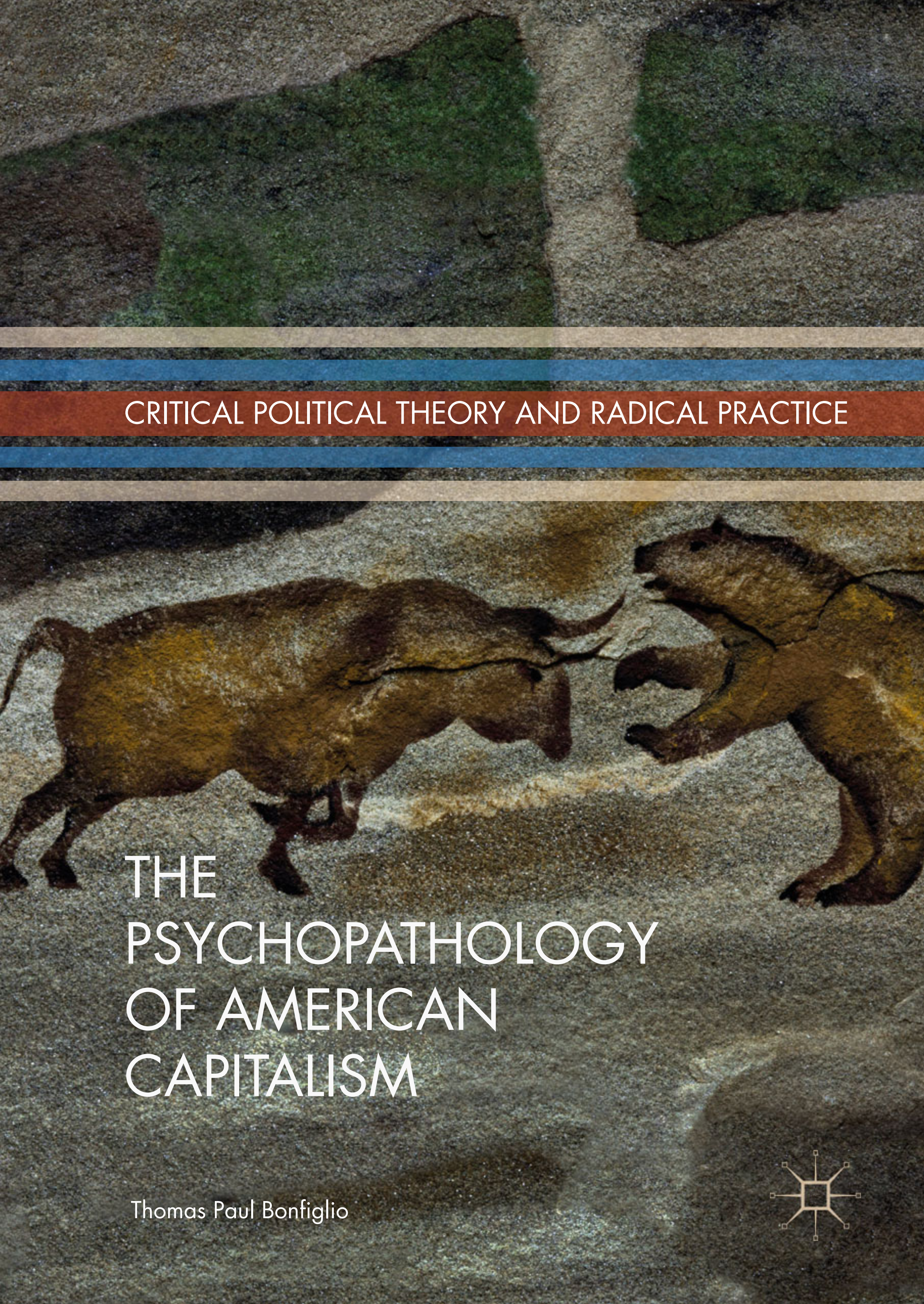

CRITICAL POLITICAL THEORY AND RADICAL PRACTICE

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Thomas Paul Bonfiglio

Critical Political Theory
and Radical Practice

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The Psychopathology of American Capitalism

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Preface

This book was written on behalf of the disremembered: the working class, the poor, and the forsaken. It is a book about hysterical blindness, in which the fortunate and forgetful perform their privilege by replacing politics with entertainment, and economy with identity. Mistaking symptom for cause, they ferociously fight a symbolic battle to maintain inequality.

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Richmond, USA Thomas Paul Bonfiglio

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Tolling for the tongues
With no place to bring their thoughts
All down in taken-for-granted situations
Tolling for the deaf and blind
Tolling for the mute…
(Dylan 1964)

These lyrics are from Bob Dylan's "Chimes of Freedom," a song that laments a litany of injustices, such as discrimination, incarceration, poverty, and war. Bells toll for the victims, but there is only regret, and no solution is offered. These lines indicate, however, problems in cognition, articulation, and perception not only among the victims, but also among the oppressors, as well. There is no available political vocabulary for organizing the disenfranchised classes. Moreover, the lines imply a general cultural blindness and deafness to the causes of social, political, and economic problems themselves. It is as if there were suffering and oppression in the system that neither the offenders nor the offended are fully conscious of. In short, these lines describe phenomena that fit well into a Marxist psychoanalysis of political economy. Marxism describes agents unaware of what motivates them *economically*; psychoanalysis describes agents unaware of what motivates them *psychologically*.

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This study proposes a synthesis of psychoanalytic and Marxist techniques in order to illuminate the discursive gambits that suppress a socialization of the American political economy, maintain protectionist discourses of anomalous American capitalism, and suppress the discourses of the capitalist welfare state, which is currently the preferred model in the industrialized world. Marxist perspectives can be used to account for the construction and stratification of the political economy, but they are insufficient for illuminating its preservation. Psychoanalysis is necessary to analyze the dynamics that maintain and protect the system.

The structural similarities between the Marxist and Freudian models are well known and consist in transformations from infrastructure to superstructure. In Marxism, agents transform their infrastructural *economic* motivations into dissimilar observable behaviors; in psychoanalysis, agents transform their infrastructural *psychological* motivations into dissimilar observable behaviors. A productive metaphor for both would be the relationship between disease and symptom. Often, diseases generate symptoms that appear unconnected to the disease itself. The correspondences between the two are not at all evident and sometimes appear far-fetched to the untrained. The symptom can easily be misdiagnosed by non-professionals, who would not, for instance, be prepared to see leg cramps as a symptom of anemia. The professional, however, can trace the odd surface manifestation back to the underlying cause. So it is as well with the psychoanalytic and Marxist models.

It is important to emphasize that this concerns general cultural phenomena as symptoms of larger psychoeconomic processes. These processes can be described as collusions or conspiracies, but only in the context of performance and not conscious intent. Just as the physical cause generates the physical symptom without involving the conscious intent of the organism, so can the psychological cause generate the psychological symptom without conscious awareness on the part of the agent. Often, agents will engage in modes of behavior that suppress cognizance of their actions. Indeed, it is often the role of the analyst to help the agent recognize what she or he is doing. The same applies to the Marxist analysis of political economy. Agents act to avoid things that threaten their power, and the protective (re)actions are often performed in a manner that can cloak the true motivations, deny them, and justify them by diversions and displacements. Thus in describing these behaviors, one must exclude notions of conscious intent. The Latin *con-spirare*, "to breath together," has given us the verb to conspire, and *con-ludere*, "to play together," has rendered "to collude." It is within these literal resonances that the protectionist discourses analyzed here are to be understood. Agents will reflexively, and not always consciously, act in consort to protect their interests. And they will often deny the effects of their actions.

1.1 The Relevance of Marxism

In his study of ideology, *Die deutsche Ideologie*, Marx said:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class that is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class that has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production… The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships that make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (Marx 1969, p. 46)

Thus fundamental material possession creates defense mechanisms that guard and protect that material possession. Marx continues:

> The production of ideas, of imaginations, of consciousness is immediately entwined in the material activity and the material intercourse of humans…as the direct outflow of their material behavior. The same is true of intellectual production, as it presents itself in the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. Humans are the producers of their imaginations, ideas, etc.—real, active humans…consciousness is nothing but conscious existence, and human existence is the real conditions of life…Ideology makes humans and their relationships appear to stand on their heads, as in a *camera obscura*, but this phenomenon really arises from their historical conditions of life, just like the inversion of objects on the retina arises from immediate physical conditions. (26)

Inverted perception makes causes appear to be effects, true material forces to appear to be the effects of mental causes, of abstract notions of mind, spirit, and consciousness. It is important to emphasize that Marx was writing in reaction to the religious configuration of humans in the nineteenth century, one that saw them as in possession of a soul and of conscious responsibility for their actions. In Marx's world, humans are the objects and subjects of concrete material forces, and not of "an abstract action of self-cognizance (*des Selbstbewusstseins*), world spirit, or any other metaphysical ghost, but instead a completely material, empirically verifiable act" (46). These empirically verifiable forces, however, can affect agents in ways that they are unaware of. Marx adds:

> While German philosophy descends from heaven to earth, we do it in the completely opposite manner; we climb from earth to heaven…Even the foggy illusions in the human brain are the necessary sublimates of material and empirically verifiable conditions of life, which are bound to material preconditions. Morality, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies, along with their corresponding forms of consciousness, no longer possess the illusion of autonomy…It is not consciousness that determines life; it is life that determines consciousness. (26)

Sublimation, the chemical process of direct transition from solid to gas, is effectively used here as a metaphor for a transition from matter to spirit. Just as a gas exhibits no visible connection to its material base, so does ideology bear no visible connection to its own material base. Just as the chemist can trace the chemical effect back to the cause, so can the Marxist trace the ideological effect back to its cause. Marx uses the example of the Indian and Egyptian caste systems, which German philosophers invert the causality of. Instead of seeing that the division of labor creates the caste system and the religious illusions that help maintain it, German philosophers think that it was the religious ideas that created the caste system; thus, they back-read from spirit to matter and, in doing so, invoke a religious justification for inequality.

From a critical Marxist perspective, and a reductionist one at that, culture is generated by economy—all culture: "Morality, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies, along with their corresponding forms of consciousness…" Ideology is the articulation and justification of inequality. An inegalitarian economy will generate ideologies and cultural products (sublimates) that reinforce that inequality.

It is here that one can also place the discourses of democracy propagated by the American upper bourgeoisie. Foggy illusions of radical individualism determine the ethics of the era of American free market hypercapitalism. This becomes essentialized: Americans become represented as ontological individualists; it is supposed to be in their spirit. What rules is an economy, in which the ruling class benefits from the individual actions of the members of that class, i.e., there is little systemic social responsibility; much depends on individual volition.

1.2 Marxist Limitations

Conventional Marxist analyses that oppose communism to capitalism are, however, insufficient for analyzing the American political economy for these reasons:

- in rejecting capitalism outright, they overlook the differences among types of capitalism, some of them highly socialized, others minimally so (US).
- the favored current world-scale economic model in the developed economies is the capitalist welfare state, which permits a liberal capitalist economy, but which also taxes high income and profit and redistributes wealth through social programs. These include a livable minimum wage, affordable health care, free or inexpensive education (including medical school) and job training, guaranteed vacations, paid parental leave, low-income housing, etc. The capitalist welfare state is maintained by a tension between strong conservative capitalist parties and strong socialist, communist, and labor parties.
- the true binary opposition in the USA is that between American hypercapitalism and a conservative, underfunded version of the capitalist welfare state. This binary suppresses theglobal dialectic that generates the capitalist welfare state and substitutes for it the proxybinary of Democrat/Republican. Thus it transforms the historical dialectic of proletariat vs.bourgeoisie into a hegemonic simulacrum of left vs. right.

There is a great danger in opposing capitalism wholesale in the United States. First of all, capitalism is not about to go away. The best that one could hope for is that the pernicious and anomalous form of *American capitalism* could change. Second, its outright rejection throws out the baby with the bath water and leaves no room for analyzing the form of liberal capitalism that characterizes the US economy. One will often hear a conservative say, "I am a capitalist." It is imperative to inquire what is meant here. What type of capitalist is the speaker? One who thinks that welfare programs should not exist? Or one who thinks there should be more short-term employment contracts? The former is an exceptional capitalist, the kind found in the exceptional American system. The latter would be a conservative voice from a capitalist welfare state, such as France. The defensive utterance, “I’m a capitalist,” is a convenient vehicle for allowing hypercapitalism—the pernicious subset of capitalism—to slip by unnoticed, to persist as a dangerous stowaway.

Before engaging psychoanalysis in the study of the preservation of the exceptionalist American economy, it is first necessary to describe that economy in its damaging forms and indicate the culpable forces. There have only been Democratic and Republican administrations since WWII. Together, they have:

- all but annihilated the true left: the socialist and communist parties.
- reduced taxes on the highest incomes from 91% in 1963 to 39% in 2016.
- increased the poverty rate from 11% in 1973 to 13% in 2016.
- created an exceptional wealth discrepancy between the wealthiest and poorest sectors, a regression to levels not seen since the 1920s.

A good indicator of the distribution of wealth is the Gini coefficient, which measures the distribution of wealth within a given economy and operates on a scale of 0–1. A rating of 1 would be granted to an economy where one person has all the money, and a rating of 0 to an economy where everyone has the same financial resources. The wealth Gini coefficient of the USA is now among the lowest in the world. The CIA data from 2007 gave the USA a coefficient of 0.45, ranking it 142nd out of 176 countries studied (CIA 2007).

US maximum tax rates on the highest incomes have declined since WWII:

1945: 94%
1962: 91.1%
1965: 70%
1982: 50%
1990: 28%
1993: 39%
2003: 35%
2016: 39%

The capitalist welfare states have low taxes on low incomes and high taxes on high incomes.

In France in 2013, a two-person household earning 12 000 € paid 0% in taxes; the equivalent household in the USA paid 10%. And in 2011, only 53.5 percent of French households—those in the more affluent categories—had to pay taxes. There is also no federal value-added tax (VAT) on purchases in the USA. A (re)distribution of wealth is only possible through a socialization of the economy, and it is this socialization that the American system rejects. The USA is one of the lowest taxed nations in the world. The OECD recently published statistics on tax revenues as a percentage of GDP among 34 advanced countries; the USA ranks number 31 (OECD 2014). Liberalism (free market economics and deregulation) will not bring about a more equitable redistribution of income. This is only possible through the system of the capitalist welfare state.

1.3 The Relevance of Psychoanalysis

While Marx's sublimates are extremely general: "politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc.," Freud's are very complex and are generated by defense mechanisms. This is not simply working off steam, but instead a working through, a processing. The diversions involved in these defense mechanisms are themselves sublimations. They express the desire or drive in altered form, and the sublimation effects a partial satisfaction. There has to be an element of satisfaction in defense mechanisms, or else they would not be deployed.

Psychoanalytic theory will be explained and applied in the course of this study as needed, but it is helpful to orient things up front with a summary of some vital concepts. The most important distinction in Freud's work is the distinction between consciousness and that which is unconscious. Conscious awareness comprises the tip of the iceberg; most of what goes on in the psyche is unconscious and consists in things that we really do not want to know or admit about ourselves. Unconscious processes are illogical, contradictory, and often absurd, but they nonetheless constitute the bulk of mental activity. And they are most readily observable in the analysis of dreams. Consequently, one of the most foundational aspects of psychoanalysis is dream theory, which informs Freud's first major book-length study. *Die Traumdeutung* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*) appeared in 1900. Freud himself considered it to be his most important work. In dreams, one finds the narratives of our anxieties, which are repressed from conscious awareness, and which must undergo transformations in order to disguise themselves. The threatening narratives become differently renarrated, a process called displacement (*Verschiebung*). Dreams will also find nodal points among these anxieties, least common denominators among a variety of them. Several anxieties become condensed into one common nodal point—a process called condensation (*Verdichtung*). Displacement and condensation correspond, in textual analysis, to metonymy and metaphor, respectively.

Consciousness and that which is unconscious are never distinctly separate; the border is quite porous. Freud introduced his study of dreams with an epigraph from book seven of the Aeneid: *flectere si nequeo superos, acheronta movebo* ("If I cannot bend the higher powers, I will move Acheron"). Acheron is the river in the underworld across which Charon ferried the dead. If Freud cannot bend the higher powers downward, he will move the lower ones upward. His project was to illuminate the continual intrusion of unconscious processes into conscious ones. This is visible in his second and third major works: *Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens* (1901) (*The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*) and *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (1905a) (*Jokes (Wit) and Their Relation to the Unconscious*). The unconscious is a collection of things that are not part of consciousness. They are repressed, blotted out, and excluded by the defense mechanisms of denial, displacement, inversion, projection, transference, and so on. But the repressed eventually passes into wakefulness; this causes us to slip, to blunder, to misspeak, to misperceive: These are the famous "Freudian slips" discussed in *The Psychopathology*. They also appear in jokes, which often pretend to be innocent. The repressed is always present in varying degrees of partial, and often total eclipse, but there nonetheless. Thus Freud used the terms *latent* and *manifest* to distinguish the hidden and evident elements of the dream.

Freud used the terms primary process and secondary process (*Primärvorgang* and *Sekundärvorgang*) to describe the processes of unconscious association and conscious reasoning, respectively. Primary processes are characterized by displacement and condensation, an absence of logic, and a free association that does not recognize contradictions. Secondary processes restrict the primary ones—a sort of reality check—and impose logical analysis upon them. Both processes are continually active. A good example of their interplay is found below in the example of "kettle logic."

The analytic techniques used in this study are largely from dreamwork and include displacement, condensation, doubling, redoubling, repetition, inversion, projection, denial, fetishizing and repression (especially cognitive repression).

1.4 Displacement and Condensation

One may diagram the dominant world economic model as such:

Left:		Right:
socialist communist labor	capitalist welfare state	capitalist liberal

and the American model as such:

capitalist2	capitalist1

And here, one arrives at the major structural displacement, a proxy battle of left versus right that is really a tension between two types of conservatism, and that suppresses the historical binary opposition. The opposition of Democrat vs. Republican neutralizes leftist alternatives. This major structural displacement is further articulated by several permutations:

- "Liberal" versus Tea Party and Libertarian: The infrastructural tension is displaced even further by a remapping of the left wing onto the Democrats and the right wing onto the ultraconservative Tea and Libertarian Parties; this results in a recentering of discourse between two conservative poles that shifts the center of gravity even farther to the right. The absurdity of the antitax and antigovernment arguments of the Tea and Libertarian Parties serves to make Republican platforms seem moderate in comparison. Indeed, the curious locution "moderate Republican" has become quite current.
- Affirmative action vs. non-interventionism: Equal opportunity employment practices designed to combat discrimination in hiring were first implemented in the 1930s and strengthened in the 1960s. The pendulum of the dynamic tends to swing toward the actual implementation of quotas, and then to lose momentum and swing back toward non-regulation. It stabilizes in the foggy area of a general declaration not to discriminate that is difficult to enforce. The only national quotas actually in place are limited to federal

contractors, and these are ambiguously articulated, leaving large spaces for exceptions. Federal statutes for employing a fixed percentage of minorities are adapted to the characteristics of the local workforce and the availability of minority workers. There are spotty laws in some states, such as Vermont. In the private sector, claims of discrimination are limited to civil courts. Thus the tension, the pendular swing, alternates between the mandated and the optional and centers in a very ambiguous space, where discrimination becomes actionable, but the processes of exacting penalties and legal settlements remain random, haphazard, and arbitrary.

The debate over affirmative action is one of the most ingenious creations of the American political economy (see Chap. 11). It is a ferocious, heated, and desperate debate suspended, however, in an ineffective limbo, a Sisyphean endeavor climbing toward the implementation of quotas only to slide back into ineffectiveness, called back by voices claiming reverse discrimination and decrying the hiring of the less unqualified. The heated tension of this debate is exactly what the stratified American economy needs in order *not* to implement the necessary systemic social programs. The polarity of bureaucratized quotas versus liberal deregulation itself acts to maintain stratification.

– "The one percent" versus the middle class: This is another proxy struggle between two forms of prosperity within the same class. It fully occludes the discourse of labor and the subaltern. (See below under Cognitive Repression.)

There are many examples of collaborative displacement and condensation in the discourse of the American political economy. An especially powerful one acts to elevate the social subset of racism to the entire set; American discussions of racism often focus on the social aspect: a white family having a black or Hispanic neighbor, or having their child date a black or Hispanic—this displaces the discussion and condenses it to the social subset, thus suppressing awareness of economic imperatives; it detensifies the racial anxieties of, e.g., ghettoization, incarceration, infant mortality and diffuses these into metonymic and metaphoric images of lower psychic intensity.

1.5 The Rhetoric of Repetition

This concerns the fort/da problem seen in Freud's *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920) (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). Freud described the behavior of his grandson in discarding a toy on a string and then reeling it back in again and again. This was caused by the anxiety over the absence of the mother, who would leave the room and then return. The infant repeatedly performed a symbolic reenactment of absence and presence in an attempt to master the situation. This became a model for the repetition compulsion, where subjects were "obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of…*remembering* it as a part of the past" (Freud 1920, p. 16). Freud saw this as an expression of the death instinct, a desire to (re)turn to an inert state.

It seems plausible, however, that this could also be seen as a trauma of insecurity and a form of cognitive repression, an inability to become fully conscious of the behavior produced by the trauma, or, as one says in our current vernacular, an inability to *get past* something, to put it behind one. The insolubility of the problem is its continual presence, reenacted in symbolic form; it is the symbolic insistence that the mother not go away. The unresolved trauma causes entrapment in a tautological loop.

The American cultural narrative repeats ad absurdum the story of the individual who succeeds on *his* own will and strength. The nucleus seems to be the Horatio Alger myth of the "American dream" attainable to anyone with sufficient motivation. An excellent example can be found in the film *The Firm* (1993), whose hero (played by Tom Cruise), from a poor background, graduates first in his class from Harvard Law, outwits the government and the mafia, has an affair with a beautiful "model," and saves his marriage, all on his own means (Davis, Pollack, and Rudin 1993).

The structure of this narrative is most familiar and configures the hero in a dilemma vis-à-vis a helpless government. The government must be weak, and the individual must triumph, in order to justify his possession of his own means, a man of means. Now the displacement and repetition, a repetition with modification as in a musical refrain, reveals the infrastructural insecurity. The danger threatens to remove the system (*fort*), and the hero reinstates it (*da*).

This continual repetition is produced by a massive insecurity over losing autonomy. American economic success is perceived as generated by individual initiative and reward; thus, the system generates narratives of autonomous victory, symbolic masterings of any threat to that system.

The system supplies a continual recursion to individualist ideologies and virtually no narratives of ameliorative statist kindness, of people being rescued by government social programs. This master narrative suppresses other alternatives.

Another permutation of the repetition of the individualist model involves the reduction and remapping of political differences onto *ad hominem* arguments. Larger political debates of, for instance, deregulation, war, welfare, health care, etc., become occluded by a focus on the personal characteristics of the political candidates. Thus the frame of difference and debate is preserved, but it is displaced, and the content is filled by a sort of popularity contest. This is also a condensation, as the field of difference is reduced to the subset of the personalities of the political figures. The arena of the *ad hominem* can become, however, most violent, combative, and impassioned and give the impression of an imperative and desperate choice. This form of proxy struggle is a very effective defense mechanism for maintaining the status quo and suppressing awareness of larger injustices. The same minority population remains disenfranchised, the same resource wars are fought, and the same global regions get invaded.

1.6 Cognitive Repression

Cognitive repression is one of the most potent psychological processes in the preservation of the exceptionalist American political economy. This involves a suppression of sources of information that could threaten the system, in order that these do not enter into awareness. The suppression is based upon a subliminal perception and subsequent bracketing from cognition. Some examples are:

- a media neglect of multiparty information from the USA and from the capitalist welfare states.
- a silencing of the American socialist parties; there is no media coverage of US socialist party conventions and only rare and marginal mentioning of the Green Party.
- a suppression of the discourses of the subaltern; a levelling of discourse to middle class; an *embourgeoisement/Verbürgerlichung* of the problematic. In 2011, 25% of black households earned less than $15 k, and 40% less than $25 k. Thus a large percentage of black households fall below the middle-class threshold.

- a suppression of the anxieties of, e.g., ghettoization, incarceration, infant mortality; a diffusion thereof into silence or proxy discourses of avoidance.
- a denial of the conservative nature of the Democratic Party.

1.7 Kettle Logic

The suppression and denial of the information above necessitate an engagement of defense mechanisms in order to justify voting within the proxy binary, especially as concerns American academics and others who have access to the oppositional information. These mechanisms can be illuminated using Freud's example of the kettle joke (*der Kesselwitz*).

In his major work on dreams and the subsequent work on wit, Freud relates the story of a man who was sued by his neighbor for borrowing a kettle and returning it in damaged condition. The borrower's three defense arguments were:

- I never borrowed a kettle from him in the first place;
- It was already damaged when he lent it to me;
- I returned it intact. (Freud 1900, pp. 124–125)

We have Jacques Derrida to thank for our critical reception of the kettle joke. Derrida calls it *la logique du chaudron*. The knowledge of guilt causes dissimulation, a form of shell game, which accesses the primary processes of dreamwork into everyday life. As noted by Freud, dreamwork has no notion of contradiction.

I list here five common American defenses for not voting for an environmentalist or leftist (i.e., socialist/communist) party, and below each one, a very simple refutation that should have been obvious in the first place. Each is an example of faulty or "kettle" logic:

1. "You're throwing your vote away."

Has there always been a Democratic Party? Did the first guy (and it was a guy) who voted Democrat throw his vote away?

2. "But they don't have a chance."

This is clearly a flagrant circularity: of course not, if no one votes for them.

3. "Why vote for someone no one's ever heard of?"

Was Obama always known? Or the Tea Party, which came out of nowhere? And here it is important to emphasize that one knows about the Tea Party *because the media reported on it*. If the media reported on the Socialist Party or Green Party deliberations, which make infinitely more sense than the anomalous ideas of the Tea Party (such ideas can scarcely be found in the industrialized democracies), then the leftist parties would be visible.

4. "Socialism? Never work in the US."

Here, one only needs to point out the structure of the argument: The way things are is the way they will always be. This is especially surprising when it comes from American historians of Russia, who saw Russia turn into the Soviet Union and back into Russia again in little more than 70 years.

Moreover, such argumentation is most curious when coming from academics who teach their students not to essentialize, holding that attributions such as "American," "Italian," "feminine," "masculine," etc., are social constructs with no ontological validity. Yet, having preached thusly, they then contradict themselves and attribute an antisocialist essence to "the American," instead of seeing the antisocialism as a contingent temporal phenomenon clearly susceptible to change. This regression also involves a suppression of the awareness of material contingency.

5. "Nader cost Gore the election."

This reverts to the "great man" theory of history, long dismissed by historians, which holds that individuals are responsible for major sea changes. It also engages the habitual recourse to individualist causality, the current dominant American ideological construct. In a theatrical play, for instance, the behavior of actors is clearly scripted by a larger direction. The "great man" theory would rather see the play's protagonist as orchestrating the whole thing by himself.

These examples of kettle logic defenses are also based upon a suppression of knowledge of strategic voting in multiparty democracies. In the first round of executive elections, there were a dozen parties in France and over 30 in Germany and Italy. Voting in those countries is often strategic and involves leveraging, where one votes for a party that one is not fully supportive of in order to block another party that one is very opposed to. A good example is the reelection of Jacques Chirac in 2002, in which socialists supported conservatives in consort against the xenophobic *Front national*.

1.8 National Daydreams

The anxieties caused by the perceived threats to the system produce oneiric responses, dreamwork narratives of resolution. The tales of heroic individual triumph are one example of such dreamwork solutions. Other examples are:

– the decoration of the college and university student population with images of color as a substitute for systemic economic solutions, a fairy tale solution without any class struggle. This is a dream image, in which the problem itself is suppressed. Freud's analysis of the botanical monograph dream works well as an analogy here. All the anxieties (cocaine, sexual desires, the blooming looks of Gärtner's wife, etc.) disappear into the pleasant image of a successful publication. (Freud 1900, pp. 175–180)
– the transformation of the racist infrastructural dynamic into the wish fulfillment fable of an accessible universal middle class via allusions to suburban whiteness. This concerns, for example, media images of fully assimilated black families in traditional suburban white settings. These offer wish-fulfillment images of progressiveness, while at the same time avoiding the realities of ghetto living conditions.

The nuclear anxiety concerns the distribution of income (not the redistribution, because it was never distributed in the first place) and the perceived threat of the levelling of class boundaries. The reality of wealth vs. poverty, of affluence vs. destitution, creates guilt. This guilt must be avoided and expressed at the same time, apologized for, and symbolic solutions have to be invented. One can take an example from Freud's *Maikäfertraum* ("May Beetle Dream"). Here is the content:

> She recalled that she had two May beetles (*Maikäfer*) in a box that she had to free or they would otherwise suffocate. She opens the box, and the beetles are completely exhausted. One of them flies out the open window, but the other

> one gets squashed by the window frame ("window wing"—*Fensterflügel*) while she closes it, as someone had asked her to do. (Freud 1900, pp. 295–296)

One can construct the dream thoughts/interpretation as follows: She was unhappy in her marriage. (She had been born in May and married in May, hence the displacement and condensation.) The desire for emancipation elicits guilt and gets thus remapped onto the narrative of two May beetles; one dies and one is freed. This is a typical redoubling, where several *Doppelgänger* are generated; the two May beetles symbolize two aspects of the dreamer; one expresses a wish, and the other a fear. There is a wish for freedom, to fly away freely, and there is a fear of death, of being crushed. The two May beetles also represent her and her husband; she escapes again into freedom, and now it is he who dies. Note that the dream does not recognize contradictions and antitheses, as Freud observed in his analysis of dreams.

One can see here that the nuclear struggle creates a symbolic and multivalent oppositionality. This is no solution, only a symbolic substitution and renarration. As Freud pointed out in *The Psychopathology*, waking parapraxes—the classic Freudian slips of the tongue, bungled actions, etc. —have the structure of dreamwork. One can use this small example from the May beetle dream to illustrate the apparent oppositional struggles in the American political economy, which renarrates the infrastructural tension into multivalent symbolic and contradictory images that serve as a symbolic (and an ineffectual) resolution.

A host of defense mechanisms is necessary to perpetuate the inegalitarian American political economy. These offer justifications that function largely as screen memories, distorting the infrastructural problem into simulacra of democracy. Some of these have already been mentioned here. Some other important psychopathologies include fetishizing and humor.

1.9 Fetishizing

Fetishizing involves a problematic situation, in which psychic energy—often psychosexual—becomes diverted into a symbolic alternative that does not resolve the problem. The sexual fetish is perhaps the most common example. Libido becomes transferred to an accessory object, and the engagement with that object does not resolve the issue, but prolongs it. Fetishizing involves an avoidance of the central problematic. One seeks a simulacrum that gives the appearance of resolving the issue while not resolving it at all, nor wanting to resolve it. This is particularly visible in the construction of American identity politics. It can also be seen in the fetishizing of the Democratic Party and especially in the election of Barack Obama.

Another important issue concerns the psychopathology of humor in the context of American politics, which, since the mid-twentieth century, has slowly and significantly moved into the theater of entertainment and amusement. Valuable perspectives can be taken from Freud's studies on wit and humor. One has recently witnessed the rise of cable TV satire as the dominant, if not the sole forum for oppositionality (e.g., Colbert, Maher, Maddow, Stewart). Freud's studies of wit can be applied here to illuminate the ideologies present in tendentious humor.

1.10 Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2 reviews the major contributions to Marxist psychoanalysis beginning with Wilhelm Reich and views these as projects lacking a concrete political platform for change. It also outlines the basic workings of capitalism and the capitalist welfare state, as these relate to the exceptionalist hypercapitalism found in the USA.

Chapter 3 reviews the presence of Marxism and psychoanalysis in the discourses of race and gender. It addresses the scarcity of applications of psychoanalysis to issues of race and a corresponding disengagement from concrete political action in psychoanalytic feminism. It recovers perspectives from these discourses that apply to effective political organization.

Chapter 4 examines the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, who wrote a major work on psychoanalysis and Marxism. It focuses on their understanding of desire, the Oedipus complex and the role of the family, representation, and metaphor and metonymy. It argues against their notion that desire does not lie in the representational, but instead in "the order of production," as they put it. It argues that desire is incommensurable, that it lies in the symbolic and the representational, and that this configuration is basic to human nature. Desire constitutes the theater for the performance of bourgeois class interests and is essential to the discourse of Marxist psychoanalysis.

Chapter 5 examines some of the problems in Žižek's understanding of hysteria, commodity, fetish, and symptom, including his idea that Lacan said that Marx invented the symptom. It argues instead that Marx invented the notion of sublimation as a psychosocial phenomenon. It also examines the ambiguities in Marx's understanding of commodity and fetish and separates the two into distinct phenomena.

Chapter 6 explores the nature of the fetish in depth and argues that fetishizing is part of human ontology. Separate from the economic, it is a product of the primary processes of dreamwork.

The sexual fetish is used as an operative model to illustrate how the commodity becomes a fetish when it enters into processes found in dreamwork and alludes to the fulfillment of desire. The chapter argues that commodity fetishism is a product of defense mechanisms arising from an anxiety of loss, and as a diversion of psychoeconomic energy.

Chapter 7 examines the language of politics in the USA and shows how the discourse of power has effected semantic shifts in the vocabulary used to discuss political and economic issues. It employs research on the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis to illustrate how the exceptionalist political economy has created a peculiar political vocabulary that restricts and channels thought and discourse into modes that reinforce the neoliberal economy itself. The resultant vocabulary terms make it very difficult to reason and discuss outside of the system. The operative model used is one of a matrix of language and culture where the two emerge in symbiosis. Traditional linguistic relativism relies on the power of language alone to determine thought. This study proposes that psychoanalytic phenomena can help account for the restriction of meanings to those that reinforce the interests of the class in power, as well as the refusal to yield semantic space to meanings that could jeopardize the hierarchical political structure.

Chapter 8 studies the suppression of the left wing in American politics in the twentieth century, beginning with the anticommunist and antisocialist sentiments in the early part of the century and continuing with the oppression and persecution of leftism during the McCarthy era. It also illuminates the ethnocentric and anti-immigration elements involved in the efforts to purge the country of leftism. It shows that the real target of the purges was not Soviet communism, but instead the labor movements and the associated efforts (few as they were) to move toward the social democratic welfare state that existed in Western Europe. Psychoanalytic techniques are used to illuminate the representation of the welfare system as a "nanny state" and the emergence of a masculinist individualism that rejects images of maternal dependency. This leads into a discussion of oedipal factors in the ideology of Ronald Reagan, especially the cognitive dissonance involved in supporting the government because there is no government. Psychoanalysis is also used to study the fear of contamination by association with images of communism. It is also argued in this chapter that anticommunism, with the Soviet Union employed as a straw man, succeeded in removing the politics of class and labor from the civil rights and women's movements.

Chapter 9 examines the lasting consequences of cold war ideology for American academia. The popular myth is that faculty were persecuted into silence by McCarthyism, and that everything returned to normal once the "commie-hunting" mania had ended. This chapter illuminates the systemic and viral effects of anticommunism on American scholarship and collects data showing that the ideologies of the period contributed to a general depoliticizing of research. Empiricism came to dominate in the social sciences, as did analytic philosophy and logical positivism in philosophy. Behaviorism excluded psychoanalysis from psychology. Literary studies came to view texts as context-free and autonomous. The role of philanthropic foundations, especially the Ford Foundation, is also examined for the privileging of empirical studies. A form of myopia has ensued, in which professors became viewed as "leftist liberals," a depiction that masks the pervasiveness of neoliberal policies that, over the past decades, have reshaped higher education in the USA.

Chapter 10 studies the hegemony of English and the ideology of monolingualism in the USA as factors that codetermine American ethnopolitical myopia. At the end of the nineteenth century, Latin and Greek were required for college admission, and students went on to study French and German (Bonfiglio 2013). Currently, the USA is one of the very few countries whose college graduates remain, for the most part, functionally monolingual, despite the "language requirement." The USA emerged from World Wars I and II as a dominant world power. At the same time, it developed a xenophobic resistance to immigration and foreign languages, especially as these conveyed information from foreign political economies. The USA exercised its power as a monolingual hegemon, and "English" came to be understood as the study of all world literature—period. It became the purveyor of meaning, and "the languages" came to be seen as skills in the service of English. The United States became the only country that does this with its principal language, a factor that helps to maintain American exceptionalism. This monolingual ideology is maintained by cognitive repression and strong defense mechanisms that deflect counterinformation.

Chapter 11 explores the discourses of identity politics, multiculturalism, and affirmative action in an effort to show how they act to divert attention from issues of poverty and thus maintain class stratification. These discourses are illuminated using concepts of the narcissism of minor differences, the defense mechanism of projection, and doubling and repetition. It is argued that these discourses constitute an economy of symbolic commodity fetishism that conceals class inequalities and the connection between poverty and bourgeois prosperity. It argues that multiculturalism and affirmative action policies are necessary to compensate for the injustices that remain after social programs to ameliorate poverty have been implemented, but that they should not replace those social programs.

Chapters 12 and 13 summarize the arguments and offer a psychoanalytic Marxist account of the production of the current president.

American popular culture and American academia have performed some very curious operations on the understanding of psychoanalysis. One often hears that psychoanalysis has been disproven because it is "not scientific." This needs to be discussed, briefly. One may begin with the understanding of science.

This term originally indicated knowledge in general. It originates in the Latin *scientia*, "knowledge." The 1989 edition of the *OED* defines science as:

1. The state or fact of knowing; knowledge or cognizance of something specified or implied.
2. Knowledge acquired by study; acquaintance with or mastery of any department of learning.
3. A particular branch of knowledge or study; a recognized department of learning.
4. A branch of study which is concerned either with a connected body of demonstrated truths or with observed facts systematically classified and more or less colligated by being brought under general laws, and which included trustworthy methods for the discovery of new truth within its own domain.
5. The kind of knowledge or intellectual activity of which the various 'sciences' are examples. (Oxford English Dictionary 2017)

These are the main entries. The *OED* includes two more entries that concern attributive uses: "man of science" and "science park." It is only in a subcategory of the fifth definition that one finds the specification: "In modern use, often treated as synonymous with 'Natural and Physical Science.'"

It is important to emphasize that the current restriction of the semantic field of "science" to indicate only laboratory, experimental, or quantitative study is a recent development limited to North America that became popularized in the twentieth century. While a similar semantic reduction of the permutations of the Latin *scientia* is found in popular use in the major languages of Western Europe—except for German—the term still allows for usages beyond the scope of the natural sciences. French, for instance, distinguishes among *sciences naturelles, sciences sociales,* and *sciences humaines* (natural, social, and human sciences). In the USA, the term "human sciences" has been appropriated by the field of biology. Thus *sciences humaines* would have to be translated as "humanities," which deprives it of scientific status, insofar as scientific status is understood in the USA. While French allows for the common ellipsis *les sciences* to refer to the natural sciences, it also allows *science* to be used by many fields. The term *science des arts*, if translated as "science of art," would befuddle many a current American reader.

German is much more strict in this regard. The equivalent of the Latin *scientia* is *Wissenschaft*, which can refer to any field of study. One needs to specify what kind of *Wissenschaft*: *Naturwissenschaft, Sozialwissenschaft, Literaturwissenschaft*, *Kunstwissenschaft*, etc. German also allows *Geisteswissenschaften*, or "sciences of the mind," equivalent to the American "humanities."

The following controversial question seems self-evident in American English: "Is psychology a science?" To render the question in French as *La psychologie, est-elle une science?* or in German as *Ist die Psychologie wissenschaftlich?* would not correspond to any current discourse and most likely motivate the listener to ask why one is asking the question in the first place. Similarly, the question: "Is history a science?" would elicit a self-evident "no" in the USA and an equally self-evident *oui/ja/sì*, etc., in Europe. Also, the English "scholar" would be translated as *Wissenschaftler* in German and *scientifique* in French. Of the three following sentences, (c) would be a semantic violation (in American English):

a. *Dieser Professor der modernen Kunst ist ein wohlbekannter Wissenschaftler.*
b. *Ce prof d'art moderne, c'est un scientifique bien reconnu.*
c. *That professor of modern art is a well-recognized scientist.

Thus the question "Is psychology a science?" is a construct of American ideology and language, which, in turn, fabricate the image of a referent. During the cold war period, American scholarship reduced the meaning of "science" to empirical methodology alone. (How this came about in language and ideology is demonstrated in Chaps. 7 and 8.) American psychology became swamped by this methodology, which caused it to cast psychoanalysis overboard, as it was seen as more philosophical and speculative than "scientific." Psychoanalysis found friendlier harbor in the humanities, especially in philosophy, history, and literary studies. This is, however, the case in the USA. In many other countries, psychoanalysis is alive and well, and Freud is read in psychology courses.

Consequently, one hears in popular discourse in the USA the statement, "but Freud has been disproven." My response is usually, "Where has Freud been disproven?" Sometimes I resort to irony and say, "Yes, Freud was wrong. He just had a big ego. He was just projecting a lot. He had a lot of unconscious problems. He was, like, so totally in denial."

This study does not share the perspective that empirical experimentation and statistical analysis are the only ways to study human behavior. It uses psychoanalysis as a human science the way it is used by reasonable scholars in the humanities in the USA and in the humanities and social sciences outside of the USA.

A final cautionary word also needs to be said about Marxism. This study does not equate Marx with Stalin. It also does not call for a communist revolution. It uses Marxist theory as an optical tool for studying political economy, not as a blueprint for how to run a country. And it enhances that optical tool with perspectives from psychoanalysis.

All quotations are taken from the original language of the document cited. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

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CHAPTER 2

Marx, Freud, and Capital

There have been many studies that juxtapose the Marxist and Freudian models. This study selects those that speak most directly to its argument. The first major contributions to a collective understanding of Marxism and psychoanalysis outside of the Soviet Union—where the reception of psychoanalysis was far from generous—are found in the works of the Austrian Psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich(1897–1957), most clearly in his *Dialektischer Materialismus und Psychoanalyse* (1934) (*Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis*). A further contributor was the Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Fenichel (1897–1946), in his *Über die Psychoanalyse als Keim einer zukünftigen dialektisch-materialistischen Psychologie* (1934) (*Psychoanalysis as the Nucleus of a Future Dialectical-Materialistic Psychology*). In Reich, one sees the beginnings of a psychoanalytic view of the injustices of capitalism. Reich believed that neuroses were caused by the capitalist system and would disappear in a fully socialist society. This theme continues in the work of Deleuze and Guattari.

This tradition took on greater form in the work of the Frankfurt School, most notably by the German philosophers Erich Fromm (1900–1980) and Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979). Perhaps the most comprehensive synthesis in the postwar era is found in Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization. A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955). The title neatly tropes on *Civilization and its Discontents*, the English (mis)translation of Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930) (it would be better translated as "malaise or malcontentment in human culture"). There are two German versions of Marcuse's work: *Triebstruktur und Gesellschaft* (1965) ("drive/instinct

T.P. Bonfiglio, *The Psychopathology of American Capitalism*, Critical Political Theory and Radical Practice, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-55592-8_2

structure and society") and a version closer to the English *Eros und Kultur* (1957). In this work, Marcuse develops his theory of surplus repression, calquing on the Marxist notion of surplus value, which holds that society has caused humans to suppress themselves more than is sufficient for the maintenance of human culture. Surplus repression comprises "the restrictions necessitated by social domination. This is distinguished from (basic) repression: the 'modifications' of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization" (Marcuse 1955, p. 35). Where Freud sees the acculturated control of instinct as a given, albeit one that causes frustration, Marcuse sees human culture a culprit; it organizes instincts, occupies them, and makes them not our own: "If absence from repression is the archetype of freedom, then civilization is the struggle against this freedom" (14). Marcuse attempts to construct a homology between repression and oppression, between the psychological and the political: "The pleasure principle was dethroned not only because it militated against progress in civilization but also because it militated against a civilization whose progress perpetuates domination and toil" (40). This also contains some curious biblical echoes of a fall from an Edenic state to one of hard labor.

The counterculture movement of the 1960s yielded some further adaptations of Marxism and psychoanalysis that were, and understandably so, articulated within the logic of that era. In 1970, Philip Slater proposed a synthesis of psychology and economics in *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point*, which was updated a bit in 1976. Already in 1970, Slater remarked that "Americans feel less safe…the guns under pillows, and the multiple locks on city doors betray our fears without easing them" (Slater 1970, p. 1). And he astutely observes that "cold warriors have always attributed this uneasiness to the growth of communism" (1). Some of his observations are frighteningly current over 40 years later: "The masculine ideal in our culture, for example, has traditionally been one of almost complete emotional constipation…most men even today are stuck with this choice between articulate and inarticulate zombiehood" (3). This calls to mind the current image of the laconic male with minimal affect. Slater's larger project is a critique of individualism, which he sees as an American malady: "American independence training has in the past been severe relative to the rest of the world" (27), and he astutely interprets the postwar flight to the suburbs as motivated by that individualist drive (16). This all results in a lack of a communitarian spirit.

The uses of psychoanalysis, however, are quite scant, but he does interesting things with orality and consumerism. He characterizes consumer society as an "oral culture"—an interesting point—and says that we respond to stress by "retreating into infant orality and 'consuming,' thereby requiring more possessions" (28). "The American love of bigness is itself a sign of orality" (28), he holds, also an excellent observation. One can expand on this a bit. The word consumer originates in the Latin *consumere*, which consists in *con*, "together" and *sumere*, "to take up," indicating a collecting together. Now, this can be viewed within the framework of the oral phase as a regression to the undifferentiated state at the mother's breast before the consciousness of separate self. One over-consumes in a simulacric attempt to revert to this state of primal narcissism in reaction to the anxieties of separation.

Slater offers other observations that are still amazingly current. He speaks of "the peculiar germ-phobia that pervades American life," which is "rooted in the attempt to deny the reality of human interdependence" (34), part of a vast conspiracy to suppress communality. (This evokes current images of the supermarket sanitary wipes one finds next to the shopping carts.) Also quite current, he argues that we prefer to see violence in the lower classes as a way to punish them and cut our ties to interpersonal responsibility. This correlates well with the current preponderant representation of violence among minorities on TV and in film.

He also critiques Benjamin Spock, the American pediatrician and author of the wildly successful *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946), which has sold tens of millions of copies. (It is considered to be one of the best-selling English language books in history.) He sees Spock as enabling the egotism of the postwar "do your own thing me-generation": "Spock's work is in the old American tradition that every individual is unique and has a 'potential.' This potential is viewed as innate, partially hidden, gradually unfolding, and malleable" (67). His views anticipate those of Christopher Lasch, whose work *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) offered similar arguments. For Slater, American society is "moving away from the instinctive sense of community that villagers had in the past—still moving with dizzying speed toward greater anonymity, impersonality, and disconnectedness…nothing will change in America until individualism is assigned a subordinate pace in the American value system" (128).

Some of the uses he makes of psychoanalysis are a bit off the mark. He claims that Freud saw all cultural achievements as stemming from a repression of sexuality (88). And here, he is being quite reductionistic; culture is generated by a repression of instincts in general. "Civilization is a parasite on human eroticism," Slater claims (88). Also, in his pleas against rampant technology, he refers to the part in Freud's work on malaise where Freud holds that technological advances do not provide one with more contentment. But here, Freud is not saying that we should not have technological advancement. He is simply saying that malaise is a constant in human culture. *Homo faber* (*homo producens* for Marx) is here to stay, along with *homo psychologicus.*

The major problem with Slater's analyses is that they remain within the realm of volition, not organization by leftist or environmental political parties. "Changing our culture will require participation by everyone" (140), he asserts, affirming that we need to "reverse our old pattern of technological radicalism and social conservatism" (141). Ironically, the changes that he advocates do not depend upon governmental organization, but upon the private-sphere individualism that he so strongly critiques: "This is not an argument for adding more power and wealth to our bulging federal bureaucracy…I'm only concerned with changing our ways of thinking about the economy—instead of just manipulating economic mechanisms" (174).

There is no mention of universal health care here, nor free college education, and there is a dearth of international comparisons. And he does not shy away from the occasional adventurous overstatement, calling individualism "the midwife of fascism" (164).

He does put forth some very progressive ideas, however, such as an abolition of the inheritance tax and of all tax deductions, which he sees as favoring the rich. He also advocates "a 100 percent tax on income over $100,000 a year" (191), which would convert to ca. $622,000 in 2017. But these progressive ideas are hard to square with his overarching antigovernmental stance: "Community needs and obligations can be handled in many ways, and the tendency to dump them into the lap of the federal government is just inertia" (193). In his concluding paragraph, he states that all the changes he recommends "seek the same end: instead of money being a freely-responsive force that controls the expression of human energies, human energy would be a freely-responsive force that would control the distribution of money" (201). Thus, he evokes a quasi-mystical force that would bring about an equilibrium.

The Pursuit of Loneliness appeared the same year as Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970), which held that rapid change, caused by a hyperactive technology, has made people go insane. Slater, too, is preoccupied with a critique of uncontrolled technology. He calls our technological products "Frankenstein-monsters" (61). Both works emerge from the counterculture of the 1960s, from the antiwar movement, the opposition to the military industrial complex, and the profound antiauthoritarianism that characterized that era. The rebellion of the era, however, was co-opted by and articulated within an antigovernmental individualist ideology that could only inhibit the development of a communitarianism.

The year 1970 also saw the appearance of Joel Kovel's *White Racism. A Psychohistory*. It uses psychoanalysis to analyze capitalism, slavery, and racism. The epigraph is a quote from Freud on the "struggle between Eros and death" as antithetical instincts fundamental to human culture. These are two of the master tropes for Kovel's study. Kovel offers a good observation on slavery in the USA that fits well into a psychoeconomic model: Slavery instantiates the priority of private property rights over human rights (Kovel 1970, p. 6). Since slavery existed before capitalism, however, the integration of this astute observation into his analysis becomes a bit problematic.

The third master trope for Kovel is that of anality. He trees out the classic division of oral, anal, and phallic stages and holds that the "anal phase is so important in discussing racism because anality" occurs at the time "when a child is painfully detaching himself from this mother and establishing himself as a separate person…dirt, becomes, then, the recipient of his anger at separation, while the love of possessions becomes the substitute for the love of what has been separated from him" (49). This is presented as the primary cause of the scatologizing of blacks. This produces a black and white distinction, quite literally, falling neatly along the watershed of evil/good, infected/pure, devil/god, etc. In the chapter "The Symbolic Matrix," he examines these binaries as constructions and describes their associative networks. These are displacements or metonymies, although he does not use the terms, nor does he use dreamwork to analyze the associative networks. Dreamwork techniques would have aided in the illumination of the unconscious prejudices that he indicts. He speaks of primary and secondary symbols and seems to relate them to primary and secondary processes, terms that are, however, not employed.

Kovel also attempts a taxonomy of racists. There are "dominative racists" who advertise their bigotry, "aversive racists" who are racist but do "nothing overt about it," and the third type, "he who does not reveal racist tendencies at all," except at an unconscious level (54–55). The reader eventually learns, toward the end of the book, that the third type consists in "metaracists" (see below). What is lacking in his study is the notion of the fictionalization of the overt racist as a straw man in order to divert attention from the economic factors that are most damaging to minorities. He does make a good observation that the historically racist society imagines the black "in his promiscuity, removes, with the power, the superego structures that come from identification with power, and frees the black to act out what the white cannot" (73). Thus, the (sexual) violence attributed to blacks is a projection and displacement of precisely those violent urges in whites. And in an attempt at a relation to the economy, he observes that "the avoidance of black people was greatest in those areas that were the most materially successful and the least tainted with slavery…of the Deep South" (80).

He asserts that the bourgeoisie "made the world a market" (112) and then criticizes "the radical extension of the market principle to the entire universe" (117), holding that technology should become "devoted to the service of the life forces" and thus "the tool of Eros." If technology is "in thrall to domination and the endless production of lifeless substance," then it will become "the tool of destruction" (121). This is a metahistorical battle between Eros and Thanatos, life and death.

Kovel's work is strongly influenced by Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (1959), especially Brown's study of anal retentivity and anal sadism in Martin Luther. Kovel offers a broad narrative of the anal personality in the West, drawing a large equation among the anal stage, the anal retentive personality, the reformation, capitalism, and individualism, all of which produce an absolutist binary of good and evil, white and black, and a racism dominated by the death instinct. Kovel holds that "it was the excremental Devil whom Luther invested with all the corporeal evil of the world; and it was from this symbolic turning point that anality spread, by repression, sublimation and abstraction, onto the entire world" (149). He extends this to puritanism, empiricism, and capitalism, via Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930). "Humans were made into things, into abstract equivalents of bodily filth to be regained by the white Western self" (184), he posits, and situates slavery within "the Western psychohistorical matrix of anality," which sought to "include the black—retain his instinctual appeal and the strength of his labor—but *control* him utterly" (186).

He offers the term "metaracism" to describe those who "are not racists —that is, they are not racially prejudiced—but metaracists, because they acquiesce in the larger cultural order which continues the work of racism" (211–212). And here, a psychoanalytic opportunity eludes his analysis, occluded by a panhistorical vision of anality and Thanatos as causal forces.

There is no analysis here of the use of defense mechanisms in the class he terms metaracist, a class that engages in defensive rationalizations in order to suppress an economic solution to inequality, an inequality that is strongly correlated with race.

There is a good deal of 1960s neo-romanticism in Kovel's vision. He is also influenced by Norman O. Brown's *Love's Body* (1966), which attempts a neo-romantic aesthetic synthesis of William Blake and Freud, pointing to an apocalyptic triumph of Eros. Kovel's solution is that "a generally loving attitude toward reality is necessary for any climb out of the abyss of racist thinking" (213). His concluding sentences read: "And, however submerged, we still have Eros on our side, along with its coordinated faculties, a creative intelligence, and a free, autonomous ethic. The rest is up to history" (247). All you need is love.

The works by Slater and Kovel display the academic side of the heady visions of 1960s counterculture, which remained impractical and individualistic in its orientation, and which became quickly absorbed into the hypercapitalist system. There is a lot of interesting psychohistorical speculation here, but psychoanalysis is focused elsewhere and remains disengaged from practical solutions to an inegalitarian political economy, avoiding the necessities of organized labor and centralized redistribution of wealth. It is as if the system deflected conceptualization into a buffer zone, a sort of ineffective DMZ, where oppositionality became neutralized and translated into permutations of individualism that would, in the end, readily assimilate into the dominant system itself.

The vision of these early works on Marxism and psychoanalysis is largely optimistic and utopian and attempts to discuss the possibility of an egalitarian future society of individuals free or relatively free from repression. In this regard, the synthesis preserves Marx's belief in the democratic progress of history, but not Freud's less optimistic conviction of the inevitability of the condition of desire and the fact that satisfaction is intermittent. The present study has no such utopian project. It uses Marxism and psychoanalysis as tools for analyzing a political and economic sociopathology in the present American culture. The political solution that it points to is nothing new; it is simply the welfare capitalism of the industrialized world, itself ameliorative of inequality to an extent. In this sense, the present study is not opposed to capitalism per se. It is opposed to the exceptional American form of capitalism, which is an anomaly among the major industrialized nations. It seeks to show how that anomalous capitalism is insulated, protected, rationalized through defense mechanisms, and how it contains and restrains opposition.

The most comprehensive study of Marxism and psychoanalysis to date can be found in Victor Wolfenstein's *Psychoanalytic-Marxism: Groundwork* (1993). This is a massive compendium of theories and issues that speak to Marxism and psychoanalysis, an overview through modernity and postmodernity from that perspective. It surveys a wide panorama of issues to which Marxism and psychoanalysis apply: race, class, gender, ecology, and so on. It is a groundwork in Marx's program of a *Grundriss*, a foundation to build upon, and a massive one at that. The title's syntax is a bit odd in hyphenating a single adjective modifier before a noun: psychoanalytic-Marxism, instead of simply psychoanalytic Marxism. This indicates a disjuncture and a subordination: Marxism is the operator that subsumes psychoanalysis into its democratic project. Contradictions, commonalities, disjunctures, even catachreses are digested into its overall project.

In his laudable attempt, Wolfensteinmust resort, however, to grant reductionistic generalizations. Pieces assemble here as in a jigsaw puzzle, and there are many binaries that snap together quite easily. For instance, he says of Marxism and psychoanalysis:

> at the level of anthropology, the two theories are mutually exclusive…For Marx interests are a function of work-activity. Desires and emotional life are molded by historically specific forms of the work-mediated relationship of human individuals to each other and nonhuman nature. For Freud manifest desires are a function of sexual and aggressive drives. Work-activity and historically specific economic relationships are sublimations of our basic drives. Productive activity, so far from being a part of our nature, is an externality nonhuman nature imposes upon us. (Wolfenstein 1993, p. 10)

These sublimations, however, which include productive activity, are basic to human nature for Freud. Wolfenstein says of Marxism and psychoanalysis: "The former speaks the imperatives of mass movement, the latter speaks against them." (93). This also seems overstated. He sees Marxism as "an objective theory, psychoanalysis a subjective one" (52). The binaries continue: "Marxism is a praxis of human emancipation, psychoanalysis is a praxis of individual emancipation. The one is public and political, the other is private and (in important respects) extrapolitical" (52).

And some declarations seem to miss the mentalist and oneiric nature of psychoanalytic inquiry: "Freud's interpretation of history is a more or less covert mythology…His story of civilization may be good psychology but it is bad history" (49). But illuminating how events are interpreted unconsciously by primary processes—is this not psychohistory itself? Such neat generalizations are also applied to diverse theorists: "Reich and Fromm present us with mirror images of social reality. Reich flees from the problematics of social life into sexual romanticism and a reduction of mind to body…Fromm, by contrast, engages the problematics of social life. He also hides within them. He retreats from body into mind, from sexuality into issues of relatedness" (90).

He discusses Freud's 1933 lecture *Über eine Weltanschauung* which is oddly translated as *The Question of a Weltanschauung*. It is literally "On a world view," perhaps more smoothly as "On world views." Here, Freud discusses the notion of having a world view in the first place. And he criticizes Marx for having a perspective that is solely economic, saying that this is reductionistic, and that it needs to include psychological models. While Freud is not rejecting economic causality in toto, Wolfenstein seems to read the essay as anti-Marxist and as posing problems for a synthesis. "The core of Freud's critique in the 'Weltanschauung' essay is that Marxism is psychologically untenable" (34), Wolfenstein holds, which seems to imply that Freud is throwing out the baby with the bath water, which he is not. Marx's treatment of ideological illusions should be seen as opening up avenues for psychological analysis.

Wolfenstein also characterizes Freud as saying that people are inherently lazy and do not want to work, and he opposes this to Marx's view that humans fulfill themselves through labor (36). But Freud's human is also one who sublimates drives in and through work; therein lies human creativity. The humans must create; it is in human nature to do so. Work for humans is transformational. One is reminded of Freud's observation in *Totem und Tabu* (1912–1913) that hysteria can be seen as a caricature of a work of art, a paranoid delusion as a caricature of a philosophical system, and an obsessional neurosis as a caricature of a religion. For *homo psychologicus*, all work is a working through. The Indo-European root for "work" indicates a turning. Words such as "wrench" and "wrought" are also root-related and can be seen as acts of transformation.

Freud's model is not utopian, and Marx's may well be. But this does not mean that they cannot talk to each other. And in a perplexing statement in the context of the death instinct, he says that for Freud, "The forces of production are the legions of the God of Death" (44). But he does manage to qualify this a bit later, saying that the aversion is not to work as such, but rather to alienated labor (48).

Oddly, Darwin is not mentioned once in Wolfenstein. This is indeed peculiar, as Freud was profoundly influenced by Darwin, as is clearly evident in *Totem und Tabu*, and as he admitted in the autobiographical notes in his *Selbstdarstellung* (1925), in which he said that Darwin played a major role in his decision to study medicine in the first place. Darwin's theories also strongly influenced Freud's configuration of instincts. In addition to the omission of Darwin, Juliet Mitchell's groundbreaking *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) is oddly absent, as well.

In toto, Wolfenstein's synthesis is itself a polemic against capitalism, if not against all forms of domination. But most importantly, it reveals the pervasiveness of a capitalism gone viral, its transparent ubiquity. In his review of *Psychoanalytic-Marxism*, Kovel has pointed out the functional primacy of the dialectic in Wolfenstein's project, which one may see as a neo-Hegelian use of psychoanalysis and Marxism in a dialectic engagement with domination and a superseding thereof. As Lacan has pointed out, psychoanalysis opens a dimension of dialogue.

Kovel summarizes very effectively: "Psychoanalytic Marxism is that doctrine which roots out blockages in the dialectic wherever these occur, whether in the inner or outer worlds" (Kovel 1994, p. 581). And it must be said that this is also the project of the present inquiry, to use Marxism and psychoanalysis to illuminate submerged discourses of domination that pass themselves off as democratic.

In doing so, however, I do not hold that Marx's work is a fixed and stable text to be interpreted "correctly," and neither is Freud's. One can collect tools from both models and use them for analysis. These models need not be, and in all likelihood cannot be reduced to a single root. In diagnosing a medical pathology, for instance, one uses heterogeneous tools quite successfully, such as meteorology and bacteriology. Climate can codetermine the success or failure of an organism. That the models are, respectively, inorganic and organic and deal with inanimate and animate matter does not at all indicate incompatibility for a sound analysis. So it is with the synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis that I present here, in application to a particular pathology. It is not, and cannot be, a totalizing holistic unification of both models.

One very recent study of psychoanalysis in a political context is found in Eli Zaretsky's *Political Freud: A History* (2015). (The epigraph to the book is a quote from *Life Against Death*.) Zaretsky holds that his work "charts the rise and fall of political Freudianism" (Zaretsky 2015, p. 12). It seeks to trace its political presence "from its charismatic origins to its 'obsolescence'" (5), and to depict it as an agent of political change. He claims that Freud became popular because his theories appealed to a new hedonism in culture, one that opposed itself to the protestant ethic described by Max Weber. In the twentieth century, people "separated from traditional familial and communal morality, gave up their orientation to denial and thrift, and entered into the sexualized 'dream-worlds' of mass consumption on behalf of a new orientation to what I will call personal life. Psychoanalysis—I will argue—was the 'Calvinism' of this shift. But whereas Calvinism sanctified mundane labor in the family, Freud urged his followers to leave behind their 'families'—the archaic images of early childhood—not to preach but to develop more genuine, that is, more personal, relations" (18).

The study is burdened by a view of Freud almost as a catalyst for these changes, much in the same way that Weberviewed Calvinism. Weber's study suffered from a failure to see economic conditions as pinning a religious flag to their motives, and Zaretsky'sstudy has a similar flaw: It sees Freudianism as a vehicle for a cultural change in direction, instead of the occasional sidecar that it was. "Psychoanalysis, I have argued, served as the Calvinism of the second industrial revolution" (37), he asserts, assessing it as "a mass cultural phenomenon" (18), which seems a bit overstated. Psychoanalysis was clearly present in the counterculture movements of the postwar era, but Freud did not become a poster boy for those movements, as Reagan did for the antigovernmentalism of the late twentieth century. He also sees the American New Left as greatly influenced by Freudianism. Clearly, some leftists (Marcuse, for instance) were influenced by Freud; but all leftists? The situation was polyvocal and decentered, and one should not hazard such totalizing causal connections.

Zaretsky sees the adoption of Freudianism in American culture as focusing on "instinctual release or gratification over and against Freud's goal of instinctual renunciation or sublimation" (6)—especially in the postwar era—which led to its "obsolescence." He also notes, but sparsely, the influence of "data: behavioral probabilities subject to prediction and control" upon the reception of psychoanalysis (192), which he terms a "cybernetic" movement, but in large, he pays insufficient attention to the role of empiricism in the gradual suppression of psychoanalysis in the postwar era (discussed here in Chap. 9). He also indicts "'poststructuralist' distortions of psychoanalysis" that led to "political correctness" in this collusion (193). Consumer capitalism is also cited as contributing to its obsolescence. All of this seems oddly overstated: "political correctness converges with cybernetics through the idea that identities, such as race, gender, or sexuality, are points of relay, exchange, and intersection, which can be shifted as easily as computer codes" (193). But he does hold, and astutely so, that psychoanalysis was suppressed by a society that does not want to introspect. If Freudianism recedes, so does "the ethical commitment to self-reflection" (13). We need "the capacity or examine one's thoughts, wishes, and conflicts without judging them" (13).

Oddly, the afterword: "Freud in the Twenty-First Century" offers no political program. It laments the passing of "the high value placed on self-exploration during the long Freudian century" (195), but in doing so, it can propose no political engagement to its title *Political Freud*. Zaretzky issues a nationwide call to introspection, disengaged, however, from an effective political economy. Zaretzky's work should be seen as a description, however overstated, of the presence of Freud in some of the political movements of the twentieth century. What it lacks is a psychoanalysis of the political phenomena themselves. Such an analysis is greatly facilitated by an alliance with Marxism.

The Marxist psychoanalysis that this study employs, however, does not consist in a categorical rejection of capitalism in toto. It is, instead, a critique of the American ideology of a deregulated capitalist market. And here, the contributions of Fernand Braudel are very valuable for identifying the errant point in the American configuration of capitalism. In his study of the rise of capitalism, *Les jeux d'échange*, Braudel holds that capitalism itself was responsible for the enormously influential developments of the renaissance; it was itself the means to those developments. The shift to modernity was precipitated by the great international commercial voyages, the stock markets, and paper money. Braudel holds that "the value of the great stock markets of Amsterdam and London was that they assured the triumph, which came slowly, of paper money, of all paper monies" (Braudel 1986, p. 116). As the expedient medium of exchange value paper money performed "the role of the accelerator of capitalism" (116). And this coordinates with stages in maritime trade. When the coastal horizons were Mediterranean, it was Venice that profited most; when they became transatlantic, England and the Netherlands profited most, and, subsequently the USA.

He holds without question that mercantile surplus value was the basis of all commercial exchange: "That mercantile surplus value should be the necessary stimulus for all commercial exchange is so self-evident that it seems absurd to insist upon it" (188). It was the merchant class that profited from the price differences between two countries, where a commodity is expensive in the one and cheap in the other. This constitutes the rise of the sine qua non of capitalism, its very specter: the merchant or middleman. The itinerant artisan who went from village to village offering his services existed at the margins of the market. The market actually begins with the boutiques, continually open, that operate on credit, borrowing and lending money.

Braudel sees capitalism as born with the merchant, the intermediary who buys from the peasant and sells to the consumer, and with whom the public market becomes the private one. The intermediary breaks with the rules of the traditional marketplace: In *La dynamique du capitalisme*, he says, "It is evident that this consists in unequal exchanges, in which competition—the essential law of the economy of the public marketplace—has a minimal function, and in which the merchant…interrupts the relationship between the producer and the person for whom the product is intended." It is here that "the capitalist process clearly emerges…in long-distance commerce…a realm of liberal movement…in this vast zone of operation, he has the possibility of choice, and he chooses that which maximizes his profits" (Braudel 1985, p. 57). Braudel sees no evil in the competition among producers; it is the law of the marketplace, a natural system that facilitates quality. The problem arises with the merchant class. And here, Braudel offers perhaps the most succinct characterization of alienated labor: the interruption of "the relationship between the producer and the person for whom the product is ultimately intended" (57). But there is a translation problem concerning the concept of alienated labor that needs to be pointed out.

The term that Marx used was *entfremdete Arbeit*. *Arbeit* is work, quite straightforwardly. *Entfremden* contains the root *fremd*, which means strange or foreign, and the prefix *ent*, which corresponds to the English "out of," as well as to the Latin *ex*. So the meaning would be something like "to make strange, to extract into strangeness," as in the English "estrange."

The *Duden* dictionary defines *entfremden* as:

1. "to cause an existing close relationship to be dissolved, to make something strange/foreign"
   (*bewirken, dass eine bestehende enge Beziehung aufgelöst wird, fremd machen*).

2. "not to use something for the intended purpose" (*nicht dem eigentlichen Zweck entsprechend verwenden*). (Duden)

Among the synonyms given by *Duden* are "to use incorrectly, to misuse, to refunction to use for another purpose" (*falsch verwenden, missbrauchen, umfunktionieren, zweckentfremden*). Thus it designates labor that is misused; capitalism changes the purpose or goal of labor. Clearly, Marx discussed psychological estrangement in his theories of alienation, but here, in the phrase *entfremdete Arbeit,* there is a clear meaning of redirected labor, one that tends to get omitted in translation. There are two new idioms that have entered the vernacular recently that could also be employed: to repurpose and to retask.

For Braudel, capitalism is an interruption to the rules of competition. This seems a bit counterintuitive, but what he means is that, in the village and the public market, the direct relation between artisan and consumer creates a balance of competition and supply and demand. The long-distance market, the market of capital, changes the public market into a private one, managed by the middleman. In this market, the merchant has abandoned the rules of the traditional market and created "a realm of liberal movement" (*un domaine de libre manoeuvre*) (Braudel 1985, p. 58), where the middlemen are free to create surplus value as they wish.

He observes a centralization of European economies in cities, beginning with Venice, then moving to Antwerp and Genoa in the sixteenth century, Amsterdam in the seventeenth, and London in the eighteenth. With London, the capital of the British Isles, the economy ceases to be municipal and becomes national, and it continues as such in the USA in the twentieth century. The organization of a national capitalism in Great Britain, however, was easier to realize due to its vast maritime routes. This helped facilitate the union with Scotland in 1707 and Ireland in 1801. The process in France, however, was hindered by insufficient maritime access and the internal obstacles of overland communication. Thus, there was a vast economy of autonomous consumers that essentially remained completely removed from the economy of exchange. Even in the most developed parts of Europe, there were zones that participated minimally in general commerce and remained isolated, clinging obstinately to their premodern economies. He sees this as persisting well into the eighteenth century and beyond. He sees these zones outside of modern capitalism as constituting the rule rather than the exception, with the majority of the population existing in the immense realm of "material life" (43–44).

Braudel sees a progression from slavery to servitude to capitalism, all the while adding that the process is not exclusive; there is considerable overlapping. But he notices one important aspect of capitalism: that it depends upon a tertiary servitude (*servage tertiaire*), upon a collaboration with the other. Thus, it depends upon both the centers and the margins. Within this model, there is plenty of room for including Third-World dependencies (97). He notes that arch-capitalists prefer external to local investments, as the former are more secure and profitable, and in this model, the government is represented as wasteful or corrupt. This outsourcing also helps enterprises circumvent local laws (109). This aids in understanding the American ideology of untrustworthy government, misrepresented as a force that suppresses competition and thus the furnishing of affordable goods to Americans.

In sum, Braudel sees a progression from "material life," to the economy of the marketplace, and then to capitalism, which he sees as internationalist and monopolist. The most important transition can be succinctly phrased as a shift from the market to the marketer. In the market, the producer sells goods directly to the consumer, sets the price, and competes with other producers. This yields to a system in which prices are determined by marketers, those who do not themselves produce, but buy and resell (116). This system persists to this day: "For sure, capitalism today has changed fantastically in size and proportion…but, *mutatis mutandis,* I doubt that the nature of capitalism has changed at bottom" (115).

This dynamic will generate moralities that justify its economy. He discusses Max Weber's work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which holds that a particular American protestant spirit facilitated the development of the American capitalist economy. Braudel holds, and rightly so, that Weber proceeds counterclockwise and back-reads the present into the past. To support this, he observes that capitalism emerged in the Italian renaissance, a decidedly catholic era, and long before the protestant reformation (684). It is not a protestant ethic that produced capitalism, but capitalism that generates such ephemeral rationalizations, for instance, the familiar myth that competition and independence are in the "American protestant soul."

It would be ridiculous to suggest that one ought to return to an economy before the days of merchant capitalism. But psychoanalysis is interested in origins, and thus it necessitates an illumination of capitalism *ab origine* in order to properly place the permutations of capitalism—

surplus value, exchange value redirected labor, and a host of others—in a psychoanalytic context.

In 2013, the French economist Thomas Piketty published the widely well-received *Le capital au XXIe siècle*, in which he addresses the problems of the unequal distribution of wealth. He emphasizes that the question of the distribution of wealth is too important to be left only to academics and also holds that the novels of Jane Austen and Balzac offer depictions of the distribution of wealth in the UK and France at the turn of the nineteenth century that illustrate the problem with a "truth and evocative power that no statistical or learned analysis could equal" (Piketty 2013, p. 17). For Piketty, the distribution of wealth always has a subjective and psychological dimension that escapes empirical analysis (17). Economic determinism is not to be trusted here, as the distribution of wealth "is always a profoundly political story that can never be assessed by purely economic means. In particular, the reduction of inequality observed in the developed nations during the years 1900–1910 and 1950–1960 is above all the product of wars and public policies put into place following those shocks" (47). He says of economics, that it "never should have tried to separate itself from the other social sciences; it can only develop in their midst" (64).

He stresses the fact that there is no mechanism in capitalism itself that will distribute wealth in an egalitarian fashion. In criticizing the idea of the "invisible hand," he holds that there is no natural and spontaneous process that can alleviate inequalities in any lasting manner. Public policy intervention is a necessary regulatory mechanism. The recent American belief that deregulation will distribute wealth more equally than regulation is a myth in the service of the class in which wealth is concentrated. And in an astute observation—one that should be self-evident, but that is not—he says that "the reality is that the inequality of capital is much more domestic than international" (80). World wealth is equal to world production, but that is clearly not the case with national wealth. And this is largely due to outsourcing and tax havens.

Piketty defines capital as the ensemble of non-human activities that can be owned and exchanged on the market (82). He uses the simple relation: $r > g$, where r is the yield on capital and g is the rate of economic growth; if the yield on capital outpaces national economic growth, then wealth will concentrate in one class. The resultant inequality will generate a mass of social problems that can only be ameliorated by a tax on capital and an engineered redistribution of wealth among the less affluent classes. Since there is no mechanism in capitalism that automatically redistributes wealth, centralized public planning is the only solution, despite the erroneous claims to the contrary found in the "Reaganomics," "supply side," and "trickle down" ideologies, along with the absurd "Laffer curve" claim that tax cuts increase tax revenues.

In Braudel's view of the medieval market without the merchant, where competition does regulate itself, and value is determined by use and quality, state intervention is really unnecessary; in the age of industrial capitalism, where the exchange of capital dominates and value fluctuates radically and mysteriously, public regulatory mechanisms are imperative for a redistribution of wealth.

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CHAPTER 3

Immanent Injustice: Race and Gender

An important issue in the history of psychoanalysis concerns its engagement with racial prejudice, or better said, its lack thereof, especially in the work of Freud and Lacan, who have been criticized for bracketing race from their analyses. Jean Walton, for instance, in *Fair Sex, Savage Dreams: Race, Psychoanalysis, Sexual Difference* (2001), criticizes the feminist thinkers who, in revising Freud's theories in order to better adapt them to gender and (female) sexuality issues, continued to bracket race from their discussions.

But psychoanalysis offers tools for analyzing all manner of defense mechanisms that generate omissions, denials, contradictions, and inversions. It can even turn on itself in doing so. The fact that Freud and Lacan did not directly engage race in their writings clearly does not exclude psychoanalysis as a valuable tool in analyzing racism. Freud and psychoanalysis have permeated Western culture and can be found, for instance, in literary production in general. Badia Sahar Ahad has recently illuminated the presence of psychoanalysis in writings by black authors in *Freud Upside Down: African American Literature and Psychoanalytic Culture* (2010). Ahad opens the work with Carl Jung's letter to Freud in 1930 asserting the interconnectivity of black and white experiences, where Jung holds that all whites have a black complex and vice versa. Ahad argues that "African American writers did not simply appropriate the model and language of psychoanalysis to destabilize conventional, and often inferior, notions of blackness—they relied upon it" (Ahad 2010, p. 4). She illuminates the

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presence of psychoanalysis in texts by Nella Larsen, Jean Toomer, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Adrienne Kennedy, and Danzy Senna.

The title of her book, *Freud Upside Down*, is taken from Richard Wright's essay "Psychiatry Comes to Harlem" (1946), in which Wright describes the work of Harlem's first mental health clinic as the "turning of Freud upside down." She observes that the idea of "turning classical psychoanalytic logic on its head so that it might account for the specificity of black subjectivity functioned as the explicit and underlying imperative of black writers for whom psychoanalysis provided both a vocabulary and a model to examine the paradox of race" (4). In doing so, she opposes the supposition that in psychoanalysis, the black experience becomes simply assimilated into white normativity. She challenges "the claim that psychoanalytic practice is yet another assertion of Western hegemony over black psychic life" (157). For black authors, psychoanalysis has been "integral to the working out and working through matters of race, gender, and sexuality" (156).

Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, in *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* (2000), has recovered Lacan in this context and holds that Lacanian psychoanalysis provides the methodology necessary for understanding race systems. Seshadri-Crooks situates race in the desire to become white, which originates in Lacan's understanding of desire as a fantasy that the subject could become united with a larger whole. "Whiteness" promises wholeness and mastery (an illusion, however) and is lodged unconsciously in the logic of race.

Desiring Whiteness is largely a critique of race-centered epistemology. Seshadri-Crooks advocates "calling into question the gestalt of racial looking" (Seshadri-Crooks 2000, p. 10). She holds that the purpose of race is to "constitute the logic of domination" (7), and that modern liberalism seeks to separate race from racism and to celebrate difference. This is a mistaken avenue, in her view, because it situates race as a category that cannot be excised. She recommends instead that "modern civil society… must prohibit what it terms racism in order to prevent the annihilation not so much of the 'inferior' races but of the system of race itself" (9). She offers the astute observation that "the structure of racial difference is founded on a master signifier—Whiteness…which founds the logic of racial difference, promises wholeness" (20–21). This is clearly, à la Lacan, unattainable, a chimera of wholeness.

She uses Appiah's notion that to speak of race is to enter into a power differential and thus to reinforce domination. She astutely restates the psychoanalytic view that there is no negation in the unconscious. To invoke race and to deny racism does not, in effect, negate racism. In affirming this, she invokes Colette Guillaumin's (1995) observation that "negations are not recognized as such by our unconscious mental processes. From this point of view, a fact affirmed and a fact denied exist to exactly the same degree, and remain equally present in our affective and intellectual associative networks" (105). One knows this well since the appearance of Freud's work on dreams in 1900. For Seshadri-Crooks, it is this "unconscious resiliency of race that invites psychoanalytic exploration" (14). Guillaumin writes that "just talking about race means it will always be there in residue" (Guillaumin 1995, p. 105).

And in speaking of the unconscious, Seshadri-Crooksinvokes the common English translation "the unconscious is structured like a language" for Lacan's well-known statement *l'inconscient est structuré comme un langage*. There are problems with this translation, and they anglicize the meaning. As such, the translation invites a comparison or analogy. French distinguishes *langue* from *langage*, a specific language, such as Chinese, from the faculty of language. Another problem concerns the conjunction *comme*, which can be translated as either like or as, and which can indicate a comparison (like), but also an instantiation (as). Take the phrase "The dinosaurs first appeared as a branch of reptiles in the Triassic era." This does not mean that dinosaurs are to be compared with those reptiles. It was their first instantiation. Better translations would be: The structure of the unconscious is linguistic, or the unconscious is linguistically structured. It is also important to emphasize that Freud also said that consciousness itself is constituted in and through language, as well; we are fully conscious of something only when we speak of it.

She observes that racism happens "when the excluded other is within the self." This occurs "in the moment when some anxious boundary of inclusion and exclusion (perhaps rationalizable as nation, ethnicity, class, caste, etc.) breaks down or becomes partially vexed" (Seshadri-Crooks 2000, p. 18). This corresponds well to the psychoanalytic view of ego formation. In *Das Ich und das Es* (normally translated as *The Ego and the Id*, but literally "the I and the it"), Freud holds that the construction of identity is a continual process of incorporation and expulsion across a porous border between self and not-self. The fabrication of the boundary in the first place is created by the invasion of the other into the self. This relates well to Stallybrass and White's *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986), which studies the construction of bourgeois identity as a result of an anxiety of influence from the lower working class, which is and was, in effect, the origin of the middle class. Bourgeois identity thus continually separates itself from that which it is and was.

Her view of identity politics corresponds in general to the focus of the current study; she holds that "identity politics works," but also argues that "it also ultimately serves to reinforce the very system that is the source of the symptoms that such politics confines itself to addressing" (158). But her program for change is quite problematic; she argues for a "grassroots" approach to amelioration, instead of governmental engagement, for "the project of dismantling the regime of race cannot be given over to the state" (158). She believes that "where race is concerned, it is imperative that we turn what is now 'political', an issue of group interests, into the 'cultural,' an issue of social practice" (158). This would be social practice without socialization? She advocates "a new adversarial aesthetics that will throw racial signification into disarray" (158), an "adversarial aesthetics that will destabilize racial looking so that racial identity will always be uncertain and unstable" (159). She discusses the notion of the gaze and the assumption that the subject is "always already given to be seen" (67) as the point of origin for the attribution of race.

It seems that the solution here—if it can be called a solution at all—remains indeed in the aesthetic realm. (Lacan's ideas are widely used in textual interpretation and literary theory.) The author applies her study to texts from literature and cinema, analyzing the film *Suture* (1993), along with short stories by Conrad and Morrison. Here, she demonstrates interpretive strategies for avoiding "the reproduction of the system of race" (159) and for pursuing "the reinvention of culture as organized by differences based on other kinds of 'reasonings' than race" (159). She insists that "an anti-race praxis must aim at a fundamental transformation of social and political logic" (160), but how one engages this praxis from the aesthetic realm remains a bit puzzling. She seems to believe that we are supposed to start perceiving differently without government intervention. But Lacanian intervention is fine.

Aesthetics aside, she is correct in saying that the problem is fundamentally perceptual. We need to ask why we perceive race in the first place, for race is not something that we see—it is something that we attribute. She is not advocating a race blindness, because that would still be based on the category of race as a given. She holds that psychoanalysis is the best way to achieve this, and here, she is right. The resistances to *not* seeing race, the insistence that it is a natural category—these need to be explored through psychoanalysis.

This can help us understand the insistences generated by defense mechanisms, for instance: "but he *is* black," "but you *are* Hispanic," and so on. When I am in the Washington Heights district of upper Manhattan, a multiethnic area, I get the impression that many there do not perceive race as a salient category a priori. Cashiers seem to react to other aspects of physical appearance. This is perhaps a result of decades of coexistence.

The common question: "What is the first thing you notice about a person?" is often posed to make one aware of the default perception of sex and race. To better illuminate the issue, one can invoke the perception of eye color, which tends not to be the first thing we notice about someone else. Take, for instance, the following reactionary statements:

- women/blacks want too much power nowadays
- women/blacks are taking jobs away from qualified people.

Prejudicial statements like this are quite recognizable. But what would happen if one were to substitute green-eyed people for women and blacks and seriously propose that green-eyed people want too much power nowadays? The statement would be perceived as farcical. We do not normally categorize people according to eye color. It does not correlate with important variables, such as wealth, status, success, etc. Eye color is a secondary characteristic that has not yet advanced to a primary one, as have race and sex. It has no function on the axis of power, whereas race and sex do. They are perceived on that axis as either indicating in-group power or a threat to that power. And the power is fundamentally economic. Minorities are othered because they are perceived as a threat to hegemonic white *economic* power, and women are othered because they are perceived as a threat to male *sexual and economic* power.

At this writing, there are reactionary voices advocating white separatism in the USA, in ignorance of the fact that the conceptualization of whiteness has changed over the last 100 years. In the racist paradigm of a century ago, simply being white was insufficient. Racist voices insisted that the US is fundamentally an Anglo-Saxon country, and this excluded many European cultures (Irish, Italian, Polish, etc.). This is no longer the case. White nationalist groups now limit membership to those of European descent, and those who are pro-Israel even accept Jews as members. Thus those once othered are no longer so. In addition, many surnames once stigmatized as non-American have become transparent and are no longer seen as exotic, or even "ethnic." Take for instance two actors: Dean

Martin, an actor of the mid-twentieth century, and Leonardo DiCaprio, a current actor. Martin had an English name (it had been changed), but he was continually identified as Italian. DiCaprio, with clearly Italian names, is not associated with Italy at all. Even the term Anglo-Saxon is receding from currency, and the term WASP even more so. Recently, in a freshman seminar, I had no students who recognized the term.

Conceptions of white nationality have changed, and Europeans once othered are now included. In the past, they were seen as threatening in-group power. They were once racialized for economic reasons, but the current racialization places them in the center, and unmarked, as is DiCaprio. Assimilation has reconfigured whiteness, and one *sees* race and ethnicity differently now in European surnames. The actors John Krasinski and Gwyneth Paltrow, for instance, do not need to pass. They are always already dead center (an apt Lacanian phrase).

One needs to keep in mind the economic causes of ethnic prejudice. The competition for work and wealth at the turn of the twentieth century, the massive influx of immigrants, created a xenophobic reaction that now seems incomprehensible. This is due to the fact that those once-othered groups gradually demonstrated no threat to white middle-class power. Assimilation occurred, income became redistributed, and one *saw ethnicity* differently. Who remains in the sights of racialization now? Clearly blacks and Hispanics, and recently Arabs. These groups have become fetishized and exist as the locus of displaced and transformed economic anxieties *that call for psychoanalysis.*

In the past, one targeted an attribute of the economic other—their ethnicity. Or, more accurately, one created ethnicity as the metonymic target. It was a very effective displacement and condensation that targeted race and class together. The real issue was class, otherwise the racialized Europeans could not have eventually assimilated; American capitalism wants a large disenfranchised lower class, and that stratification has remained intact. At the time when one did not separate race from class, racist rhetoric was normalized; presidents were racist, *The New York Times* was racist, etc. But now, one has separated race from class and fetishized it in an act of avoidance of economic necessity, of the redistribution of income, of the necessity of governmental programs to alleviate poverty. Race has become a wonderful decoy. The real culprit is class. And class remains largely unmarked, very rarely a part of audible public discourse.

There is a valuable psychoanalytic perspective absent from Seshadri-Crooks' study, one that can help account for the counterproductivity of the notion of race. It is clear that she argues that focusing on race unintentionally reinforces racialization and thus the marginalization of the other. But in psychoanalysis, nothing is never just one thing. The focus on race can also be seen in a cynical light; one knows subconsciously that the focus on race will maintain marginalization; one can thus argue for unconscious intent.

One may place Seshadri-Crooks' aesthetic approach along with those of university literature professors (incorrectly called English professors in the US) who use Lacan (and psychoanalysis) for textual interpretation. The bridge to political action is oftentimes absent. And after all the theoretical gymnastics are done, many of them wind up voting Democrat anyway. And here, another cynical interpretation may be offered, one within the frame of protectionism. Could these theoretical exercises be avoidance strategies for working through inegalitarian class interests?

In *Trauma and Race: A Lacanian Study of African American Racial Identity* (2016), Sheldon George also explores whiteness as that which racializes a priori. He advocates an eradication of the idea of race *in toto*. "This study ultimately refutes the concept of race, designating it as a primary source of subjective alienation" (George 2016, p. 137), he asserts, and holds that "the master signifier of whiteness seeks to recover this being for the white subject but more often denies it to blacks" (136). George makes use of the Lacanian notion of extimacy to analyze how the other is part of the self, an interdependence that must be recognized. He calls for a separation from the symbolic order, the law of the father, within which one accepts the symbolizing mechanism of patriarchy. He says, "This separation must be founded, first of all, on a recognition of the interdependence of the subjectivities of the self and the racial other. The fact of the extimacy of this racial other, who is internal to each American's subjective sense of self, is exemplified in the racial fantasies that structure both subjective and national identity for Americans" (137).

George demonstrates how the popular music that originated on the plantations informed American identity. He sees "jazz and the blues as among the greatest cultural achievements of African Americans," in which he finds "a message about suffering. The blues, in particular, is compellingly read as involving an artistry whereby pain and suffering, the trauma of the past itself, come to found the experience of transcendence and overcoming that is the very aesthetics of the musical form" (69–70). He does, however, qualify this in observing that a focus on this suffering contributes to the continual racializing (and thus essentializing) of blacks. But the fact remains that jazz and blues informed rock and roll, which is a fundamental part of collective American identity. “The implication here is the need to conceive of individuals in terms of broader cultural identities that transcend racial differences and acknowledge interconnectivity across groups” (137), George observes.

George makes use of Lacan’s analysis of James Joyce’s experimentation with language. Lacan sees it as a refusal to accept the symbolic order (of language), the law of the father. Thus one finds in Joyce a revolt of language (and identity). Lacan sees this as originating in Joyce’s confrontation with the belief that his father was radically lacking. Joyce thus assumes a radical “equivocation” of language. Lacan’s use of the term *équivocation* is important; it indicates an evasiveness, but etymologically, it indicates “equal voices,” thus a bringing to the surface of a multiplicity of concurrent discourses, which is clearly what Joyce is doing in *Finnegan’s Wake* (1939).

It is interesting to note, although George does not address this directly, how well some current discourses of black identity fit into this model. The lyrics of rap music serve as a good example, but more so the dynamics of naming, where one finds many creative experimentations, for instance, nominal prefixes such as La/Le (e.g., LaTanisha), Da/De (e.g., DaShawn), or Ja/Je(JaMarcus), and suffixes such as -ique/iqua, -isha, and -aun/-awn. Since George sees whiteness as the unmarked master signifier, and since slave owners had the right of naming and imposed the master’s name upon on the slave, these dynamic neologisms play with the boundaries of meaning and fit quite well into his model. It should be emphasized that a psychoanalytic view is recommended here; one cannot suggest that American blacks are all Lacanians, nor that this was a conscious decision on the part of Joyce or American blacks to implement a rebellion against the patriarchal symbolic order. This phenomenon can be placed in a larger psychoanalytic framework by seeing it as a manifestation of the hostility toward patriarchy intrinsic to human culture.

Whites have appropriated the right to name, but remained, in the past, themselves unnamed and unmarked. When whiteness was unmarked, marked members were encouraged to be proud of their “ethnicity” and “difference.” This created a lot of hyphenations that are used less and less, such as “Irish-American,” “Italian-American,” etc. African American, unhyphenated, remains, as does Asian American. But where is the equivalent for the in-power group? The term “European American” has no currency; if it were to be used, it would most likely indicate a political relationship between the USA and the European Community.

A word about color terms for race can be included here. In the past, the terms white, red, black, and yellow were used. One spoke of "the redman" and the "yellow race" (unthinkable in the current era). Red and yellow have disappeared as ethic terms; black does remain, but formal discourse prefers the more respectful term African American, and one can even posit that black is receding from polite (white) discourse. What remains? Just white.

George advocates transcending the restrictions of race as an identifying and essentializing category, but oddly seems to limit it to the black community: "because of the cynicism already central to their relation to the Symbolic, African Americans are uniquely positioned to embrace this very daunting task of transcending both race and the fundamental fantasy it supports" (141). Since race is, however, a construction of whiteness, the transcendence cannot take place without whites doing the same.

In the Lacanian studies discussed here, one sees an odd disengagement from the realm of political praxis and a fixation within the realm of individual volition. Is this yet another permutation of neoliberalism? Is cognizance itself configured or codetermined by the neoliberal political economy, as Marx held of the production of all ideas?

Discussions of race in the context of psychoanalysis and Marxism are interspersed in the body of this study, which will gradually suggest that race needs to be defetishized, and both from the discourses of vocal prejudice as well as democratic diversity.

3.1 Reproduction Rights: A New Manifesto

While formal discussions of race and racism are fairly recent in psychoanalytic study, those of sex and gender are not. There is a long history of feminist responses to Freud, and the present limited study clearly cannot do justice to all of them. Still, one can summarize from a perspective that aids the present investigation. It is best to begin in the postwar period.

Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* (1949) is noteworthy for its rejection of biological determinism in the configuration of sex and gender, exposing the holes and inductive leaps in the transition from body to psyche as an explanatory device for notions of masculinity and femininity. In doing so, de Beauvoir challenges psychoanalysis by reading the Oedipus complex too restrictively as boy to mother and girl to father, when in fact Freud says that, in the oedipal moment, all manner of cross-identifications is possible. She misses the notion in Freud that, in patriarchy, all desire the phallus, all subjects of patriarchy envy and resent the concentration of power in the patriarchy.

In Freud's work on malaise in human culture, he says,

> The human, too, is an animal of unambiguously bisexual disposition…sexuality is a biological fact that is hard to conceptualize psychologically, even though it is of great importance for psychic life. We are inclined to say that everyone displays masculine as well as feminine drives, needs, and characteristics; anatomy can, of course, indicate masculine and feminine traits, but not psychology. In psychology, the sexual opposition fades to one of activity and passivity, whereby we let activity be associated with masculinity and passivity with femininity without thinking much about it, a distinction that is never found without exception in the animal kingdom. The study of bisexuality remains largely in the dark, and cannot be related to the theory of instincts…if we accept that individuals seek to satisfy masculine as well as feminine desires in their sex life, then we are prepared for the possibility that these demands (*Ansprüche*) cannot be satisfied by the same object. (Freud 1930, p. 456)

And in *Das Ich und das Es* (translated as *The Ego and the Id*), after having explained the binary Oedipus complex of boy to mother and girl to father, Freud then problematizes the schema:

> The simple Oedipus complex is not at all the more common one, but instead a simplification…closer analysis usually reveals the *more complete* Oedipus complex, which is twofold, both positive and negative, and which depends upon the child's inherent bisexuality, i.e., the boy has not only an ambivalent orientation toward the father and an affectionate object choice for the mother, but he also behaves at the same time like a girl and shows the same affectionate orientation toward the father and the equivalent jealous and hostile orientation toward the mother…It is also possible that the ambivalence shown in the family home could be thoroughly attributed to bisexuality and could not, as I explained it earlier, have developed from a rivalrous process of identity formation. (Freud 1923, pp. 261–262)

Since the *more complete* Oedipus complex offers multiple cross-identifications, one is left with but one viable explanation of infantile and adolescent hostility in its generality. It is the hostility toward (parental) authority, the same hostility found in human culture, in *malaise in human culture*, an ambivalent combination of parricidal and parento-philic urges, transferred from the family to culture in general. Patriarchal culture is an operation performed upon the latent ambivalence in the family; it constitutes the appearance a posteriori of male domination in its damaging forms. This does not seem to be indigenous to human culture a priori, as Lacan also holds. Cognizance of the more complete Oedipus complex is suppressed in many responses to Freud. Such incomplete readings can generate skewed vociferous reactions, such as that of de Beauvoir.

The bottom line is that all complicated texts are overdetermined, and one can continually extract supplemental meanings from them. That is the nature of the excellent literary text; it invites multiple rereadings. In fact, psychoanalysis itself is a mode of interpretation that operates within a schema of overdetermination and secondary revision without closure.

A major development in psychoanalytic feminism is found in the work of Juliet Mitchell, whose *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) may represent a turning point in the feminist attitude toward Freud, especially in the popular sphere, where simplistic and incomplete understandings of, for instance, penis envy, led some feminists to view Freud as a grand misogynist. While such misunderstandings still persist in the popular sphere, feminist theory has largely progressed to a more nuanced reception of Freud, and, in Mitchell's work, a quite positive one. For Mitchell, Freud is the analyst and critic of patriarchal domination, and his anatomy of patriarchy is necessary reading for the progress of women's rights. She observes: "That Freud's account of women comes out pessimistic is not so much an index of his reactionary spirit as of the condition of women" (Mitchell 1974, p. 362).

Her work is also an excellent synthesis of Marxism, feminism, and psychoanalysis. She makes use of Engels' work on the origin of the family and private property, along with anthropological research, and holds that "sexually non-repressive matriarchies gave way to private property patriarchies" (364). She posits that "woman was the first slave—in civilization—and women the first oppressed group. The end of matrilineage was world historical defeat of woman…monogamous marriage, inheritance, and the first class oppression are—for Engels—also coincident with civilization. Patriarchy and written history are twins" (365).

Following Levi-Strauss and Lacan, she holds that "the universal and primordial law is that which regulates marriage relationships and the prohibition on incest," and "it is always men who exchange women. Women thus become the equivalent of a sign which is being communicated" (370–371). And in a grand attempt to define *homo*, she adds: "The legally controlled exchange of women is the primary factor that distinguishes mankind from all other primates, from a cultural standpoint" (372). This instantiates the incest taboo, of which she astutely says, "The subjective depth of the taboo indicates social necessity, not biological revulsion; but this is a social necessity so basic…that the prohibition is experienced as immutably natural—except, that is, in the testimony of the Oedipal child who is only just learning the law" (373). And, here, she offers an excellent bridge to class oppression: "When, within the *majority* of the population, it is no longer necessary for women to be exchange objects, then the small dominant class must insist on their remaining so—hence we have bourgeois hypocrisies about the value of the family for the working class" (380). This is clearly visible in the USA, where the lack of social programs for families belies the ideology of family values. This occurs within the American shift to the right, where social programs are replaced by rhetoric, and a necessity becomes optional via private volition. Paid parental leave programs that could distribute income more equitably (and thus threaten the hierarchic structure of American capitalism) and effect more mobile gender roles are avoided; what remains intact are subliminal messages that sexualize and maternalize women. Mitchell sees Freud's contribution as an examination of "the 'eternal' structures of patriarchy in what is for us their most essential particularity: the bourgeois, patriarchal family" (380).

Mitchell also makes an excellent observation on the nature of femininity. Within patriarchal domination, "*both* sexes repudiate the implications of femininity. Femininity is, therefore, in part a repressed condition that can only be secondarily acquired in a distorted form. It is because it is repressed that femininity is so hard to comprehend both within and without psychoanalytic investigation—it returns in symptoms, such as hysteria. In the body of the hysteric, male and female, lies the feminine protest against the law of the father" (404).

This view fits in well to the present study. American capitalism privileges masculinist values of competition, independence, rejection of maternal dependence, etc., and normalizes them, so that collectivist values become repressed, relegated to the subaltern, and seen as abnormalities within the dominant power structure. The resuscitation of values that have been repressed and tagged as feminine would not mean a resuscitation of feminine values. It means a shaking up of the concretized behaviors of capitalism, a liberation from the prison house of *an identity* and a free circulation, so that behaviors flow freely among the array of possible personalities and offer to individuals a choice without prejudice.

Nancy Chodorow, in *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), has well described the separate development of boys and girls in Western cultures. For Chodorow, girls maintain their identification with the mother and do not need to undergo the individualist separation that boys do; they do not need to cut the umbilical cord so radically. Due to the symbiotic relation with the mother, girls' boundaries between self and non-self are more porous than those of boys. The citadel around the self that Lacan discusses in *Le stade du miroir* (1949) does not need to be erected.

Thus women develop a more codependent relationship (in a positive sense) to other women, whereas men develop a less dependent relationship toward both sexes. Chodorow holds that these cultural structures reproduce themselves and prepare girls and women for effective motherhood, thus *the reproduction of mothering* in Western cultures, at least. One can easily validate what Chodorow is describing. I regularly bring my computer to a café in the afternoon (where I am writing from now) and work there. I continually see women in groups of two or three discussing relationships. I very rarely see men in the same situation. It is important to emphasize that these are cultural developments and not fixed biological determinants. Boys could just as easily develop in a similar fashion, if the phrase "mama's boy" had no currency in a society where gender roles existed in liberal exchange.

Carol Gilligan, in the work *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982), describes something similar, but in the realm of justice and morality. Women's collaborative orientation facilitates a caring and empathic personality, whereas male individualist training prefers a moral system of individual responsibility, individual guilt, and punishment. In short, this enacts the punitive law of the father, a law that is, however, never clearly spelled out. As Freud pointed out, one must enact punishment even where no guilt is present; he derives the arbitrary punishment of the Hebrew God from this psychological issue. For Gilligan, women are altruistic, men are not.

These are clearly massive generalizations, but they are not without validity. The orientations that Chodorow and Gilligan see do separate out along the lines of gender, but not without multiple exceptions, which need not be enumerated here. It is important to see gendered behavior as never ontologically fixed and static, but instead as determined by power and economy. A valuable bridge can be made here to welfare state capitalism as opposed to American capitalism, especially the version advocated by the current president. The death penalty is absent from the European welfare state, whereas the American individualism that Gilligan describes insists upon vengeance. The correlation between economy and morality may be more than coincidental here. (These issues are treated in the discussion of Ronald Reaganin Chap. 8.)

The work of Ann Ferguson, in *Blood at the Root: Motherhood, Sexuality and Male Domination* (1989), is relevant here, as she points out that women's socialization as dependent caregivers engenders an affective interconnectedness that renders them less inclined to challenge the system. This may well help account for the resistance to feminism found in many women. A good example is the opposition to the American Equal Rights Amendment, as is the astounding fact that over 50% of American women voted for the current president.

Unfortunately, many progressions of feminist theory have insisted upon an essentialization of numerous positive values as native to woman. This would mean that they become, in effect, racialized within a model that represents men and women as if different races of *homo* (as Seshadri-Crooks holds of racialization). The present study refrains from overapplying the theory of phallocentrism. The psychoanalytic basis here is the suppression of instincts in general and the postponement of gratification. Human culture developed gradually out of that suppression. Whether or not it was the law of the father and the threat of castration that determined all instinctual resignation is beside the point and would necessitate a most distracting departure into theoretical speculation that would compromise the argument of this study. There is a plenitude of instincts other than the sexual ones.

A good deal of French feminism sees a phallocentric ideology in Freud and Lacan, one that models sex and gender on the male and thus avoids engaging "the feminine," "the female," etc. Luce Irigaray, for instance, sees an ideology of sexual *indifference* in Freud. There is a double meaning here in French, as well as in the English homonym. Freud and Lacan are indifferent to the feminine, and they also see no difference between male and female sexuality. Irigaray cleverly terms this a *hommo-sexualité*, doubling the letter n to pun on the French *homme* "man" and, of course, the Latin *homo*. She explains this in the essay "Così fan tutti" from the book *Ce sexe qui n'est pas un* (1977). She is punning again on Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte*, which means "all women do this," but changes it to "tutti," which is the default masculine plural in Italian, thus alluding to default male authority. What it communicates is: "all (men, whose gender conceals the feminine) do this." *Ce sexe qui n'est pas un*, the sense of which is "the sex that is not a sex," is in English translation as *The Sex Which Is Not One*, a title that provides an ambiguity—"not one" can also indicate not whole. This ambiguity is not present in the French title. The term *indifférence sexuelle* is first found in her *Speculum. De l'autre femme* (1974).

Shortly after the Maastricht Treaty and the formation of the European Community, Irigaray published *La democrazia comincia a due* (1994), in which she proposes that the EU, and indeed all Western culture, establish a new civil right based on gender that allows women a civil identity separate from and equal to that of men.

In Irigaray's view, the patriarchal order is based on a form of matricide, the suppression of woman from the inheritance and transmission of power. This corresponds well to Engels' theories and Juliet Mitchell's assertion that "the end of matrilineage was world historical defeat of woman": The first human cultures were matriarchal, which were overtaken by "private property patriarchies." For Lacan, language is determined by the phallocratic/patriarchal order, thus, the feminine is unrepresentable in language, as Irigaray sees it. Now although Lacan insisted on a close reading of Freud, one thing that we know well from psychoanalysis is that the repressed returns in distorted form. And we know from poststructuralist operations on language that agonistic discourse (a discourse that attempts to exclude its adversary) always contains what it denies. Thus there must be traces of the feminine in the act of the suppression of the feminine in patriarchal culture. As Mitchell said, "It is because it is repressed that femininity is so hard to comprehend both within and without psychoanalytic investigation—it returns in symptoms, such as hysteria. In the body of the hysteric, male and female, lies the feminine protest against the law of the father."

One arrives at a crossroads here. Did Freud and Lacan create a cultural cosmology that excludes the feminine from language a priori, or did they describe a system that suppresses the feminine, which would then return in symptoms, as Mitchell holds? This study opts for the latter. To continue a theoretical discussion on both possibilities would greatly distract from the purpose of the present study. One must remain within the field of how to use psychoanalysis and Marxism to analyze the world anomaly of American capitalism. A lot of psychoanalytic feminism stays in the theoretical, and even aesthetic. Its contribution to the understanding of patriarchy is invaluable, but the transition to concrete practice, to an effective political-economic program, remains elusive. And finally, analyzing constructions of masculine and feminine identity is feasible and necessary. Analyzing essences of masculinity and femininity is foolish, because there are no such essences.

A quite idealist solution to all of this has been proposed by Donna Haraway in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

(1991). Haraway argues for a fluid notion of gender and sexual identity. Operating within the notion of a "posthuman" culture, she explores the porous borders between conventional binaries (e.g., male/female; machine/organism; human/animal; nature/nurture, public/private, etc.) and presents "an argument for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their construction" (Haraway 1991, p. 150). She holds that "this is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories" (181).

Before we all become posthuman, however, one might recommend a return to practical concerns.

While much of psychoanalytic feminism remains theoretical, Marxist feminism generally engages in political change, siding with the proletariat against capitalism. This involves a recognition of "women's work" as a vital mode of production, which is marginalized in classic Marxist theory. Child bearing and rearing has been subject to separate discrimination and should be analyzed differently than the general underevaluation of labor. Is not child bearing a form of production? But this reproduction is really unpaid labor. Although Marx and Engels held that woman was the first slave, and Marx offered his clever visual pun in saying, in the *Ideology*, that the original division of labor was nothing but the division of labor in the sexual act, Marxist feminism sees a sexual division of labor that went unaccounted in traditional Marxist analysis. A reanalysis began in first-wave feminism with, e.g., the work and activism of Charlotte Gilman and Emma Goldman.

The sexual division of labor clearly accounts for the salary disparity between men and women, but it is most forcefully seen in the shameful rise in the number and poverty of single-parent households headed by females. And one sees here an intersection of psychoanalysis and Marxism; the sexual and economic oppression and subjectification of women go hand in hand.

In patriarchy, woman is sexualized, objectified, and invested with disempowered identity characteristics, and the suppression and marginalization of the feminine manifests itself both in sex and in work, as well. A discussion of some recent Marxist feminist studies of "women's work" can illuminate valuable points of correspondence between psychoanalysis and Marxism.

The work of Silvia Federici is important in this regard. Her major works are *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*

(2004) and *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (2012). Her recent article "The Reproduction of Labour-Power in the Global Economy, Marxist Theory and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution" (2010) offers a succinct summary of her arguments.

Federici observes in Marxism an avoidance of analyzing "woman's work" in the production of labor. A principal advocate of the Wages for Housework Movement, Federici supports a remunerative recognition of household labor. She argues that Marxism has been blind to the role of child bearing and rearing in the machine of capitalist production. Thus Marxism does not see the full exploitation of labor, nor the division of labor in sexual difference. Federici attributes this to Marxism's exclusive focus on commodity production. She suggests that "Marx ignored women's reproductive labor because he remained wedded to a technologistic concept of revolution, where freedom comes through the machine," which is due to his "idealization of science and technology as liberating forces" (Federici 2012).

She astutely offers a materialist explanation of the antiabortion movement and holds that "policies forbidding abortion could be decoded as devices for the regulation of the labor-supply." Thus the ulterior motive would be to restrict and define women as mothers and housewives, but not to honor that work materially. She also sees a reflexive resistance to that restriction: "the collapse of the birth rate and increase in the number of divorces could be read as instances of resistance to the capitalist discipline of work." "The personal became political," she holds, "and capital and the state were found to have subsumed our lives and reproduction down to the bedroom." She connects to this the domestication of healthcare: "patients are dismissed almost immediately after surgery and the home must absorb a variety of post-operative and other therapeutic medical tasks," which would, in an inegalitarian economy, be shifted to women. And one can add another reflexive reaction to this model: The suppression of health care in the USA can be seen as the patriarchal suppression of the maternal and the sexual, which must remain domestic and domesticated.

In her perspective, phenomena that would normally be seen as random and unmotivated assume a form of involuntary protest, an ontological reaction against inequality: "the women's strike against procreation continues, resulting in a zero growth demographic regime that is raising much concern among policy makers and promoted immigration. There has also been a decline in the number of marriages and married couples in the US from 56% of all households in 1990 to 51% in 2006."

While "production has been restructured through a technological leap in key areas of the world economy," Federici sees no such leap in the sphere of housework. Technology does not aid in "significantly reducing the labor socially necessary labor for the reproduction of the workforce." This results in a kind of outsourcing of domestic activities: "large quotas of housework have been taken out of the home and reorganized on a commercial basis." And here, she invokes the phenomenon of take-out food, prepared food, etc. She adds to this that, in the liberalization of the world economy, where "much of the reproduction of the metropolitan work-forces is now performed by immigrant women a new international division of labor has been constructed on the pauperization of the populations of the Global South whereby women from Eastern Europe or Africa, Latin America, Asia perform a large quota of the metropolitan work-force, especially providing for the care of children and the elderly and for the sexual reproduction of male workers."

Federici invokes the important work done by David Staples in the ironically titled *No Place Like Home* (2007): "As David Staples writes… homework has demonstrated to be a long-term capitalist strategy…by organizing work on a home basis, employers can make it invisible, can undermine workers' effort to unionize, and drive down wages to a minimum." These are wonderfully reflexive protectionist strategies of American capitalism. Unless reproductive work is recognized by the political economy, it will remain ghettoized, and will function as a federal reserve bank for depositing and saving patriarchal strategies.

The work of Bell Hooks offers an interesting synthesis of these issues. In *Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000), Hooks illuminates the framing of gender issues within the patriarchal structure of American capitalism, observing that "most folks learn about feminism from patriarchal mass media" (Hooks 2000, p. 1), and that "white men were more willing to consider women's rights when the granting of those rights could serve the interests of maintaining white supremacy" (4).

She critiques "lifestyle feminists" who "could count on there being a lower class of exploited subordinated women to do the dirty work they were refusing to do," and in doing so, they "ally themselves with the existing patriarchy and its concomitant sexism" (5). The discourse of gender was assimilated into the political structure and posed no threat to it: "the politics was being slowly removed from feminism. And the assumption prevailed that no matter what a woman's politics, be she conservative or liberal, she too could fit feminism into her existing lifestyle" (5–6).

(Chapter 8 below shows, however, that the removal of politics from feminism began in the 1950s.) Class, but never class struggle, was a prerequisite for this depoliticization: "as feminist movement progressed and privileged groups of well-educated white women began to achieve equal access to class power with their male counterparts, feminist class struggle was no longer deemed important" (37).

Hooks foregrounds the racial dynamic here in speaking of her own childhood experience, where women had to work. In this environment, "working women, who put in long hours for low wages while still doing all the work in the domestic household would have seen the right to stay home as 'freedom'" (38). The feminism that Hooks critiques emerged from the milieu of educated women whose feminism was learned in college dissemination. Thus "all women were encouraged to see the economic gains of affluent females as a positive sign for all women. In actuality, these gains rarely changed the lot of poor and working-class women" (41). What emerged was a "white power reformist feminism" that "enabled the mainstream white supremacist patriarchy to bolster its power while simultaneously undermining the radical politics of feminism" (41).

The system that Hooks describes created the illusion that the entry of middle-class white women into the work force would "liberate women from male domination" (49). Correspondingly, she holds that "the only genuine hope of feminist liberation lies with a vision of social change which challenges class elitism" (43). And like Federici, she believes that "women and men who want to stay home and raise children should have wages subsidized by the state" (52).

Hooks broaches the issue of sexuality within sexism, observing how phallocentrism structures sexuality: "Many women and men still consider male sexual performance to be determined solely by whether or not the penis is hard and erections are maintained. This notion of male performance is tied to sexist thinking" (90). This gives pause for reflection: Has the opening up of representations of sexuality in media—the depictions of women as sexually active—brought economic equality? Hooks sees females as "divided by sexist thinking into the roles of madonnas or whores," with the result that they "had no basis on which to construct a healthy sexual self" (85).

In this context, one can view sexual aggression as a device for maintaining females in a subaltern position, sexualizing and objectifying them in a revanchist refusal of gender equality. In current culture, women are much more frequently sexualized than men. One certainly does see images of attractive men in the media, but these are greatly outweighed by the immense quantity of images of attractive women in sexually suggestive poses. Hooks observes that "the sexist iconography of madonna or whore continues to claim the erotic imagination of males and females, that patriarchal pornography now permeates every aspect of mass media" (90).

This discussion points to a confluence of race and gender within the matrix of psychoanalysis and Marxism. There is something ontological at work here, in the nature of things. For Marx, democracy is a force in human culture. Perhaps the only vestige of idealism in his works, it is a force that moves us toward democracy, and it moves from the subaltern upward, its telos being the *Diktatur des Proletariats*. One sees this model in Federici's view of the declining birth rate and the increase in divorce as resistances to the gender inequalities in capitalism. This is an intrinsic rebellion, indeliberate and irrepressible. But revolution from below incites resistance from above, a resistance that camouflages itself in guises of democracy, and enters a stealth mission under the radar of consciousness. That resistance is the focal point of this application of psychoanalysis and Marxism. Analyses of issues of race and gender are interspersed in the chapters that follow, and they are illuminated from the perspective of class, which this study holds to be the major theater of operation for issues of inequality. Race and gender are seen as permutations of class struggle.

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CHAPTER 4

Misrepresentations: Deleuze and Guattari

Some of the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are applicable here, especially their studies on capitalism and schizophrenia and their concept of the anti-Oedipus. Their attempt to adapt psychoanalysis to the discourse of materialism is of special importance. A point of departure can be taken from their understanding of desire, which they configure not within capital, but within the modes of production: "Desire is in the order of *production*. All production is at once desiring and social" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/1973, p. 352). And here, the authors attempt to place desire firmly within the realm of tangible activity, and not in the order of simulacra. In this context, they reproach psychoanalysis "for having effaced this order of production, and for having restored it to the representational" (352). They hold that psychoanalysis moved desire from the material to the representational, but in stating this, the authors' language slips away from them; in describing this move, they use the term *reversé*, which means to put something back where it was (to restore it), as in putting wine back in the bottle. This must be an inadvertent slip, as it would be problematic for them to insist on the material nature of desire while saying that it was initially found in the process of representation. One translation gets around this problem by rendering *reversé* as "shunted," an obscure word choice that does not communicate very well. Nonetheless, their argument rests upon the conviction that desire is a form of material engagement.

The theater of conflict for their concept of the anti-Oedipus is the family, and one may characterize the ideology of the anti-Oedipus as

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antifamilial. It is an opposition to configuring the family as the cradle of the psyche, insofar as the authors understand Freud and psychoanalysis to be holding this view. If the family is not the birthplace of the psyche, then the Oedipus complex and the necessary incest taboo are not primary. For them, “the desire has never been incest” (239). Incest is simply a product of the repression of desire. It is the consequence of a family ideology operating on desire itself, which has no real interest in incest.

The authors use the terms code and coding (*code et codage*), which work in French as in English. They indicate a law, as in the Napoleonic Code, and also a coded message, an encryption, as in a social code. The patriarchal family structure encodes incest into the signifying system, where it becomes forbidden by law and produces multivalent permutations, a kind of grammar of spin-offs. It becomes instantiated as *the code of the father*, as both law and language: “Incest is the very operation of overcoding at the two ends of the chain in all the territory ruled by the despot, from the limits (*confins*) to the center” (248). They offer the entertaining but elusive maxim that “in incest, the signifier makes love with its signifieds” (*Dans l’inceste, c’est le signifiant qui fait l’amour avec ses signifiés*) (248).

It is the despot who constructs the prohibition on incest. In doing so, he retains the right of full agency and full promiscuity for himself. This corresponds well to Marx’s view; he held that the family structure is where the problem of private property begins. For Marx, property “has its germ, its first form, in the family, where the wife and children are slaves of the man. The latent slavery in the family, albeit in raw form, is the first property” (Marx 1969, p. 32). This idea was further developed in Friedrich Engels’ *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats.*

Engels theorized that human culture was not patriarchal in origin, and that kinship was initially determined matrilineally, as descent from the mother is readily evident, whereas descent from the father is not. He holds that, in the hunter-gatherer culture, which dominated most of human prehistory, culture was more egalitarian than it is now, and that the shift to agriculture produced an inegalitarian, male-dominated system: “The overthrow of the mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took the helm at home, woman was devalorized, enslaved, slave of lust and simple tool of childbearing. This debased position of woman…became hypocritically euphemized and sporadically clothed in milder form, but never eliminated” (Engels 1962, p. 61). Engels reminds the reader that “family” comes from the Latin *famulus*, “household slave,” and holds that the family is "the totality of the slaves belonging to the man" (61). This system institutes polygamy for the man and monogamy for the woman. It is the despot, the proto-father, who forbids incest to others, but not necessarily to himself, and establishes the social order and its codes. He hoards the wealth and women, and he is the despot the band of brothers rebel against.

The larger question here concerns the centrality of the family structure and its degree of mutability. For Deleuze and Guattari, the family is but one forum of desire among many. In their view, Freud places the family at the nucleus of the psyche and makes all permutations radiate outward from that center. They hold that the engagement of desire is multicontingent, and that the exclusive modelling of desire upon the parents is reductionistic: "The child does not only play daddy and mommy. It plays magician, cowboy, cops and robbers, trains, and little cars. The train is not necessarily daddy, neither the train station mommy…once grown up, the child finds itself subject to relations that are no longer familial" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/1973, p. 54).

This is quite true, also, in many of Freud's analyses of individual behavior, where he makes no reference to the family at all. One is dealing here with the same problem that is found in the etiology of fetishism (see Chap. 6). Many scholars trace the fetish back to the (lacking) phallus, and some of them, surprisingly, stop there. This, however, is far from telling the whole story. Physicists, for example, do not invoke the big bang and leave it at that. Nor do biologists wrap things up by invoking the recombinant DNA in proto-yeasts that yielded life on earth. Many other recombinations have occurred since then, and their analysis need not recapitulate the point of origin. Nor is a multitude of problems alleviated by reference to that initial point.

It is not Freud's concept of sexuality that is restricted, nor that of the psychoanalysis that the authors critique; it is their own interpretation of Freud that is severely restricted. They reduce it to "*le familialisme*, which maintains that sexuality only operates within the family and must be transformed in order to enter into larger fields. The truth of the matter is that sexuality is everywhere: in the manner in which a bureaucrat caresses his files, in which a judge renders justice, in which a businessman spends his money, in which the middle class screws the proletariat, etc. And it does not need to go the route of metaphor any more than the libido needs to go the route of metamorphoses" (348). The authors offer examples here of fetishism—most clearly in the image of the bureaucrat who caresses his files—that fit perfectly into the psychoanalytic model and were, in fact, conceptualized within that model itself in the first place. In this pansexual or panerotic view, at no time is a cigar just a cigar. (Urban legend credits Freud with having said something like "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." This has yet to be documented in Freud's writings.)

The processes of displacement, condensation, and overdetermination allow for the eroticizing of myriad objects and activities that bear no relation to intrafamilial sexuality. It is also important to remember that, in a patriarchal, family-based culture, the family will supply the dominant scene for sexual development. That development and its permutations will likely bear the markers of intrafamilial sexuality. Those structures are clearly mutable, but the power of conditioning and habit may determine the continuation of those structures, as well. They thus have no ontological value and are, instead, determined by the cultural habitus. It would be untenable to hold that the family system creates sexuality, just as it would be untenable to say that it creates suburban residential architecture. But it would be plausible to say that this architecture is greatly determined by family structures. So is sexuality greatly determined by the family system.

Perhaps the problem here is that Deleuze and Guattari are concentrating on patient–analyst relations, where the analyst should not, according to them, relate all patient problems back to the mother and father. This is all well and good. But it is also doubtful that those problems can be explained by reference to oppressive capitalism. And here, one is confronted with a problematic interfacing of the general and the particular, of the metacultural and the discrete problems of the individual.

The authors bracket psychoanalysis from viable materialist analysis: "The parallelism of Marx-Freud remains utterly sterile and indifferent, dramatizing terms that interiorize or project themselves upon one another, but always remaining strangers…the truth of the matter is, social production is simply desiring production itself…we hold that the social field is immediately traversed by desire, that it is its historically determined product, and that libido has no need of mediation, sublimation, psychological process, or transformation, in order to invest productive forces and relations of production. There is only desire and the social, nothing else" (36).

Here, one encounters a crucial problem in the authors' configuration of Freud. They hold that Marx remains in the field of production and Freud in the field of representation. These are supposed to be as incompatible as are reality and dream. Freud's dreamwork consists of sublimation, transformation, and a host of other psychological processes. (It is, however, true that Freud's initial major work on dreams serves as a template for his subsequent cultural studies.) Marx's field, on the other hand, is one of tangible human relations, and as such, one where human desire is engaged concretely into the material. For Deleuze and Guattari, the unconscious is not a theater, but a factory of machines, "desiring machines." These constitute the expressions and objects of desire, such as the phallus or the breasts. They are not understood as metaphorical or metonymic, because desire is something produced and not something represented. Sexual fetishes would also not been seen here as metaphorical or metonymic, but as productions of desire.

And here one arrives at a crucial difficulty, one that avoids the notion of avoidance. If fetishes are not seen as displacements and condensations, then one loses sight of their relation to central anxieties and the dynamics of overdetermination. One could take an example from the current fetishizing of hybrid vehicles. They have emerged as a symbol of ecological awareness within the affluent bourgeoisie, a class that, however, freely indulges in all manner of overconsumption. The investment of social capital into these vehicles involves a complex network of rationalizations, apologies, inversions, denials, etc., all interconnected in a symbolic order, and the interconnections themselves are the locus of tropes. To reject the idea of tropes is to occlude the dynamics of the socioeconomic processes that beg to be studied. This is what Deleuze and Guattari do, in effect. They indict the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. They hold that "the notorious metaphors and metonymy" (*les fameuses métaphores et métonymie*) are complicit in the project of the overcoding despotic machine (*la machine despotique surcodante*) (247). To reject metaphor and metonymy is to reject displacement and condensation, which are the master tropes of dreamwork, as well as of the parapraxes (Freudian slips) studied in Freud's *Psychopathologie*. One is tempted to ask if a psyche remains at all after this purgation. But it is also necessary to be fair to Deleuze and Guattari and to historicize their views, which clearly predate the advances in cognitive science that see metaphor and metonymy as foundational for human cognition.

The authors have a concept of desire that is fundamentally opposed to that of Freud and Lacan. For Freud, the human condition is one of permanent separation from an initial unity and contentment, a feeling of oneness that the infant experiences at the mother's breast (Freud 1920).

The trauma of birth and separation from the mother create a desire to return to a state of unity that can never be attained. The human condition is one of intermittent contentment, in which the subject is left with approximations, simulations, simulacra, etc. Some trace this condition back to an original point as a desire for the missing phallus, a desire for something that was not there in the first place, thus a fundamental paradox. The irony of this idea is developed more intricately by Lacan. Dwelling on the initial point is, however, not very productive for an analysis of the current problematic conditions of desire.

Such a priori notions of absence, lack, gap, and incommensurability as a given in the human condition are counterproductive to the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, who prefer to see the malaise in culture as something continually reconstructed, a product of active material political forces. Their project can be placed in the context of the utopian visions of the counterculture movement of the 1960s, a kind of postmarxist dream of a future universal happiness. Now this view can also be seen as fundamentally anthropocentric. Among the incalculable terrestrial species that struggle for existence—most of whom have gone extinct doing so—happiness is supposed to be reserved for humans. The present study accepts, with Marx, Deleuze, and Guattari, that cultural phenomena are the product of simultaneous material causes, and not the product of a diachronic essence. If there is a historical component to a cultural phenomenon, it is because that phenomenon has been reconstructed and re-erected by the material forces current in every period in which the phenomenon has been found. It is not because "an essence" in the phenomenon has informed the period in question, or haunted it, as in the reappearance of a ghost.

The authors reject the common psychoanalytic notion of incommensurability, which is quite clearly expressed in the theories of Freud and Lacan. Incommensurability is the product of repression but also of the human condition: desire. There is no union, no return to the oceanic feeling, thus only simulacric (symbolic) approximations. It seems to be this gap that Deleuze and Guattari do not accept.

They pose the question: "Is it correct to say that in this sense schizophrenia is the product of the capitalist machine, like manic depression and paranoia are the product of the despotic machine and hysteria the product of the territorial machine?" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/1973, p. 41). A rhetorical question, to which is appended the assertion that "schizophrenia is our disease, the disease of our time" (42), along with the conclusion that "the truth of the matter is that we want to say that capitalism, in its process of production, produces a formidable schizophrenic charge upon which it brings to bear the full weight of repression, but which never stops reproducing itself as a limit to the process" (42). The authors see the schizophrenia produced by capitalism as itself the means for undoing capitalism itself. In "Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/ Dissolution," Jonah Peretti states that "Deleuze and Guattari see schizophrenia as a central part of a subversive postmodern politics with the radical potential to bring down capitalism" (Peretti 1996).

The authors define schizophrenia as "the detachment from reality accompanied by a relative or absolute predominance of interior life" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/1973, p. 13); this fits well into the distinction that Freud makes in *Neurose und Psychose* (1924) between neurosis and psychosis; the neurotic avoids the unpleasant aspect of reality, while the psychotic tries to change it.

The beginnings of human culture (which Marx locates at the point when *homo* began to produce its own means of sustenance) reveal a modification of the environment through art and symbol, along with a radical re-formation and aestheticizing of the body itself. Where is here "reality?" Is this schizophrenia? Or can it not be schizophrenia because there is not yet capitalism? One is obliged here to take a view of *homo* as *homo psychologicus* and situate "reality" in an interactive space between psyche and object, within representation itself. This also raises the question of when repression began. When did humans begin to repress their instincts? It is not tenable to say that this began with capitalism, nor with the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture. Would a "true democracy" (Or an andro-gynocracy?) be free of repression? Oppression, perhaps, but repression?

Deleuze and Guattari's speculations are not very helpful for understanding the intricacies of capitalism from a psychoanalytic perspective. The rejection of the oedipal argument, of the Freudian notion of desire as incommensurable, and of metaphor and metonymy suppress an understanding of the aesthetic-symbolic functioning of commodities and fetishes. Moreover, they suppress an understanding of a host of defense mechanisms that serve to support exceptional American capitalism. Dreamwork provides the best techniques for understanding the more recent nightmarishly grotesque products of the American political system.

In the article "Deleuzian Capitalism," Frédéric Vandenberghe offers a more useful engagement of the project of Deleuze and Guattari.

He believes that the systemization of capitalism has occupied the entire field of activity, functioning as an ecosphere: "Since the machinic production of capital has left the factory and spread to the whole of society, the capitalist machine reproduces itself on an enlarged scale by producing the subjects that produce and consume the products they have produced" (Vandenberghe 2008, pp. 884–885). This is a system of no exit: "Subjected to a capitalist megamachine that produces willing subjects, the latter have been fully integrated into a living machine that functions not against their will, their thoughts, their desire, their body, etc., but through those" (885). Now this is quite useful for understanding behavior within the particular American brand of capitalism, which seems to offer no exit from the system itself; the protests perform the ideology of the system proper.

This effects a closing of discourse and of true oppositionality: "Advanced liberal capitalism colonizes the life-world and life itself. It not only threatens the communicative infrastructure of the life-world, which is bad enough, but does worse: the conjunction and integration of capital, science and technology potentially puts the human race itself at risk and opens thereby…the perspective of the end of the human sciences" (886). This phrase captures the problem well, as the string "human sciences" really has no more currency in American English. Where it does exist, it has been appropriated by the biological sciences, as has been already pointed out.

The colonizing of "the life-world and life itself" becomes realized quite literally: "The commodification of the human body transforms the body into capital. When the medical industry proposes the patient a transplant or an implant, it modifies and commodifies the body and transforms it into human capital" (896). Here, the ownership of one's own body becomes expropriated. Vandenberghe thinks that, in this sense, we are already transhuman, in that we have become capital. Whereas the slave economy mechanized only a portion of the population, the neoliberal capital economy commodifies all agents, even those apparently "alternative:" "Commodification leads to diversification and heterogenization. Today's mass culture is pluralist, heterogeneous, fragmented and diversified, or postmodernist, to use a vague word which summarizes it all. Diversity sells, and to guarantee a constant access to diversity, the margins of the sub- and counter-cultures of rebellious youth are constantly inspected for novelty" (891–892). The omnivorous machine has no dietary restrictions; it can consume all cultural products and convert them into nourishment for the entire organism. An example can be taken from the counterculture movement of the sixties, the permutations of which were commodified into fashion and then marketed to the consumer, a coopting that may well be responsible for the political atrophy of that movement itself.

In this model, capitalism becomes the dominant mode of global organization: "The global economy is not made up of nations, but of transnational networks of companies that spread through the world in search of cheap labour and a quick buck" (882). It has the appearance of a free market but is nonetheless hegemonic: "Although the spread of networks might appear anarchic at first, it should be noted, however, that the centrifugal process of decentralization is balanced by a centripetal process of concentration and command. In the archipelago of networks, there is a mainland of power that commands the 'decentralized concentration' of capital" (882). He adds that the marketing of culture through media means that simultaneous viewers/consumers participate in the same cultural experiences, thus greatly accelerating the process.

Vandenberghe offers a productive perspective for viewing the global commodification caused by liberal capitalism that can recover the representational in the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari. The commodity takes on a symbolic function: "As objects are increasingly aestheticized and emptied out of their material content, the aesthetic form trumps the latter. Use-value becomes secondary, and at the end, everything happens as if it is now the exchange-value that induces the use-value. Even more, according to Baudrillard, the exchange-value simply absorbs the latter, becomes self-referential and turns into a simulacrum, that is, into a copy without an original" (891).

This is the essence of the fetishized commodity; it has the appearance of material necessity; indeed, those who collect such objects are termed "materialistic," when, in fact, it is not the material but the symbolic capital that is pursued. And here, Vandenberghe astutely chooses the term aesthetic: This situates the commodity as a locus for "the notorious metaphors and metonymy," which correspond to condensation and displacement in psychoanalysis, as well as for a host of psychological defense mechanisms. In this context, he quotes from Jeremy Rifkin's *The Age of Access*: "Capitalism is making its final transition into full-blown cultural capitalism, appropriating not only the signifiers of cultural life and the artistic forms of communication that interpret those signifiers but lived experience as well" (Rifkin 2001, p. 144).

Vandenberghe agrees with Deleuze and Guattari that, as capitalism becomes pandemic, the only possible opposition is from within the system itself. He does hold, however, that "there is hope. While capital goes transnational, resistance is globalizing as well … the resistance against universal commodification is gathering momentum" (Vandenberghe 2008, p. 897). This may perhaps be true, but in the USA, the opposition lacks organization. The Occupy Wall Street Movement, for example, had no coherent program; it was a decentered collection of quite vocal complaints. One is reminded of the movie *Network*, in which Howard Beale (Peter Finch) says, "I want you to get up right now and go to the window. Open it, and stick your head out, and yell: I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!" (Gottfried et al. 1976). The problem is the ambiguity of "this." What are the forces causing the discontent? This may well be the schizophrenic *vox populi* that Deleuze and Guattari discuss, a deterritorialized, anarchic, semi-conscious, self-centered primal scream of dissatisfaction.

Maverick screaming is itself produced by the neoliberal machine. It instantiates the radical individualism of the USA and acts against a socialization of the economy. Random screaming will bring no solution, not unless it is tamed and organized into a coherent political platform. Even the race riots of the 1960s opposed a clear enemy: racial discrimination. But what is the clear enemy of the Occupy Wall Street Movement? End Wall Street? The civil rights agenda did not propose the elimination of whites, just the elimination of white racism. The problem in the US is not the stock market; it is a deregulated economy with a liberal credit and debt culture, of which the stock market is a symptom and metonym.

Vandenberghe thinks that the current antiglobalization movement "can be considered as the legitimate heir of the working-class movement of the nineteenth century" (Vandenberghe 2008, p. 897), but the comparison is tenuous, as those labor movements were informed by a solid political agenda and solid organization. The viral pervasiveness of the logic of American capitalism easily disables oppositional movements. But Vandenberghe has aided in the restoration of the symbolic and the representational into the discourse of Marxist psychoanalysis abandoned by Deleuze and Guattari. One can now proceed to a proper analysis of commodities, fetishes, and defense mechanisms in the continual constructing and reconstructing of exceptional American capitalism.

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CHAPTER 5

Žižek's Hysterical Commodities

Productive discussions of Marxism and psychoanalysis have been made by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek. Often referred to as "the giant of Ljubljana," Žižek published *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), in which he offers syntheses of the Marxist and psychoanalytic models.

Žižek opens his study with a wonderful observation: "When a discipline is in crisis, attempts are made to change or supplement its theses within the terms of its basic framework—a procedure one might call 'Ptolemization'" (Žižek 1989, p. vii). He is referring here to the geocentric view of the cosmos that persisted until the Copernican revolution, which, when confronted with new astronomical data, performed all manner of warped contortions in order to assimilate the data into the dominant paradigm and maintain the earth at the center of the universe. He asserts that "all the 'new paradigm' proposals about the nature of the contemporary world (that we are entering a post-industrial society, a postmodern society…) remain so many Ptolemizations of the 'old paradigm'" (viii).

While Žižek's assertions may well be overgeneralized, one can certainly make good use of his valuable concept. New information that could possibly problematize the dominant paradigm becomes retrofitted to pass smoothly into the paradigm and ultimately to shore it up. One can certainly apply this to US sociopolitics, in which potentially oppositional data becomes retrofitted into the logic of the dominant model. Political terms become redefined, such as "liberal," "red," and others (see Chap. 7). Current discourse often speaks of a "postfeminist" and even a "postracial" society, expressions of a wishful thinking that the problems have gone away. An example from

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the psychology of perception can aid in illuminating this process; perceptual experiments show that when subjects wear goggles that invert the image on the retina, the brain will eventually reinvert it. At first there is temporary confusion (often nausea), and then comfortable correction, in which the viewer has no idea that he/she is seeing upside down. This fits well into Marx's metaphor of the *camera obscura*; one could also conclude that the subject is thinking upside down, as well.

5.1 Commodity

Žižek speaks of a "fundamental homology between the interpretative procedure of Marx and Freud—more precisely, between their analysis of commodity and of dreams" (3). This is a very promising statement, if not far-reaching, and clearly needs to be nuanced. The notion that dreams and commodities are homologous is quite nebulous. Dream images are displacements and condensations. Are commodities to be understood as such as well? The commodity is simply the product mediated by the merchant. It will be subsequently argued that it gains its oneiric (dream) function when it becomes a fetish. The fundamental homology between the interpretive models of Marx and Freud lies in the process of transformation from infrastructure to superstructure, from the latent to the manifest. More precisely, it is the relationship between ideology for Marx and dream content for Freud.

Žižek recommends that we should ask, "Why have the latent dream-thoughts assumed such a form, why were they transposed into the form of the dream? It is the same with commodities…the real problem is to…explain why work assumed the form of the value of a commodity, why it can affirm its social character only in the commodity form of its product" (3–4). This is to say that in capitalism, labor is seen in the context of exchange value, so that that the process of labor becomes a commodity in itself. Labor affirms its social value in its form as a commodity, and the commodity value of the product configures the quality of labor. The exchange value of the Mercedes, for instance, its image, reflects back on the worker. But this contention by Žižek is a bit problematic, as the use value of the product brought to market by the producer in the precapitalist age also indicated the value of the labor put into it. The real issue here, however, is the relationship between commodities and fetishes.

Labor produces products that become commodities and sometimes fetishes. And labor itself becomes fetishized only when connected to a product, thus when appropriated by market interests. The labor that produces the Icelandic sweater becomes fetishized in association with the sweater itself. The Icelandic sweater is a point of condensation of dependable labor, ethnicity, nature, etc. An image of the worker is fabricated to contribute to the marketing of the sweater. Perhaps the most ridiculous example of this is the familiar advertisement for the Colombian coffee beans "picked by Juan Valdez," which offers an idealized image of a happy coffee gleaner in a spotless white poncho accompanied by a mule. Now this works perfectly well as an example of the commodity that conceals the reality of the miserable labor conditions. But it is important to emphasize that the fictionalized labor image is dependent upon the fetishizing of the product a priori. Žižek's idea becomes less problematic when he quotes Marx further: "Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, as soon as it assumes the form of commodities?" (9). And here, it seems that the enigmatical character is that of the specific item, the diamond ring or the Mercedes.

There is also a considerable jump here on the part of Marx; the enigmatic character does not come from the nature of a commodity, but rather from its attributes. Otherwise, thumbtacks would be enigmatic. The enigmatic character comes from the fetishizing of the commodity. And here, one can find a point of intersection between the Marxist and Freudian models by using Žižek's understanding of Freud's model of latent and manifest: "It is this unconscious/sexual desire which cannot be reduced to a 'normal train of thought' because it is, from the very beginning, constitutively repressed (Freud's *Urverdrängung*)—because it has no 'original' in the 'normal' language of everyday communication, in the syntax of the conscious/preconscious; it's only place is in the mechanism of the 'primary process'" (5).

It is unlikely, however, that Žižek intended this as the point of common denominator between the Marxist and Freudian models. But his understanding of Freud is on the mark here. Freud himself said that the dream thoughts *do not want to be understood*. And this fits well into the subsequent projects of Lacan, as the original point—which is in effect no original point at all—is a kind of black hole that itself consumes the light of analysis. The latent dream thoughts are unknowable. Thus there is a rupture a priori, the original point is unrecoverable, and one is left with secondary processes *post facto*. And this point of intersection accesses a new highway, one that Marx could not yet design in the prepsychoanalytic age, despite the fact that, according to Žižek, he introduced a model that informed psychoanalysis. Marx knew that the commodity fetish was the locus of superstition, to which bourgeois capitalism ascribed magical powers, but their etiology remained unfathomable to him. He knew, however, that the superstitions aided the capitalist ideology.

The mystical significance behind the fetish is fundamentally unknowable, as it accesses unconscious realms that want to remain unconscious. The question that Žižek wants us to ask: "Why have the latent dream-thoughts assumed such a form, why were they transposed into the form of the dream?" concentrates astutely on the *form*, on the structure, but the *why* also needs to be augmented by the *how*. The process can be analyzed with the mechanisms of displacement, condensation, overdetermination, and secondary revision, applied to the dream content, the content of ideology, and the relationship among commodities. The value of the commodity is not haphazard; it is not just an accident of supply and demand, as some free market disciples would hold. The value of the commodity is found in its relationship, within the context of power, to other signs. Žižek states this as well, but only very generally by using mirror stage theory to help illustrate how commodities only have value in relation to other commodities.

The mediated exchange of objects determines their commodity value. Mystical investment changes the commodity into a fetish, and the relationships among commodities then take on the characteristics of the relationships among dream images. Commodity fetishes become the *loci of displacements and condensations.*

5.2 Symptom

The chapter in which Žižek discusses the commodity is entitled "How did Marx invent the symptom?" (3). It begins as such: "According to Lacan, it was none other than Marx who invented the notion of symptom" (3). Žižek then adds, "how was it possible for Marx, in his analysis of the world of commodities, to produce a notion which applies also to the analysis of dreams, hysterical phenomena, and so on?" (3). The answer, as illustrated below, is not that Marx invented the symptom; it is that Marx invented the sublimate.

The *OED* traces the etymology of the word symptom to the Greek *σύμπτωμα* "chance, accident, mischance, disease," which derives from the verb *συμπίπτειν*, a compound of the prefix *σύν* and the verb *πίπτειν*, "to fall." It is a "falling together," a coincidence of sorts, and is first attested to in English in 1398. Similarly, the Latin root is *cadere*, to fall, from which derive *ad-cadere, in-cadere, co-in-cadere*, all of which indicate a "falling together." (Oxford English Dictionary).

Žižek's discussion of the symptom is based, however, on a misreading of Lacan. Lacan discusses Marx's relation to the symptom in *Réel, symbolique, imaginaire* (*RSI*), which is part of *Le séminaire* (1973), a transcription of annual seminars that he held at various locations in Paris. Lacan's declarations in *Le séminaire* tend to be cryptic, at times even oracular, inspiring students to go off and speculate upon their meaning. He situates the symptom within the triad: "Inhibition, symptôme, angoisse" (Lacan 1974–1975, p. 24). It is a function of anxiety and repression, of delay and deferral, usually of something sexual. The symptom is a symbolic language permitting expression of the repressed. It is here that Lacan attributes the introduction of the symptom to Marx: "The notion of the symptom was introduced well before Freud by Marx, who used it as a sign of something not present in reality (*le Réel*)…the symptom is the effect of the symbolic in the real" (25). And it is attested to in the unconscious, according to Lacan.

In the conversational style of the seminar, Lacan situates the symptom within Marx's view of the transition from feudality to capitalism: "To look for the origin of the notion of the symptom…which is not to be found in Hippocrates…it is to be found in Marx…in the connection he makes between capitalism and—what?—the good old days, which is what you call it when you try to say it differently, the feudal times…capitalism is considered to have certain effects…the effects are, in sum, beneficial, for it has the advantage of reducing the proletarian to nothing, thanks to which the proletarian realizes the essence of the human, and stripped of everything, is charged with being the messiah of the future. This is the way that Marx analyzes the notion of the symptom" (120). For Lacan, Marx has a messianic notion of the proletarian; this is clear in his reference to the messianic in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. A teleological reading ascribes an infrastructural program, purpose, and narrative to the Bibles, in that events are seen as leading up to and presaging the arrival of the messiah. The events are thus symptomatic indications of a process and progress in history.

Lacan did not say that Marx invented the symptom; he said that Marx introduced the notion of the symptom into political discourse. It is as if Marx had normalized the feudal period and the proletarian. For Lacan, Marx's capitalism exhibits symptoms that presage the triumph of the proletarian. At a symposium at Yale in 1975, Lacan said, "Capitalism is marked by a certain number of effects that are symptoms; it is a symptom to the degree that Marx ascribes a norm to humanity, and he chooses the proletarian norm (when the human is cleansed, completely nude, thus it is Adam)" (Lacan 1975, p. 34). There is a bit of unclarity here in Lacan's characterization of the proletarian as both messianic and adamic, god and human. But the point in common is clear: The proletarian is the savior of human culture, either as the prelapsarian Adam or the future messiah, he who will return humanity to "normality."

The notion of the symptom may be antedated even further back to Plato's cave metaphor and his notion of a sphere of ideal forms. For Plato, there is a higher ideal realm of spirit and a lower material one that we inhabit. In this lower realm, we see only shadows of the ideal, imperfect copies that hint at the higher realm. In this sense, they are *symptoms* that something is amiss on earth. This platonic model informed German idealism, especially the ideas of Kant, as well as the German and English romantics, who saw terrestrial allegories that pointed to a prelapsarian existence. Writing at the end of German idealism, Marx directed his polemic most strongly against that idealism and reversed the model; the material world is no allegory of the spiritual realm, the spiritual realm is an ideological trope of the material. Religion does not create human values; human values create religion. And the values are themselves created out of *material class interests*.

Lacan also holds, and here quite lucidly, that the symptom in the social sphere manifests itself as an irrationality that is subject to myriad excuses and justifications. The contradictions in capitalism are among those symptoms. Clearly, we all know that we should be more generous to the poor, and this guilt haunts us and causes odd rationalizations. This observation is valuable for the present study, as the American political economy does indeed exhibit quite perplexing phenomena that undergo equally perplexing and contradictory rationalizations, e.g., those found in the discourse surrounding the uniquely American oddity that a medical degree can easily cost $500,000 (pre-med study included). The older postwar justification that the alternative was Soviet communism is now clearly laughable. The current justifications are pathological symptoms in their inductive leaps, contradictions, suppressions of data and cognition, etc. Such justifications are rooted, according to Lacan, in the unconscious, which accounts for the evasiveness of the rationalizations. He characterizes this with the charming phrase that the striking thing about the symptom is that it "smooches" with the unconscious (*se bécote avec l'inconscient*) (Lacan 1974–1975, p. 77).

While Marx did not invent the symptom, he did invent the sublimate, in its social sense. This is seen in his observation that "even the foggy illusions in the human brain are the necessary sublimates of material and empirically verifiable conditions of life, which are bound to material preconditions" (Marx 1969, p. 26). As stated earlier, Marx is employing a chemical metaphor to explain the transition from matter to spirit, from the material base to the gaseous illusions of ideology, ideas that seem to be autonomous. Just as alcohol bears no visible connection to the grain base that produced it, so do ideologies lack a visible connection to the dynamics of power and class interest that created them. Just as the chemist can trace the process of sublimation from grain spirit back to grain, so can the social historian trace the process of sublimation from the spiritual/intellectual back to the material. In Marx, it is not the symptom that provides the novel structure that prepared the way for Freud, it is the sublimate that did so. The transformation from infrastructure to superstructure informs both the Marxian and Freudian models. In Freud, it enables the process of sublimation, the relationship of latent to manifest, and the shifts from dream thoughts to dream content, among other transformations.

And this requires an inversion of the reading process, visible in Marx's golden sentence: "While German philosophy descends from heaven to earth, we do it in the completely opposite manner; we climb from earth to heaven" (26). It is also clear in his metaphor of the *camera obscura*: "Ideology makes humans and their relationships appear to stand on their heads, as in a *camera obscura*, but this phenomenon really arises from their historical conditions of life, just like the inversion of objects on the retina arises from immediate physical conditions" (26).

5.3 Hysteria

Žižek decides to include a discussion of hysteria in his itinerary and proposes a homology between hysterical conversion and conversion to the symptoms of capitalism. He begins by distinguishing feudal labor from capitalist labor relations. In the former, it is the relations between people that dominate, and that are also clearly visible. In capitalism, human relations are disguised under the relationships between objects, i.e., commodities. This is the hysterical conversion for Žižek, the conversion to the symptom: "One has to look for the discovery of the symptom in the way Marx conceived the passage from feudalism to capitalism. With the establishment of bourgeois society, the relations of domination and servitude are *repressed*; formally, we are apparently concerned with free subjects whose interpersonal relations are discharged of all fetishism; the repressed truth—that of the persistence of domination and servitude—emerges in a symptom" (Žižek 1989, p. 22). And for Žižek, the symptom is "the social relations between things" (22). To help illustrate this, he quotes Marx on feudal relations. He uses, however, an English translation that differs markedly from the German original:

> No matter what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society, the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labour appears at all events as their own mutual personal relations, and are not disguised under the shape of social relations between things, between the products of labour. (22)

This is the original text by Marx:

> Wie man daher immer die Charaktermasken beurteilen mag, worin sich die Menschen hier gegenübertreten, die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse der Personen in ihren Arbeiten erscheinen jedenfalls als ihre eignen persönlichen Verhältnisse und sind nicht verkleidet in gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen, der Arbeitsprodukte. (Marx 1962, p. 91)

A closer translation would read:

> No matter how one judges the character masks in which people encounter each other, the social relations of people in their work appear in every instance as their own personal relations and are not disguised as social relations of objects, of the products of labor.

This is a good choice of words on the part of Marx. "Character masks" in the feudal system do not disguise labor relations. They are not disguised into social relations among things, among products of labor, as they are in capitalism. This is a very fruitful summary of the commodity, especially of the notion that commodities have a life of their own. Žižek says that "here we have a precise definition of the hysterical symptom, of the 'hysteria of conversion' proper to capitalism" (Žižek 1989, p. 22). While this is indeed an interesting assertion, it is quite general and hardly "a precise definition of the hysterical symptom": It falls short of accounting for both the hysterical symptom and the fetish.

The *OED* records hysteria from 1801 and hysteric already from 1657. The term *hystérique* had entered French in 1568. From the onset, the terms were used in their currently familiar sense as hypochondria, psychosomatic disorder, etc., disturbances that were misunderstood as originating in the womb, thus the familiar etymology from the Greek *ὑστέρα* (*hystera*) "womb." The modern configuration of hysteria has its origins in the work of Charcot in Paris and entered formally into psychoanalysis in the work of Freud and Breuer, appearing in 1895 in the *Studien über Hysterie*. It is first specifically articulated in the second case study, that of Emmy. The first and well-known case study of Anna O. discusses hysteria in a very general way, saying that some of the patient's physical problems are psychosomatic in nature, i.e., that psychological factors contribute to them. There is no structural analysis of the relations between psyche and soma here, nor is there any interpretation, simply a list of possible symptoms. It is in the second case study, that of Emmy, that the concept of conversion is introduced, in French as *Conversion*.

When anxious, the patient Emmy interrupts the flow of conversation with a "curious cackling" noise, which Freud claims that he cannot imitate (Breuer and Freud 1895, p. 38). In a subsequent footnote, he says that his colleagues who hunt liken it to the mating call of the grouse (*Auerhahn*) (89). Emmy's anxiety is connected to her vigilance at the side of her sick child, who succeeds in falling asleep. The overanxious mother is mortified at the possibility that she might make a sound that would awaken the child. This elicits the nervous tic, and in this case, it is seen as a "contrastive representation" (*Contrastvorstellung*), in which the patient winds up doing exactly what she is afraid of. In analysis, she repeats the scenario when nervous (78).

Freud sees such tics as having an original or long-standing connection with traumas, and they substitute for those traumas in the memory; i.e., the trauma is not remembered; the tic takes its place symbolically (81). In this context, Freud says that, in order for a hysterical conversion to take place, a representation has to be purposefully suppressed from consciousness and excluded from associative processing (99). Thus there is a repression and displacement, and it is the displacement that is subject to associative processes.

In the introduction to the studies on hysteria, it is said that the hysterical conversion is "a 'symbolic' relation between the instigation and the pathological phenomenon, just as a healthy people do in dreams" (3). And here, one sees the presence of Freud's major tropes of condensation and displacement, first explained in his major work on dreams, that structure much of his subsequent psychoanalytic interpretations. The hysterical conversion operates in a structurally similar manner. There is repression, displacement, and condensation into the symptom, the "symbolic" representation. And the associative processes that ensue are like those in dream and "free" association, which is never completely random, discrete, or unrelated to the context.

In the third case, that of Lucie R., the analysis of the conversion becomes more detailed. The patient had acquired an acute rhinitis, which is an irritation and inflammation of the nasal mucous membranes. It is usually allergic; if non-allergic, it has no apparent etiology. In Lucie's case, the etiology was hysteric and resulted in olfactory insensitivity. When asked what odor normally troubled her the most, she stated that it was an odor of burned pastry (91). Freud suspects that the original trauma, suppressed from awareness, was related to this smell and asks why the patient "had selected precisely this odor as a symbol" (98).

Lucie R. was a Scottish governess who became infatuated with the father of the family she was attending to. She opened a letter from her ailing mother in Glasgow, which evoked the desire to return home. This conflicted starkly with her own lovesickness and with her commitment to the children of the family. This traumatic conflict occurred just at the moment when the children had burned a pastry. Thus the odor became the symbolic condensation and point of conversion. Her rhinitis repressed all smells, thus repressing the traumatic episode. The memory trace was the odor of burnt pastry. And one sees here that the process is indeed like that of dreamwork. The anxiety-producing thoughts are repressed and condensed into one laconic image.

An especially productive example of hysterical behavior is found in the case study on mysophobia (fear of germs), which Freud originally published as "Obsessions et phobies. Leur mécanisme psychique et leur étiologie" in *Revue neurologique* in 1895. It is the case of a woman who would wash her hands countless times a day and touch door handles only with her elbow. She would also repeatedly wash her genitals. The washing was indeed symbolic; she felt "dirty" due to an extramarital affair and was attempting to cleanse herself of the moral stain. She had also decided to strike the episode from memory. The repression elicited the obsessive behavior, which Freud characterizes as a symbolic substitution. It can also be said that she was attempting to "wash her hands of the matter," and here, one sees the body performing psyche and language in the form of a kinetic pun (Freud 1895, p. 350).

Freud sees this as "the case of Lady Macbeth." At Lady Macbeth's urging, Macbeth stabbed King Duncan and assumed his throne. In act V scene 1 of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, she is seen washing her hands:

Doctor	You see, her eyes are open.
Gentlewoman	Ay, but their sense is shut.
Doctor	What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.
Gentlewoman	It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.
Lady Macbeth	Yet here's a spot.
Doctor	Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.
Lady Macbeth	Out, damned spot! out, I say!–One: two: why, then, 'tis time to do't.–Hell is murky!–Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?–Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.
Doctor	Do you mark that?
Lady Macbeth	The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean?–No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.
Doctor	Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.
Gentlewoman	She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.
Lady Macbeth	Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh! (Shakespeare 2015).

This works well into the psychoanalytic model, as do many of Shakespeare's plays that Freud cites. "Her eyes are open…but their sense is shut," is a poetic indication of repression, and a doubled one: sense as understanding and sense as perception; both are shut off. And she is not blind, only blind to the deed. And here, the hand is the locus of the deed. She has blood on her hands, symbolically.

These examples illustrate that the hysterical conversion operates from mind to body as a strong condensation. The conversion is a relocation to the body, and, while technically a displacement, it lacks the larger narrative that constitutes the examples of displacement, and that one sees, for instance, in dreams, where the story changes in order to escape repression. In hysteria, the conversion happens at a bodily point and does not change the narrative when it represses it. It seems that the hysterical conversion lacks a narrative, whereas dreamwork seldom does.

It is important to emphasize that the use of hysteria to characterize the economic conversion cannot function without the psychoanalytic element. The commodity becomes the fetish at the point of psychological conversion; thus, there is no purely economic hysterical conversion. Similarly, one can say that all conversions are symptoms, but not all symptoms are conversions. In the psychoanalytic model, the conversion proceeds from the mental to the physical, to the psychosomatic symptom. And in the economic conversion, the symptom is always a fetish, as it is overdetermined, a locus of condensation and displacement.

One can propose a homology between the fetish and the *hysterical* symptom, as both indicate an occluded pathology. More precisely, one can compare the fetishized commodity to the hysterical symptom and analyze both as instantiations of hysterical conversion. As such, they are subsets of the symptom. Both are also animated. It is important here to distinguish between animism and fetishism, between the commodity as anima and the commodity as a fetish. It is true that the movement of commodities and their fluctuation in value conceal underlying labor relations. One may say, "Potatoes are up, potatoes are down," etc., as if the potatoes were independently airborne, and leave it at that. This is an animistic view, and it is safe to say that, in most cases, people know better. Material explanations are readily given, e.g., potatoes are up due to the workers' strike, the drought, the flood, etc. But once the commodity becomes fetishized, it is at that point that the rational causality diffuses into the "foggy regions."

The process of commodification does not bring one very far in understanding the magic of the market. The magical space of value lies in the fetishizing of the commodity. Žižek has started a conversation for understanding this process. It is now necessary to engage the process of fetishizing.

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CHAPTER 6

Marketed Fetishism

The concept of the fetish is basic to the theories of both Marx and Freud. Marx employs the term in his discussion of commodities and uses the term "commodity fetishism" (*Warenfetischismus*). For Freud, the fetish is a locus of diverted libido, displaced sexual energy. The *OED* traces the word back to the Latin *facticius* "factitious," which has its roots in *facere*, "to make." Thus it contains the root notion of a fabrication or simulation. It first appeared in early modern Europe in the Portuguese *feitiço* "charm, sorcery." Its usage in English dates to 1613. The *OED* defines it as such:

a. Originally: any of the objects used by the indigenous peoples of the Guinea coast and the neighbouring regions as amulets or means of enchantment, or regarded by them with superstitious dread.
b. By writers on anthropology (following C. de Brosses, *Le culte des dieux fétiches*, 1760) used in wider sense: an inanimate object worshipped by preliterate peoples on account of its supposed inherent magical powers, or as being animated by a spirit.
c. Fig. Something irrationally reverenced.
d. Psychol. An object, a non-sexual part of the body, or a particular action which abnormally serves as the stimulus to, or the end in itself of, sexual desire.

The psychological definition is quite accurate and contains the structure of a diversion of sexual stimulation. One could take exception to the term

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"abnormally," however, as human attraction normally involves reactions to sexualized accessories, such as dress.

The concept of the commodity is fundamental to Marx's understanding of capitalism. He inaugurates *Das Kapital* as such: "The commodity is the elementary form of capitalist production. Thus our investigation begins with the analysis of the commodity" (Marx 1962, p. 49). Marx makes an important distinction between the commodity (*Ware*) and the physical substance of the commodity (*Warenkörper*), a distinction that disappears in many English translations, which render both as commodity. The distinction is important for describing the transition from use value to exchange value the material properties and function of an object constitute its use value; it is as such that objects exist as goods. Its exchange value says Marx, is an abstraction from its use value: "When we abstract from the use value" of a good, "we also abstract from the physical parts and forms that constitute the use value" (52). In the Marxist model, the commodity emerges in the transition from use value to exchange value The product becomes a commodity when it enters into the system of market exchange.

Marx begins his discussion of the fetish character of the commodity as such: "A commodity seems at first glance to be a self-evident and trivial thing. But its analysis reveals that it is a very thorny thing full of metaphysical sophistry and theological squabbles (*Mucken*)." (The conventional translation of *Mucken* as "niceties" no longer has currency.) Marx says of a wooden table, "As soon as it appears as a commodity, it transforms itself into a sensual supra-sensual thing. It stands not only with its feet on the ground, but also in all directions on its head, and produces fantasies more fantastic than if it started to dance by itself" (85). Here, he again uses the familiar image of inversion used in the *camera obscura* to discuss the commodity. He characterizes the commodity as "sensual supra-sensual" (*sinnlich übersinnlich*). Clearly, the product remains as a tangible object; the contradiction in saying that it is both sensual and supra-sensual is of course ironic, but it means to say that the fantasized values ascribed to the commodity are, for the consumer, very real. He offers an analogy for understanding this by going into the "foggy regions of the religious world," where "the products of the human head appear to have a life of their own and to relate to each other, and to humans, as autonomous forms. That is what happens to handmade products in the world of commodities. I call this fetishism, which adheres to the product of labor, as soon as it is produced as a commodity, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities" (86–87). This is quite clear: For Marx, when a product becomes a commodity, it becomes a fetish.

The excursion into the "foggy regions of the religious world" is quite didactic. Just as a wooden crucifix, for example, is believed to have mystical properties, so is the commodity invested with fantasies by the consumer. This is, for Marx, the moment of fetishizing As soon as the product becomes commodified, fantasies are inseparably bound to it. Commodity value is, however, "not written on its forehead"—an odd allusion to the mark of Cain—"instead, it transforms every product of labor into a social hieroglyphic. Subsequently, humans try to decipher the meaning of the hieroglyph and get behind the secret of their societal product." The attempt at decipherment, however, does not bring about much change. And again, he uses sky metaphors to illustrate why: "The scientific separation of air into its elements still allows the form of air to persist as a physical form" (88). Analysis can bring one only so far; radical change is necessary: "All the mysticism of the world of commodities, all the magic and phantoms that befog the products of labor on the basis of the production of commodities, will immediately disappear when we flee to other forms of production" (90).

There is, however, a problem in Marx's analysis; he does not clearly distinguish between commodity and fetish. Moreover, he sees commodity fetishism as a product of market capitalism. This seems quite problematic. Would fetishes disappear in an egalitarian communist utopia? And clearly, not all commodities are fetishized. Are thumbtacks, which are exchanged through merchants, automatically fetishized? The point at which commodity becomes fetish cannot be explained by solely economic factors. Psychoanalysis must intervene and take the relay.

In 1927, Freud published the essay *Fetischismus*, his penultimate discussion of fetishism, where he attempts to arrive at its origin. He asserts that the fetish is the substitute for the absent female phallus, that of the mother. The child believes that the mother possesses the phallus, discovers that she does not, and then suppresses cognizance of this discovery, searching for it in the form of a symbolic substitute. Thus in quite postmodern fashion, the fetish is a substitute for something nonexistent. And in equally postmodern fashion, it is something both relinquished and retained. In viewing the absent phallus, the child infers a castration, and then transfers the fear onto itself; if the mother can lose the phallus, then the child, too, may lose the icon of power; thus, the child seeks symbolic compensation and assurance in the form of the fetish, which Freud sees as "the sign of the triumph over the threat of castration and the protection against it" (Freud 1927, p. 313).

This phenomenon is, however, overdetermined, a locus of contradiction. Freud theorizes that this constitutes the male heteronormative moment, but admits having no explanation of why some also find a homoerotic resolution to the problem, nor can he account for pathological outcomes. The etiology of fetishes is explained by the perspective of the child who looks up at the mother from below and witnesses the last objects before confronting the absent phallus: shoes, stockings, underwear, hair, etc. Things that signify undressing are fetishized because they hold fast the moment before the shock of seeing the missing phallus, but Freud also holds that this is not always the case.

The process of fetishizing is normative and systemic in human culture and generates dreamwork condensations that unite contradictory images. Freud discusses the case of a patient who had a fetish for jockstraps. In covering the genitals, they imply that women could both be castrated or not castrated; but since men wear them as well, it implies the same of them; thus, the jockstrap works as an overdetermined condensation. Freud also reads the figleaf similarly and sees this fetish as "twice connected out of contradictions" (316). In the same vein, he sees "affection and hostility in the treatment of the fetish, which parallels the denial and acceptance of castration" (317). As an illustration, he discusses "the Chinese custom of mutilating the female foot and then revering it like a fetish after it has been mutilated. It seems as though the Chinese male wants to thank the woman for having submitted to being castrated" (317).

In 1938, Freud wrote the incomplete essay *Die Ichspaltung im Abwehrvorgang* (*Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence*), which was published posthumously in 1940, and in which he discusses masturbation as a form of substitute gratification that insists upon the maintenance of the possession of the penis in the face of the threat of castration. This example constitutes, again, a substitutive detour from intercourse as the primary gratification, along with, clearly, a reaction to patriarchal authority.

The focus on the phallus in Freud's penultimate discussion of fetishism and the attempt to arrive at an original point for the fetish has served as somewhat of an obstacle to the full understanding of fetishism, especially as concerns its value for the understanding of the commodity fetish. Many studies of the fetish in Marx and Freud have focused on that fictive original point, consequently emphasizing what the two configurations of the fetish do not have in common. This can be cleared up by examining Freud's earlier discussions of fetishism.

Freud's first formal discussion of fetishism is found in the *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (1905), in the section "Ungeeigneter Ersatz des Sexualobjektes – Fetischismus." The phrase *ungeeigneter Ersatz* indicates a substitute for the sexual object, a substitute that was not originally intended for sexual purposes; it has been repurposed from its original function to other aims. Some translations render *ungeeignet* as "unfit," but this is misleading, as the fetish may fit quite well into the subject's project. The substitute has a clear relation to the "sexual object," the person who is the object of affection. It is, for instance, an article of clothing or underwear. It is most interesting that Freud says of the fetish early on that it can be rightly compared to the fetish "in which primitives see the embodiment of their gods" (Freud 1905, p. 52). One sees here a clear bridge to the religious. The investment of sexuality into the fetish is caused by a supervaluation of the sexual object, and Freud observes that this supervaluation "inevitably extends to everything that is associatively connected to the sexual object." And he holds that such fetishism is a "regular part of normal loving" (53). The postponement of gratification in human courtship sexualizes that which is associated with the primary object of affection. (One is reminded of the song "On the Street Where You Live" from the film *My Fair Lady*, when Freddy expresses his ecstasy in just being in the vicinity of Eliza, his love.)

Freud also frames this in the context of "early sexual impressions" and offers the apocryphal French proverb: o*n revient toujours à ses premiers amours* ("one always returns to one's first loves") (53). This indicates a fixation at a point of loss, in which the fetish becomes an act of repetition, an attempt to retrieve symbolically something that has been relinquished. He holds that the transition from normality to pathology occurs when the fetish detaches from its human relations and becomes the principal sex object itself. The dreamwork processes involved are visible when he speaks of cases, in which "a non-conscious symbolic thought connection leads to the substitution of the object by the fetish" (54).

The next and most important discussion of fetishism in the works of Freud is found in *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens* "*Gradiva*" (1907). The essay is based on the novel *Gradiva: Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück* published by Wilhelm Jensen from June 1 to July 20, 1902, in the Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* (Jensen 1903). The story concerns the hero, Norbert Hanold, an archaeologist, who is obsessed with the Roman bas-relief Gradiva, which depicts a woman walking barefoot, lifting her long robe to reveal the feet. Hanold dreams that he travels back in time to meet the woman in Pompeii in the year 79 during the inundation of the city by the eruption of Mount Etna. In the dream, she is walking easily on the lava stones. He loses sight of her, then finds her again, and addresses her in Latin. She refuses to respond unless he speaks German. When he addresses her amorously, she seems to not understand and then leaves. He calls after her, but she disappears around a corner, nowhere to be found. He then sets himself the task of finding out if she really existed or was a figment of his imagination.

Hanold had had an intimate friendship as a child with a girl named Zoë, who had an elegant gait. Freud notes in Hanold a long-standing avoidance of women and sees this as causing the foot fetish; thus, the principal sexual attraction is displaced onto an object connected metonymically to the object of his interest. The image of Gradiva's feet evokes the memory of his childhood friend, but unconsciously so; Hanold does not say the feet remind him of Zoë; he represses the memory of her and displaces and condenses it onto the feet. Then he goes off in quest of them, but it is clear what he is really seeking. Freud Calls this a "fetishistic erotomania" (*fetischistische Erotomanie*) (Freud 1907, p. 71), and he uses it to illustrate the unconscious process of repression.

Hanold's preoccupation with archaeology is itself a performance of his problem; he is digging for something, which is the source of his fixation on the bas-relief. The fetish is the product of dreamwork and a locus of displacement and condensation. Gradiva comes from the Latin *Mars Gradivus*, the marching god, *gradus* indicating "step," from which the English "grade." It was to this god that an oath was sworn before marching into battle. And here, the feet enter as a metonym for marching. But it is also a pun on the Latin *gravida*, "pregnant." And it also splits into gra-diva, thus indicating the diva, Latin for goddess. Thus one has a triple condensation.

The inversion of Gradiva into *gravida* repeats and displaces the sexual desire to make Gradiva gravid (pregnant). The triple condensation into the feet can also be seen as a screen memory, as the bas-relief story covers the infrastructural memory of Zoë. (Interestingly, the particular relief in question is now called Gradiva because of the novel.)

In Freud's analysis, Hanold's problem is an avoidance of sexuality, which he also desires. Thus the dreamwork selects an image of low psychic intensity, the feet of the bas-relief, as a simultaneous instantiation of and diversion from the sexual. The feet condense the hidden Pompeii, Hanold's childhood intimacy with Zoë (which also desexualizes the issue by making it prepubescent), Zoë's elegant gait, and also the feet as phallus images. One could call this the dream of the archaeological dig on the model of Freud's dream of the botanical monograph (Freud 1900, p. 175–179), in which the scientific project is seen as a sexualized allegory. One could say that the flower becomes fetishized in the dream of the botanical monograph, just as the feet become fetishized in the narrative of Gradiva.

The important aspect of this illustration of fetishism is that the fetish operates as a dreamwork image; the dynamics of displacement and condensation are the same in dream image and fetish. It is important to note that Hanold does not displace sex only onto the feet; he displaces it onto an entire narrative, a story. One could characterize this as a complicated "novelization" of his nuclear anxiety.

Freud also discusses the fetish in *Totem und Tabu* and builds upon the work done by James George Frazer. He characterizes the both the fetish and the totem as a revered object of superstition that one believes to have a special connection to oneself. The relation is reciprocal, with the object protecting the individual and the individual venerating the object in various ways, e.g., by not killing it, if it is an animal, or picking it, if it is a plant. He also distinguishes the fetish from the totem, in saying that the totem is "never a single item…instead a category, usually an animal or plant species, less often a class of inanimate objects, and less often still of artificially constructed objects" (Freud 1912–1913, p. 126). This is, however, the sole distinction offered by Freud.

Freud also discusses the fetish in his last major work on malaise in human culture, in which he says that the people of Israel thought themselves to be God's chosen ones, and that during times of hardship, they never doubted God's omnipotence and justice, but instead created prophets who reproached them for their sinfulness. From their bad conscience, they created the severe regulations of their sacerdotal religion (*Priesterreligion*). He contrasts this with the fetishism of "primitives," saying, "When they experience misfortune, they do not hold themselves guilty, but instead the fetish, which is obviously innocent, and they punish it instead of punishing themselves." (Freud 1930, p. 486). Thus both the Israelites and the "primitives" share an unshakable faith in a superstitious system, the difference being that the Israelites blame themselves for misfortune, and the primitives blame the fetish. Neither, however, sees the objective truth and prefers a mystified explanation.

Freud's excursions into the nature offetishism go well beyond the irreducible original point of the image of the castrated mother. The present study recommends focusing on the dynamics of the permutations of fetishism, which offer a quite generalizable and useful model.

The key issue is the notion of incommensurability. Rather than deriving the fetish from the initial threat of castration, it would be more productive to situate it instead within the process of the repression of sexuality, a repression that causes displacements along the syntagmatic continuum associated with it. The shoe, the foot, underwear, etc.—are all loci for the displacement of sexual energy, not because they preserve the moment before the horror of castration (of the female) and both accept and deny that castration, but because they accept and deny the suppression of sexuality. They operate like displacements in dream—the nuclear problem is denied but has to be recognized in warped form. So it is with sexuality. The panties, for instance, serve as a displacement and condensation of the sex act itself.

This leaves unanswered the question as to the origin of sexual repression, a repression that is central to human culture. In his work on malaise in culture, Freud held that happiness is at best episodic and intermittent, and this may well account for the lack of sexual satisfaction. Other psychoanalytic concepts may aid in an explanation, such as the human need to postpone gratification, the shame elicited by the exposure of the genitalia (which was a result of the assumption of an upright posture), or the notion that human culture is not possible without a generalized instinctual repression.

One of the most productive points in common is the issue of lack. The subject must both accept and deny the repression of sexuality. The resultant absence of sexual gratification is compensated for symbolically in the instantiation of the fetish. Thus the project is incommensurable, as the symbolic cannot satisfy the instinctual need. This sets up a repetition compulsion, in which the performance of the fetish is doomed not to satisfy; this generates a vicious circle of repetitions, wheels spinning in an effort of forward motion.

This process can be illuminated by the fort/da issue that Freud discusses in *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (translated as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). Freud observed his grandson Ernst, at the age of one and a half years, in a repetitive of game of casting away a toy that he held on a string and then pulling it back again. When the toddler cast away the toy, he exclaimed *fort!* (gone), and when he reeled it in, he exclaimed *da!* (here). Freud placed this repetitive game in the framework of the trauma of birth, the trauma of the separation from the mother. The toddler was traumatized by the fact that his mother would continually leave the room, but then return, and also by the fact that he could neither control nor predict the return. The toddler's act of throwing and retrieving was a symbolic attempt to master the neurosis, here practiced upon a toy instead of on the mother, the similarity lying solely in the structure in common. The trauma generates a repetition compulsion (*Wiederholungszwang*), a need to repeat the activity over and over. The process is clearly circular, and the satisfaction only immediate and temporary, because the fundamental problem is insoluble. And therein lies the elegance of the fort/da problem. If the problem cannot be resolved, a resolution gets reenacted in symbolic form. This results in no real solution, which sets up the circularity of the repetition. The process of fetishism can be seen in the same light, as an exclusively symbolic attempt at gratification, an attempt to master the lack (Freud 1920, pp. 1–15).

It is probably a good idea to bracket Freud's notion of the fetish as a substitute for the penis, in which the fear of castration sets up repetition and doubling. It clearly fits in well to the logic of patriarchy, but there is a lot more to the picture. One is obliged to offer a different view of fetishism. Due to the incommensurability of sexuality—the drive can never be extinguished—it gets repeated in analogous symbols. The repression of sexuality causes the proliferation of permutations, which are also enabled by the human faculty of play.

At this point, one may propose a bridge to political economy. In the Marxist model, the mystical fetish is believed to have supernatural powers; in the psychoanalytic, the sexual fetish is believed to have erotic powers, enabled by a deflection of sexual energy/libido onto an object. One could invoke the collegiate "panty raids" of the mid-twentieth century, when young men gathered outside the women's residences, and the "coeds" (as they were called then) threw panties down to them, thus alluding to the incipient "giving up of one's gifts." The sexual allusions invested in the fetish are created by metaphor and metonymy. The object associated with sexuality becomes itself sexualized.

The central issue is the object's relationship to desire. The object becomes a surrogate for satisfying a desire. Then and only then does it become a fetish. Marx fails to make that connection; for him, there is no difference between a commodity and a fetish. But one can draw a parallel here between psychoanalytic and economic processes: The commodity becomes a fetish when it alludes to the fulfillment of desire. The important thing is to decipher what the infrastructural desire is. For the sexual fetish, the desire is, clearly, sex. But it is important to emphasize that the sexual fetish, as in the case of Gradiva, is overdetermined, a locus of condensation of many values. It is the same for the material (economic) fetish—the Prius; the wristwatch; the handbag; all are loci of condensation. And clearly, the material fetish can be sexualized, as well, adding further condensations to the nodal point.

In 2012, Robert Cluley and Stephen Dunne published “From Commodity Fetishism to Commodity Narcissism,” in which the authors illuminate the submerged discourses of “excuses, rationalizations, and guilt” (Cluley and Dunne 2012, p. 255) in the buying habits of first-world consumers, as these habits relate to the third-world production of the commodities in question. Consumers are often reminded of the sweatshop conditions in the countries that produce the commodities, but, quite obviously, they purchase the items anyway. The reminders of inequality and exploitation are present but marginal; one may glance over an article on such exploitation in, for instance, *The New York Times*, but the information becomes muted by the din of all the other media information continually bombarding the consumer. The authors label this the *as if* phenomenon: Consumers know about the sweatshop, buy the sweater anyway, and act *as if* they did not know any better.

Quite cynically, the authors hold that the underlying motivation is sadistic—the consumer wants the sweatshop worker to suffer. They see this as commodity narcissism, an “other-abasing self-love…a desire to have at the expense of others” (253). They hold that “the average consumer already knows only all too well that their daily bread and clothing, as well as their privileged luxuries, are almost always made possible only by the existence of exploitative and unsafe working conditions that damage the social and physical environment” (252). The authors relate this phenomenon of ambivalence, of remembering and forgetting, to the acceptance and denial of castration in the psychoanalytic model. They conclude, quite harshly, “that the sovereign consumer is actually a tyrant who needs others to suffer so that they can continue to reign” (263). This dismal assessment is nonetheless exemplified, for instance, by the sign of the upscale chain retailer Banana Republic, which seems to proudly announce the exploitative inequity in an indifferent act of comic irony. Moreover, the authors’ observations do indeed correspond well to the psychoanalytic model, which takes aggression in human culture as a given. (Freud relates this to the death instinct in several works.)

In his late writings on malaise in culture, Freud observed that there is a part of human nature that is not readily admitted, namely that "humans are not kind beings in need of love, who can also defend themselves when attacked. Instead, they need to admit that a powerful tendency to aggression makes up a large part of their instinctual constitution. Consequently, their fellow humans are not potential helpers and sex objects, but also represent a temptation to satisfy their aggression upon them, to exploit their labor without compensation, to exploit them sexually without their consent, to take over their property, and to humiliate, harm, martyr, and kill them. *Homo homini lupus*" (The human is the wolf of the human.) (Freud 1930 pp. 470–471).

Thus violent urges are not reserved for the maladjusted. Violence and sadism are part of human nature: "As a consequence of this primary hostility that humans have for each other, society is continually threatened with collapse…human culture has to do all it can to set limits to aggressive human instincts" (471). All repressed instincts, however, manage to surface in one way or another, in most cases in a disguised form that seems to be devoid of violence, or, in some cases, that even seems to be altruistic.

Thus there is an element of truth to what Cluley and Dunne are saying. The authors largely reduce the scope of their inquiry to the sadistic elements in commodity fetishism. It should be emphasized, however, that the fetish is quite overdetermined and, as a locus of displacement and condensation, collects a plethora of psychophenomena in its multivalent prism. Given the presence of aggressive human instincts, the sadistic element must be found among those phenomena. The authors observe well that "fetishism is the name given by both Freud and Marx to a sort of displaced, somehow deficient subjective connection to an object, a connection that conceals something more profound and primordial" (Cluley and Dunne 2012, p. 257). The "something" here needs to be replaced by "many things" more profound and primordial, clearly among them the sadistic element. The authors do well, however, to expose the fallacy of the rational decision-making model; the decentered, ambivalent, contradictory, and semi-conscious subject is no master of its shopping motivations. And they have excellent observations on the avoidance mechanisms at play here: "the commodity fetish allows us to relate to commodities in such a way as to construct an idealized sense of self and draw attention away from the possibility that when we consume, what we are actually doing is willfully engaging in the elevation of ourselves at the cost of the destruction of others" (260). "Enlightening consumers of the moral consequences of their actions will make it more likely that they will continue with those actions" (261).

They also do well to illuminate the narcissistic elements in child-centered consumerism and make use of Freud's observations in his work on narcissism:

> Freud alerts us to the narcissistic strand running through commodity consumption. Parents buy things for their children not just to please their children but also to please themselves. When they shower expensive toys, food and clothes onto their children, parents are not simply ensuring that their child has the best products on the market. Much more importantly, as far as Freud is concerned, they are satisfying their own narcissistic desires. First, they are able to entertain the notion that they are acting out of selfless love and, therefore, add to their idealized image of themselves. Second, they can make up for desires that they were forced to inhibit when they were children by ensuring that their children, with whom they identify, need not ever know of these inhibitions. (259)

This is very well observed, but the authors do not transition to the commodification of children themselves. In the USA, for instance, the child often reflects the symbolic capital of the upper bourgeois family, both in the child's accessories (dress, prestigious schools, etc.) and in the child as accessory.

The shifting of guilt in consumer matters is also discussed in "The Subject Supposed to Recycle" by Campbell Jones (2010), who views individuals in the neoliberal setting as not denying, but exaggerating their own responsibility as concerns environmental pollution. The true ecological delinquent is not the individual, but the corporation that creates the environmental hazard in the first place. Jones observes, however, that individuals have displaced the responsibility and guilt onto themselves and recommends a relocation of responsibility onto the culpable corporations. His observations are productive in two ways. First, they illuminate public reaction in the context of guilt vis-à-vis an authority figure, and one can place this in the context of the ontological guilt that Freud sees in human culture, a guilt that stems from the ineluctable hostility of children toward parents. (One is reminded of Freud's account of the people of Israel blaming themselves for the misfortunes that the deity has rained down upon them.) Second, they illuminate the uniquely American resolution to politico-economic problems that can only be solved by centralized government solutions; the resolution (not the solution) "gets the government out of the way" and flips the responsibility onto the individual, thus obviating the socialized solution and perpetuating the problem.

In should be emphasized, however, that one of the major obstacles to environmentalism is the phenomenon of symbolic environmentalism, the engagement with signs of environmental amelioration instead of the amelioration itself, a phenomenon that can be situated within the dynamics of fetishism.

The article "Commodity Fetishism and Repression: Reflections on Marx, Freud and the Psychology of Consumer Capitalism," by Michael Billig, is also relevant here. Billig points out how consumer capitalism is based on suppression of awareness of the true dynamics of production, a sort of performed amnesia. He relates this to the fact that commodities become understood in relation to other commodities, or to money, instead of the circumstances of production. This is all based on cognitive repression, a shared forgetting. And the habitus is reinforced by that amnesia: "There is a link between custom and lack of awareness." He speaks of "consumption and amnesia" (Billig 1999, p. 316). If I own an object and it is to be part of the construction of my identity, "then my imagination must be routinely curtailed" (319) and the commodity becomes a transcendent object relating to that identity. The modes of production of the commodity are bracketed from awareness. Billig notes that repression involves substitution; the repressed returns in displaced form, in allusive form. The nagging reminder of the poor working conditions becomes repressed and reappears in the relationship among commodities. This is similar to the *as if* of Cluley and Dunne.

Gareth Lloyd has offered an especially cogent account of commodity fetishism in relation to power: "On a formal level, fetishism refers to the human ability to project value onto a material object, repress the fact that the projection has taken place and then to interpret the object as the autonomous source of that value" (Lloyd 2008, p. 8). One sees here that the commodity becomes a fetish at the point of the projection of value that is suppressed from awareness. This corresponds to what Marx and Zizek say about the commodity, that it apparently has a life of its own, but one sees here that the autonomy (and mystification) of the commodity result from psychological sources, a point not clear in Marx's discussion. He continues: "It must be remembered that this mass culture is offered to consumers as compensation: a form of substitute satisfaction for the needs denied to them as alienated workers of capitalism…Differences between cultural commodities provide the individual with a pseudo-individuality to placate the need for real individuality denied in production. In the end, cultural commodities are only superficially different from one another" (119–120).

This is also a very productive observation, in that it underscores the illusory value of the commodity while also offering a bridge to the complicity of American identity politics. Lloyd then engages some observations by Horkheimer and Adorno: "For Horkheimer and Adorno, acts of consumption therefore, do not correspond to, but conceal class differences because the difference between commodities is artificial. The logic is thus that if we all (mass society) consume similar commodities, there ceases to be a visible difference between the classes" (120). Thus the free circulation of commodity fetishes is seen to create the impression of class levelling; but this is clearly not the case. The class codes imbedded in the commodities communicate class membership quite well to those already initiated into the social group.

Moreover, the accessibility of the mystified commodity itself invites the consumers into the dynamic of upward mobility, of themselves seeking that difference. While Americans do play at being middle class, there are plenty of gradations within that class. Moreover, the ideology of middle class is operative in order to obfuscate the working class. Lloyd points this out well: "In a Marxist sense, the ownership of commodities amongst the broad middle class (especially in the first world), actively conceals the real contention between the working class and the bourgeoisie. In other words, the differences between an individual's position in the system of production is obscured beneath the circulation and ownership of commodities" (126). The circulation of commodities always reminds the consumer of the next rung up in the social ladder. One consumes, in part, in order to rise above one's class. This is to be distinguished from the current American discourse of a generalized middle class, which acts to obscure the working class.

This is well analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu in the article "Social Space and Symbolic Power." Bourdieu holds that "the groups that must be constructed in order to objectivize the positions they occupy hide those positions" (Bourdieu 1989, p. 16). And here, Bourdieu repeats his astute taxonomy of the permutations of capital: "According to my empirical investigations, these fundamental powers are economic capital (in its different forms), cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital, which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (17). And the commodity fetish operates in the nexus of those capitals.

Bourdieu aptly illuminates the subtle strategies for communicating class difference within the appearance of class levelling: "I have in mind what I call strategies of condescension, those strategies by which agents who occupy a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space symbolically deny the social distance between themselves and others, a distance which does not thereby cease to exist, thus reaping the profits of the recognition granted to a purely symbolic denegation of distance ('she is unaffected,' 'he is not highbrow' or 'stand-offish,' etc.) which implies a recognition of distances" (16). This play acting at being non-elitist is a symbolic denial of distance, symbolic because it is not real, as it offers the appearance of non-elitism while preserving elitism.

These points had been further elaborated upon by Bourdieu in *Choses dites*, in which he holds that the legitimation of the social order is not the product of deliberate acts of propaganda; it results from the fact that the agents of that legitimation create perceptual and evaluative structures that make the legitimation seem self-evident, because they hold a quasi-monopoly on societal institutions and impose a scale of value most favorable to themselves (Bourdieu 1987, pp. 160–161). That is a large part of the problem; the legitimation is evident or taken for granted.

Also in *Choses dites*, Bourdieu offers an excellent bridge to the fetishizing of authority figures, saying that ministers, be they governmental or religious, are subject to the processes that Marx ascribed to fetishism, and that their characteristics are constructs of the human mind that appear to have a life of their own (186–187). He adds that "political idolatry…the value that is in the political personage…appears as a mysterious objective property of the person, a charm, a charisma" (187). This parallels the attribution of autonomous value to the commodity fetish, an attribution that suppresses recognition of the cultural factors that have constructed the fetish.

William Pietz has made an outstanding contribution to the understanding of the fetish in a trilogy of articles appearing in the journal *Anthropology and Aesthetics* as well as in the anthology *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, coedited with Emily Apter. Pietz agrees with the basic Marxist tenet that exchange value and the corresponding fluctuation of market prices mask the dynamics of social labor: "Material objects turned into commodities conceal exploitative social relations, displacing value-consciousness from the true productive movement of social labor to the apparent movement of market prices and forces" (Pietz 1985, p. 9). It is important to emphasize that this concealment is a *consequence* of the appearance of commodities, but not the cause thereof. Economies do not produce commodities in order to conceal labor relations. They produce commodities in order to profit from exchange value and this results in the diversion of attention from labor to market value. Moreover, this process accounts for the commodity, but not the fetish.

For Pietz, the fetish "evokes an intensely personal response from individuals" (12). Fetishes "exist in the world as material objects that 'naturally' embody socially significant values that touch one or more individuals in an intensely personal way: a flag, monument, or landmark; a talisman, medicine-bundle, or sacramental object; an earring, tattoo, or cockade; a city, village, or nation; a shoe, lock of hair, or phallus…each has that quality of synecdochic fragmentedness" (14). The use of synecdoche here is well chosen, although not entirely on the mark. It indicates the relation of a part to a whole, the whole here being the ideological system that contains the fetish. The invocation of fragmentedness is also well chosen, as the fetish is a fragment of a whole. But the term metonymic would be more apt, as it allows for the displacement of energy along the syntagm of associations. The fetish is a locus of a "rhetoric of identification and disavowal that establishes conscious and unconscious value judgments" (14).

Pietz also offers a good explanation of why we study fetishes: Fetish theory "holds an illusory attractive power of its own: that of seeming to be that Archimedean point of man at last 'more open and cured of his obsessions,' the impossible home of a man without fetishes" (14). This would imply that fetishism is ineluctable and ontological in human existence.

In the essay "Fetishism and Materialism: The Limits of Theory in Marx," Pietz sees the Marxist theory of fetishism as "a critical, materialist theory of social desire" (Pietz 1993, p. 129) and reiterates Marx's statement that capital is a sensuous supersensuous thing. He isolates Marx's pregnant statement that fetishism cannot deliver humans from desire, because it is itself "the religion of sensuous desire" (*die Religion der sinnlichen Begierde*) (Marx 1976, p. 91). He also says, as does Freud, that fetish worshipers smash the fetish when it no longer acts as the most obedient servant of their desires. He holds that the discourse of fetishism "displaced the problem of religion from a theological to a materialist problematic congenial to the emerging human sciences and to anticlerical activism alike. It did so by discovering the origin of religious belief in primitive causal reasoning: a mode of thought deriving not from 'reason' but from 'desire and credulity'" (Pietz 1993, p. 137). And he adds that "the bourgeois capitalist is perceived as himself a fetishist, one whose fetish, capital, is believed by its deluded cultists to embody *(super)natural causal powers of value formation*" (141). While this statement is indeed true, one must emphasize that the fetishism of the bourgeois capitalist is transparent; it is not seen as fetishism; it is seen as normality.

In the introduction to the anthology *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, Emily Apter has made some important observations. She holds that "the household fetishes of cars, TVs, and swimming pools are shown to be sites of displaced lack, dream surrogates for better values. Fetishism in avant-garde culture, one might say, is impregnated with the self-consciousness of absent value" (Apter 1993, p. 2). This clearly relates back to the Freudian and Lacanian notion of the phallus as the proto-fetish but does so in a more global and productive manner. Apter adds: "Fetishism records the trajectory of an idée fixe or *noumen* in search of its materialist twin (god to idol, alienated labor to luxury item, phallus to shoe fetish, and so on)" (4). One might better reverse direction and say that it concerns the *phenomenon* in search of the noumen: The idol alludes to the absent deity; the shoe to the absent phallus, etc. The condition of desire seeks a closure that cannot be attained, and we only know this closure in representative secondary forms. The phallus itself is one of those derivative representations.

The problem is *malaise in human culture* a priori; existence is incommensurate due to the repression of instincts and the necessity, for civilization, of the postponement of gratification. All are seeking a nebulous fulfillment but are relegated to solely simulacra of that fulfillment, and those simulacra become easily fetishized.

An excellent contribution to the understanding of fetishism has been made by Hal Foster in the article "The Art of Fetishism: Notes on Dutch Still Life," also found in the anthology by Apter and Pietz. Foster observes that "commodity fetishism partly replaced religious fetishism" (Foster 1993, p. 255). One might abbreviate this as such: People worship go(o)ds. Foster explains Dutch still life paintings as expressions of commodity fetishism. He quotes Willem Bosman, former chief merchant of the Dutch West Indies Company, from 1705: "If it was possible to convert the *Negroes* to the Christian Religion, the *Roman*-Catholicks would succeed better than we should, because they already agree in several particulars, especially in their ridiculous Ceremonies; for do the *Romanists* abstain one or two Days weekly from Flesh; these have also their days when they forbear Wine; which, considering they are great lovers of it, is somewhat severe" (Bosman 1705, p. 154; Foster 1993, p. 255). This is, of course, a protestant interpretation that sees a quality of voodoo in Catholic practices.

Foster observes: "As religious fetishism was suppressed, a commercial fetishism, a fetishism of the commodity, was released"; the Dutch denounced one overvaluation of objects, only to produce another of their own (255): "Painting was to become the ultimate golden calf, as it is for us today, as it had begun to be for the seventeenth-century Dutch" (255). This makes perfect sense and fits tidily into the transformation from religious to secular painting, especially in Italy. Along with the quote from Bosman, one sees a progression from African fetishes, to catholic fetishes, to Dutch still lifes. The Dutch "employed fetishism as a category with which to negotiate the different economies of the object that they encountered in the course of market expansion" (256). That is why their still lifes are eclectic: Venetian glass, Chinese porcelain, American tobacco, etc. These objects are "mastered in representation" (256).

Foster seems to be saying that first there was the preeconomic gift exchange system, then the religious one, and then the commodity.

Foster relates this to Freud's studies on fetishism, the phallus, and castration, namely the ambivalent attitude that castration is to be both denied and accepted. Thus Foster holds that to possess the commodities in art is to be threatened with their dispossession. This may be the most generalizable use of Freud's ideas and it may also help to explain greed in general: Overconsumption is generated by a fear of loss (in the reductionist model, an abstracted fear of loss of the penis). Thus Foster holds that the idealizing gaze "might include a reminder of the very loss that haunts the subject" (264). In still life, "a ghost of a lack hangs over its very abundance" (264).

The distinction between commodity and fetish has been well delineated by Marcel Godelier, who has studied the commodification of salt among the Baruya culture of New Guinea. He holds that this commodity "only has exchange value because it has a consumable use value to begin with. Of course, the amount of salt consumed by the Baruya is minimal; not because it is naturally rare, but because it is exclusively an object of ritual consumption. Thus salt is a commodity, the use value of which is that of a ritual object valorized by its ideological and social signification as well as by its biological utility, its gastronomic flavor, and the difficulties of its production…In order for a commodity to function as 'money,' it has to be able to be exchanged for a set of other commodities and function as their equivalent" (Godelier 1969, p. 26).

The commodity does indeed have value, but in a limited and non-generalizable context.

He notes that when the Baruya were paid in money for the first time, they did not know what the coins were for. Some began to pierce and wear them like they do seashell necklaces. In fact, they came to refer to European money as "seashells," which they would also occasionally use as money, a generalized equivalency. This offers a useful correspondence among accessory, object of religious devotion, fetish, and commodity. And Godelier, M. sees this correspondence as very promising for his study. He says that "this money offers us an exceptional opportunity to plumb the mysteries of the theory of value" (27). The nature of commodity fetishes begins to crystallize here as ritualized objects of exchange of ideological significance.

Godelier, M. continues this theme in *Horizon, trajets marxistes en anthropologie*: "commodity fetishism constitutes the hearth for a universe of mythical representations that nourish irrational beliefs in the magic power of things, or that lead people to magical behavior in order to obtain the occult powers of these things" (Godelier 1973, p. 311).

In the film *The Next Three Days* (2010), the protagonist John Brennan (Russell Crowe) plays a community college professor who engineers the escape from prison of his innocent wife. In pursuing Brennan, the police discover that he drives a Prius. A detective then asks, "What kind of criminal drives a Prius?" (Nozik et al. 2010). This cultural anecdote indicates the morality involved in environmentalism; the sign of ecology is ethical. The Toyota Prius is an expensive hybrid vehicle that runs on electricity and fuel. The sign of ownership of a Prius can be seen to indicate both social status and proper morality; it self-moralizes as a justification and instantiation of affluence, serves as a form of absolution for ecological and economic transgressions, and thus sanctifies the owners, who may participate in all manner of other activities that contribute to wealth inequality and pollution. These are, however, excused by the sign of the hybrid vehicle, which is thus fetishized as a ritualized object of ideological significance, a secular fetish with religious overtones.

This corresponds well to Cluley and Dunne's study of commodity fetishism, which illuminates the submerged discourses of "excuses, rationalizations, and guilt" (Cluley and Dunne 2012, p. 255) in the buying habits of first-world consumers, but it advances the study by adding to it the function of the commodity fetish that negates and excuses the irresponsible consumption. The authors hold that consumers consume in an act of feigned ignorance of their irresponsibility. The present study, however, shows that consumers add an accessory to their consumption that symbolizes a responsible reversal of their otherwise culpable buying habits. They engage in a form of symbolic ecology, and their discourse and acquisitions become littered with such fetishized symbols.

The exceptionalist American political economy possesses a truly amazing security device, a defense mechanism that neutralizes oppositionalities by commodifying and marketing them. The oppositionalities become transferred to the symbolic, as one sees in the commodification of environmentalism into symbolic objects—the actual environmental political alternatives become neutralized. The resultant fetish holds the process in the symbolic, in the ineffective. A far greater commodification occurred with the counterculture movement of the 1960s. The opposition to domestic and foreign policy quickly became sublimated into fetish symbols of pop culture and identity politics, finally yielding a decade later to the election of Ronald Reagan.

The fetishized symbols became the locus of diverted political energy, absorbing and diffusing that energy.

Clearly, the fetish does not arise only in the act of economic exchange. It must be the product of a non-economic process that becomes joined to the economic. In psychoanalysis, all objects can have symbolic value, all can be loci of displacements, and all can have oneiric (dream) value. And this is not a product of an exchange economy; if it were, then human prehistory would have been quite different. The mechanisms of displacement and condensation (metaphor and metonymy), so fundamental to human thought, cognition, and behavior, generate secondary and tertiary loci of psychological processes. These mechanisms then become applied to commodities, when these commodities enter into complicated psychological dynamics. It is the human faculty of mystification that becomes exploited, but not created by the market. Fetishes are part of human ontology; commodities are not. Also, the supposition that fetishes would not be present in a completely egalitarian society (a communist andro-gynocracy or gyno-androcracy?) does not seem to be tenable.

In the realm of economy, objects become commodities as soon as they are exchanged. The commodity becomes fetishized when it is imbued with mystical value, when it becomes multivalent and overdetermined. The contradictions and anxieties active in the overdetermination become transferred to the object, and it then emerges as a fetish. One need only ask what the consumer is avoiding in the act of buying. For it is the act of avoidance that determines the fetish. In Freud's last major work on malaise in culture, he observed that "beauty and charm (*Reiz*) are originally properties of the sex object. It is remarkable that the genitals themselves, the sight of which is always stimulating, are almost never judged to be beautiful; the nature of beauty seems to depend on secondary indicators of sex" (Freud 1930, p. 442). Sexual responses are thus triggered by secondary characteristics. Sexuality seems to be displaced a priori. The margins become the primary locus of activity. So it is as well with the commodity fetish.

But one must ultimately ask if there are homologic structures here, if the conversion of the modes of production into commodities parallels the transformations found in dreamwork. It seems that the fetish aspect of the commodity is constructed externally to the commodity itself; the mystified attributes are ascribed to it by the psychology of bourgeois consciousness. Commodity fetishes do not flourish simply because they mask the realities of production. They have acquired mystical properties from psychological non-economic processes. Clearly, commodity fetishes have great economic power, but that power is enabled by the engagement of a psychological process. And often, they proceed in an act of class division in order to separate the bourgeoisie from the workers.

As Foster has pointed out, commodity fetishes can be constructed by an anxiety of loss, real or not. And as has also been discussed, the guilt resulting from affluence generates the necessary defense mechanisms. In Billig's model, the defense mechanisms result from the cognitive repression of the conditions of production. This is true to an extent, but they rather result from the cognitive repression of the conditions of class and income inequality and its permutations in race and gender. And the class fetish is the object that the empowered class has chosen as a sign of its membership, as a membership button. It comes from the discursive maneuvers of the empowered class, from their sign language.

Language is of massive importance here, for language is the theater for the performance of political, economic, and sociological ideologies. For the performance of these ideologies, the USA has developed an exceptionalist language, both symbolic and concrete. It is a language relative to the USA, one that determines the parameters of what can be conceptualized. This necessitates a discussion of linguistic relativism.

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CHAPTER 7

Language, Thought, and Economy

Marx observed that the class in control of the material forces of a society also controls its intellectual forces; the class that has the means of material production also has the means of intellectual production: "The production of ideas, of imaginations, of consciousness is immediately entwined in the material activity and the material intercourse of humans … as the direct outflow of their material behavior. The same is true of intellectual production, as it presents itself in the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc." (Marx 1969, p. 26).

The key term here is *language*: the class in power determines the *language of politics*. It will be argued here that the exceptional American political economy has generated linguistic habits that severely restrict the possibilities of exit from that system. Now what is being proposed here accesses a hotly contested issue: linguistic relativism, the idea that language determines or influences thought, which is commonly known as the Whorf hypothesis, named after Benjamin Lee Whorf, a fire prevention engineer who studied linguistics with Edward Sapir. It is also referred to as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis. The awkward terms "Whorfianism" and "Neo-Whorfianism" are also current.

Whorf dabbled in the study of the native Hopi language of the southwestern USA and contrasted its grammar with that of the major European languages. He observed that the Hopi language expressed many phenomena, e.g., plurality, numeration, quantity, time, space, etc., quite differently than do the European languages. This lets him to the conclusion that the Hopi and European world views were radically different, and that

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these world views were enabled by the different linguistic systems. He actually went so far as to say that Western physics is a linguistic construct: "Newtonian space, time, and matter are no intuitions. They are recepts from culture and language. That is where Newton got them" (Whorf 1964, p. 153). Just as Marx held that thought is generally determined by political and economic interests, so did Whorf hold that thought is generally determined by language. Subsequent studies, especially careful work on the Hopi language, have shown the errors present in many of Whorf's speculations.

There do remain, however, some aspects of language that lend themselves well to the arguments of linguistic relativism. As linguists continue to examine previously unrecorded languages, they find striking differences in ways of expressing, for instance, color, spatial orientation, gender, and even arithmetic (there are cultures very uninterested in counting), and experiments do show that the linguistic peculiarities can affect cognition.

One of the major respected apologists for linguistic relativism is the Israeli linguist Guy Deutscher, a research fellow at the University of Manchester. Deutscher's *Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages* (2010a) is an especially astute assessment of linguistic relativism. Deutscher focuses primarily on three aspects: color terms, spatial orientation, and gender. He cites experiments showing how cultures can perceive and name colors differently, how they can perceive and indicate direction differently, and how they can perceive objects according to the gender that their language assigns to those objects. The experimental evidence for his arguments is solid, but some opponents of linguistic relativism hold that the differences are minimal and do not add up to a different world view based on language.

A central issue in linguistic relativism concerns the interaction between language and culture. One asks if it is language that is creating the cultural phenomenon, or if it is the cultural phenomenon that is determining the particular use of language. It will be argued here that this particular aspect of the controversy over an original point is basically a chicken-or-egg argument that avoids the interactive nature of the forces at play: culture and language exist in symbiosis and reinforce each other. The symbiotic reinforcement can determine the degree of relativity of the linguistic construct to the culture that it is bound up with.

One remarkable facet of linguistic relativism concerns the differences between egocentric and geocentric spatial coordinate systems. Most cultures employ an egocentric coordinate system, in which directions are given based on the position of the person in question, "turn left at the corner" being a useful example. In a geocentric system, directions are given relative to the earth, and one would say "turn north at the corner." In the few geocentric cultures studied, the degree to which the coordinates are engrained in perception and cognition is truly startling to outsiders. Guy Deutscher reports "how a speaker of Tzeltal from southern Mexico was blindfolded and spun around more than 20 times in a darkened house. Still blindfolded and dizzy, he pointed without hesitation at the geographic directions" (Deutscher 2010b). (Tzeltal is a Mayan language spoken in the Mexican state of Chiapas.) This seems indeed mysterious and uncanny to, for instance, monolingual anglophones, but one need only to reflect for a moment on the fact that the blindfolded anglophone would just as invariably indicate left or right, no matter many times spun around.

These differences have fascinating perceptual and cognitive results. Two "identical" rooms opposite each other on the same hotel corridor would not be considered identical to a Tzeltal speaker. The anglophone would see the same furniture positioned the same way in both rooms: bed on the left, mirror on the right, bath on the left, etc., but the Tzeltal speaker would see the furniture distributed differently, one room having the bed on the south (or west), and the other room having the bed on the north (or east) (Deutscher 2010a, p. 185). One could imagine an amusing conversation at the hotel desk between the guest, a geocentric language speaker, and the receptionist, a clueless egocentric language speaker, as to whether the rooms were the same or not.

There are, however, geocentric coordinate reference systems even in heavily egocentric cultures. People who live in Manhattan (a very egocentric culture) prefer geocentric coordinates when indicating location and would say, for instance, "Lincoln Center is on the west side of Broadway." Saying "Lincoln Center is on the left side of Broadway" would elicit confusion.

Deutscher points out that children do not learn directional coordinates from nature, but instead from adults speaking to children in that manner. Thus it is culturally transmitted through language, obviously. In fact, geographic coordinates are more quickly learned by children than egocentric ones. Studies of Tzeltal-speaking children show that they actually start actively using the geographic coordinates already at age two and have mastered them by age seven, whereas children raised in left–right cultures do not actively use their coordinates until about age eleven (190–192).

What started as a cultural phenomenon in a certain natural niche then became a linguistic one that reinforced the cultural habitus.

One of the most fascinating aspects of language and perception concerns the problem of color terms and color perception, which vary considerably across cultures. There are cultures with a wide array of color terms, like the USA, and cultures that only distinguish between black and white (or light and dark). There is, however, a fixed sequence in the accumulation of color terms:

b/w → red → yellow → green → blue → brown → purple pink orange or gray

or b/w → red → yellow → green → blue → brown → purple pink orange or gray

All cultures with only two color terms have only black and white (or light and dark); all colors with only three color terms have black, white, and red. All cultures with five color terms have black, white, red, green, and yellow. And so on. The grouping of objects under one color can also vary wildly from culture to culture, with one culture calling something blue that another culture would never think of calling blue. Since the naming of the color is bound up with the perception of the color, the function of language as a determiner emerges once more.

Experiments have shown that, if language A has a word for color X, and language B has none, speakers of language A can identify color X more quickly than can speakers of language B. For instance, English has one general term for blue, whereas Russian does not, having *siniy* (blue) and *goluboy* (light blue). These are not seen in Russian as distinctions in shade, but as two different colors as separate as are, for anglophones, blue and green. Experiments have demonstrated that Russians can identify this color difference more quickly than can anglophones. (Italian actually has three terms for what anglophones call blue: *blu, azzurro*, and *celeste*, but experiments seem to prefer Russian as the example.)

The Herero (Himba) culture of Namibia has one term for both green and blue. The documentary "Colour is in the Eye of the Beholder" (Franklin and Davies 2015) discusses an experiment that shows the great difficulty the Himba have in identifying the difference. Some just stare at the display of color images for a good length of time. Similarly, the Himba see shades of green that are nearly imperceptible to anglophones, who need lengthy focused concentration to tell the difference. (Most of my students could not see the differences in shade at all.) Blue and green are adjacent on the color spectrum, with no clear point of demarcation between the two, and the range in wavelengths for what anglophones would call blue is much larger than the minimal range in wavelengths necessary for them to see a clear separation of blue from green.

Deutscher adds an important observation: “As strange as it may sound, our experience of a Chagall painting actually depends to some extent on whether our language has a word for blue” (Deutscher 2010b). Color perception has everything to do with the appreciation of polychromatic art. The issue is one of a culturally determined color blindness. Clearly, if one is not habituated to see a certain color, that would most certainly affect one’s appreciation of a painting containing that color.

He also discusses the role of memory in color perception: “If the brain remembers that a certain object should be a certain color, it will go out of its way to make sure that you really see this object in this color” (Deutscher 2010a, p. 249). The brain keeps colors constant in differing light environments, e.g., morning, noon, night, indoors, etc., by storing the normalized image and adjusting perception to it. We know that humans share the same retinal color receptors (we share them with monkeys, as well). Cultures that perceive colors differently do not have different ocular anatomies, but they do process color differently in the brain. The images by which they navigate are stored in the brain, along with the corresponding vocabulary.

This is clearly adaptive, as it would be confusing to see one blue in the morning and a different blue at night. The normalized image is, clearly, stored with a name (blue, green, etc.). The simultaneous storage of the color term along with the color would reinforce the reciprocal relationship between language and perception. The name retrieves the normalized color, and the perception of the color the name, in a reciprocal habituation. This can be extended to apply to the relationship between word and concept. Vocabulary is stored along with a normalized version of the corresponding concept, which would thus constitute its normalized meaning, a meaning to which speakers become habituated and accustomed, and which has its place in the spectrum of the ideology of the culture. Incoming data that varies along with the environment becomes “corrected” to correspond to the memory image to which the perceiver is habituated. Just as the perception of change in color along with a change in light environment would be bothersome, so would a change in meaning.

The universal progression in color terms from b/w to red, then to yellow and/or green, and then to blue corresponds to a color distribution in nature. Red, green, and yellow are very common in natural materials, whereas blue is extremely rare. Our primate ancestors developed a sensitivity to spot red and yellow fruit against a background of green foliage. Red is also the color of blood, which would have been quite useful to perceive. Also, red, yellow, and green dyes are easy to make, but blue dye is not. Thus it was not that necessary to distinguish blue (or brown) from other colors. The sky is blue, but, clearly, one has no need to pick it out against a larger background in order to perceive it; thus, its color is not important in some cultures. There is an absence of blue in the ancient Greek and Indian texts. Homer does not seem to be interested in the color of the sky—instead he refers to it metaphorically, e.g., as iron or copper. He also refers to the sea as the color of wine, as he does oxen. Some cultures have been found that actually refer to the sky as black, perhaps generalizing to the sky at night, or perhaps shoving its color into a secondary catch-all. If one is not interested in the color of something, one will tend to avoid color in describing it, and will, instead, resort to other characteristics of the object, e.g., its luminosity, its appearance of dampness, dryness, freshness, age, etc., in order to identify it.

Deutscher notes that American culture has a wide range of color terms—as a trip to the paint store will quickly verify—but a dearth of taste terms: "We have a refined vocabulary of color but a vague vocabulary of taste. We find the refinement of the former and vagueness of the latter equally natural, but this is only because of the cultural conventions we happen to have been born into" (75). We can easily be taught to distinguish among tastes, but it is not in our current habitus to do so. This can be applied to color, as well: "The ancients could see colors just as well as we do, and the differences in color vocabulary reflect purely cultural developments, not biological ones" (76).

Take a "guy" who is indifferent to many color distinctions, who could care less what magenta, turquoise, and ecru are, and who, in identifying them, would perhaps generalize to the nearest "major" color, saying, respectively, pink, blue, and brown. Imagine the following conversation:

See that ecru car over there?
-Huh? Which one?
The one on the corner.

-Ya mean the brown one?
Well, ok but it's not brown, it's ecru.
-Yeah, whatever, what about it?

Now clearly, one could quickly teach him the differences and the requisite vocabulary (especially with a financial incentive). But that is not the point. Left to his own devices, he will continually rehabituate himself to indifference, to blindness and muteness, and he will have neither perception of nor language for the colors. His vocabulary and perception will correspond to his needs, and his emotional investment in his indifference could manifest itself in an arrogant "big deal."

If it is useful for a culture to distinguish color x from color y, then the culture will have separate terms for the two. The terms will be stored in memory, along with the color, and the term will evoke the color concept. It would be useful here to return to an early point in modern linguistics and the contributions of Ferdinand de Saussure, who helped to problematize the notion of simple descriptiveness in language. Referentiality does not consist in a direct relation between a word and a referent, but instead between an acoustic image and a concept. This moves the whole of referentiality indoors into perception, cognition, and, clearly, psychology. The belief that there is something "out there" that all languages describe equally is simplistic and, honestly, incorrect. The theater of language is in the brain and subject to individual peculiarities. This is not to say that we are all locked into universal solipsism; individuals and cultures may, with reasonable effort, develop agreed-upon conventions. But these are only conventions. William Blake's ungenerous aphorism: "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees" may serve as an illustrative metaphor.

Another issue in linguistic relativism concerns languages that indicate grammatical gender, e.g., masculine, feminine, and neuter, and its relationship to perception. Experiments have shown that languages with noun gender attribute masculine and feminine characteristics to those nouns in accordance with the corresponding gender. For instance, *la finestra*, "window," in Italian becomes associated with feminine characteristics. The feminizing or masculinizing of objects will vary according to the gender of the same object in different languages. In French, a bridge (*le pont*) would attract masculine descriptors and in German (*die Brücke*) feminine ones. Also, interesting cartoonish experiments show that when speakers of languages with noun gender are asked to assign human voices to various objects, they prefer female voices for feminine nouns and male for masculine ones. Deutscher speculates that this could influence the design of, for instance, bridges across cultures.

There are also experiments that contrast speakers whose languages express time by indicating an amount or a size (Spanish: *mucho tempo*) with speakers whose languages express time by distance (English: "a long time"). The experiments showed that Spanish speakers could better estimate how quickly a space fills up, whereas the English speakers could better estimate how quickly a line reaches its destination. Again, spatial metaphors for time add but another ingredient to the matrix of language and culture.

The most powerful connection between language and thought is found in the realm of vocabulary, where shifts in meaning accompany shifts in thought, and where the semantic and the conceptual go hand in hand. Some terms will stubbornly persist in an ideological deadlock. Take for instance the absence in American English of a word for a young adult female, say between the ages of 20 and 30. "Girl," "woman," and "lady" do not hit the mark. Even though women's college basketball is not officially called "girls' college basketball" and Bryn Mawr does not refer to itself as a "girls' college," 20-year-old female college students are regularly referred to as "girls" by both students and, unfortunately, faculty, as well. One can easily point to a cultural origin for this—the patriarchal desire to infantilize females, but it is the vocabulary that freezes the discursive possibilities.

In some cases, the attempt to modify prejudice through language eventually backfires, and prejudice changes the meaning of the new word back to the meaning of the old one, until the prejudice is eradicated. The linguist Robin Lakoff argues this point in *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), in which she shows that, if there is a societal prejudice against an ethnic group, changing the name of the group will only work for a while, and, eventually the prejudice will catch up with the neologism and degrade it. Her observations have clearly held true with the name changes for the US black population. The terms *colored* and *Negro* were polite up till the 1960s, changed to *Afro-American*, then to *black*, and now to *people of color* or *African American*. One wonders what the difference is between *colored people* and *people of color*, between *Afro-American* and *African American*, and the answer is that the difference is largely temporal. A neologism may pass out of fashion, like V-neck sweaters, until it returns decades later and is fashionable again by virtue of its difference. Lakoff observes that only an eradication, or absence, of the prejudice will secure the prestige of the term. *White* has remained *white* and needs no euphemisms.

This shows the symbiosis between thought and semantics. Political thought can navigate across the metonymies of a word and select the one supporting its ideology. It then expands the metonymy to cover the semantic field of the term, and then the term reinforces the ideology. If language were separate from culture, then the semantic shifts of political terms in the USA could not happen the way that they do. The associations of a word depend upon its usage in culture, the things it gets connected to, and then the ideology will fix the meaning, and the meaning the ideology, in symbiosis.

Negative critiques of Whorf often overlook the factor of habituation in his theories. This is indicated in the title of one of his most discussed essays, *The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language*, and it is important to emphasize that, for Whorf, it is the *habits of language* that reinforce our perception and cognition. And as is well known, habits can be difficult to break. Deutscher knows this well: "fundamental aspects of our thought are influenced by the cultural conventions of our society, to a much greater extent than is fashionable to admit today … the real effects of the mother tongue are rather the habits that develop through the *frequent use* of certain ways of expression. The concepts we are trained to treat as distinct, the information our mother tongue continually forces us to specify, the details it requires us to be attentive to, and the repeated associations it imposes on us—all these habits of speech can create habits of mind" (Deutscher 2010a, p. 234). And habits create needs.

The model here is simple operant conditioning. The linguistic phenomenon may appear randomly in a given culture, but it then becomes associated with a behavioral response, which it then elicits by habituation. One may indeed enlarge this without exaggeration: Language is itself the medium, the laboratory of repetition. Culture uses language as its means of habituation.

Language is the theater of operant conditioning, the determiner of learned behavior.

Deutscher adds: "No one (in his or her right mind) would argue nowadays that the structure of a language limits its speakers' understanding to those concepts and distinctions that happen to be already part of the linguistic system. Rather, serious researchers have looked for the consequences of the *habitual* use from an early age of certain ways of expression" (156). He notes "the dominant view among linguists and cognitive scientists today" that "the influence of language on thought can be considered significant only if … one language can be shown to prevent its speakers from solving a logical problem that is easily solved by speakers of another language" (234), of which he says, "how many daily decisions do we make on the basis of abstract deductive reasoning, compared with those guided by gut feeling, intuition emotions, impulse … how many wars have been fought over disagreements in set theory?" (235).

Recent research on rational choice theory, a major perspective in economics that supposes a rational economic agent, shows the subliminal psychological factors at work in the theater of economic agency. And clearly, the operative model for the present study concerns the partial eclipsing of consciousness in political and economic behavior. Language does condition thought in ways that one is often reluctant to see.

Opponents of linguistic determinism often wiggle out of the language determines thought model by noting that, if language A has a peculiar linguistic construct that is absent in language B, speakers of language B can learn it anyway. In most cases, this is indeed true, and it reflects the ingenuity of human intelligence to think its way out of the confines of language. Humans can learn the strange exoticism in another language, but their own customs of language and cognition will habituate them *not to do so*.

The wholesale rejection of Whorf's ideas based upon some of his improbable assertions—such as the assertion that Newtonian mechanics is a construct of the English language—is tantamount to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. There are numerous examples in the history of science of seminal thinkers who said the brilliant alongside the preposterous and, in many cases, one ignores the preposterous and focuses on the brilliant. In the *Phaedo*, Plato asserts that all knowledge is recollection from a previous existence. He also held that the world consists of four elements —air, earth, fire, and water—in the form of polyhedrons (Plato 2009). And Aristotle believed that many animals spontaneously generate out of mud. He also thought that a vacuum was an impossibility, and that the earth was stationary. Clearly, one has cut Plato and Aristotle a lot of slack.

The issue here centers on the difference between the empirical and the holistic. Systems that function as wholes, like languages, cannot be comprehended as an assembly of component parts. Their nature is contingent, and their etiology is multicausal and overdetermined. Predictability, in language behavior, is extremely complex. It is useful to turn to the ideas of the French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu in *Ce que parler veut* *dire* (1982), in which he offers an astute assessment of the necessity of studying language in its social and cultural context:

> Thus, in order to explain the new way intellectuals speak—a bit choppy, hesitating and mumbling, questioning ("right"?)—, which is attested in the US as well as in France, one would have to take into account how this is configured in differential relation to the entire *structure of usages*. On the one hand, there is the old professorial manner (with its long periods, imperfect subjunctives, etc.), which is associated with a devaluated image of the magisterial role; on the other, the new petit-bourgeois usages resulting from wider diffusion of scholarly usage. These range from a 'liberated' usage—a mix of tension and laissez-faire that tends to characterize the new petite bourgeoisie—to the hypercorrection of an overly cultivated speech, which is immediately devaluated by an all-too-visible ambition, and which is the mark of the upwardly mobile petite bourgeoisie. The fact that these distinct practices can be understood only in relation to the composite of universal practices does not mean that they originate in a conscious worrying (*souci*) about being separate from them." There is every reason to believe that they are rooted in a practical sense of the rarity of distinctive marks (linguistic or otherwise) and of its evolution over time. (Bourdieu 1982, p. 56)

He holds that these newly fashionable ways of speaking proceed along "unconscious slippages towards 'classier' (*classants*) stylistic traits" (56). He adds to this a quite flattering assessment of our profession:

> Linguists, equipped with an abnormally acute perception (particularly at the phonological level), may notice differences where ordinary speakers do not. Moreover, since statistical measurement limits their focus to specific criteria (such as the dropping of the final/r/or/l/) they tend towards an analytical perception very different in its logic from the ones that comprise the classificatory judgements and the delimitation of homogeneous groups in everyday life. Not only are linguistic features never autonomous and clearly separated from the speaker's whole set of social properties (bodily hexis, physiognomy, cosmetics, clothing), but phonological (or lexical, or any other) features are never autonomous and clearly separated from other levels of language; and the judgement that classifies a speech form as 'popular' or a person as 'vulgar' is based, like all practical classifications, on sets of indices that never appear in consciousness in that form, even if the ones designated by stereotypes (such as the 'peasant'/r/or the southern *ceusse*) have greater weight. (94)

Bodily hexis may be defined here as body language. The "peasant/r/" refers to the use of trilled/r/in some parts of the south, and *ceusse* indicates the dialect pronunciation of *ceux* (they/those who).

The important lesson to be learned from these differences in language and perception is that one does not readily see them; they are transparent; one take's one's own reference system for granted as universal and self-evident. When the exception to what one considers universal is illuminated, the reaction is shock and disbelief. "What? They don't distinguish right from left?"; "What? They don't see green? Are they color blind?" It is important to emphasize that the perceptual phenomena are stored in memory along with the corresponding words for them.

The habits of language that a culture performs and repeats ad infinitum articulate the modes of thought of that culture. One could take Roman Jakobson's (1959) golden maxim that languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey and suggest an adaptation relating to cognition: Cultures do not differ essentially in what they may understand, but in what they are habituated to understand, not in what they are capable of understanding, but in what they are accustomed to understand. And they express that habituation in language, which cannot but codetermine understanding. Yes, humans encountering an exotic culture and its language can learn the essential differences, providing they are willing to see them and learn them. And here, the major factor is psychological, which involves motivation, curiosity, objectivity, consciousness, concentration, and a host of other factors that codetermine the performance of language, of bilingualism and biculturalism.

The work of Anna Wierzbicka, in *Imprisoned in English* (2014), is very valuable in this regard. Wierzbicka notes that even in presenting color slides to cultures that seldom or never use color to distinguish objects, that act of presentation "has English meanings embedded in it … it introduces the tacit assumption … that 'color' is a conceptual domain separate from others, and the reliance on this culturally alien preconception blinds researchers to bona fide indigenous meanings" (Wierzbicka 2014, p. 17). She offers very good illustrations of the contextualization of words, that they resonate differently in each language. Lexical items web out uniquely in each language. One can extract the word from its context and try to find an equivalent in another language, but in doing so, one extracts the word from its contextual web.

She even takes Steven Pinker to task for opening his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011) with the assertion that there has been a universal decline in violence. But the English term violence has no equivalent in many languages (55). She often says that a certain English word has "no exact counterparts in most other languages of the world" (157). This is a bit reckless; after all, we have yet to record most of the world's languages. We don't even know how many there are, and we have a devil of a time trying to draw sharp boundaries between related languages and demonstrating with clarity the distinction between dialects and languages.

But her strategies of upsetting the apple cart even before it gets under way are most interesting. She takes on Marc Hauser's book *Moral minds: How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong* (2006), noting that right and wrong are "English-bound" concepts (187). A bit of reflection (to which we are unaccustomed when we take such transparent idioms for granted) reveals that to render the phrase in French, for instance, one would have to resort to the locution *le bien et le mal*, which would translate back into English as "good and evil." One could also try to translate it as *le vrai et le faux*, which would then translate back into English as "truth and falsehood." Clearly, neither of these hits the mark, and one could easily marshal a host of examples from other languages (187). So much for the universality of right and wrong.

One is grateful to Wierzbicka for supplying some interesting summaries of work published in Russian by Zalizniak, Levontina, and Shmelev: "Every natural language reflects a certain way of experiencing and constructing the world, or a 'linguistic picture of the world.' The totality of ideas about the world embedded in the meanings of the words and phrases of a given language, form a certain unitary system of views and norms which presents itself as obligatory to all the speakers" (230). The authors qualify their use of the term "obligatory," saying that this picture does not render permanent blindness to other linguistic pictures, and that one can think—one's way out of the culture-specific assumptions of a given language.

Wierzbicka adds, "To be able to speak a language one has to master certain ways of conceptualizing the world reflected in that language. Because the speakers take for granted the configurations of ideas entrenched in the meanings of the words of near native language, there arises an illusion that this is simply how things are" (231). She also discusses the work done by L1 bilinguals, i.e., those who have more than one first language, and who attest to a process of "self-translation" in moving between those languages. An example is Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989). Hoffman is an L1 speaker of Polish and American English who notes: "My American Friends … share so many assumptions that are quite invisible to them, precisely because they're shared. These are assumptions about the most fundamental human transactions, subcutaneous beliefs, which lie just below the stratum of political opinion or overt ideology" (Hoffman 1989, p. 210). Now Hoffman is speaking of differences between Polish and American language and thought. But it is important to note that many of these assumptions invisible to Americans are not even shared in other anglophone countries.

In *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews* (1992), J. M. Coetzee observes that the field of literary translation "is one field, however, where the Whorf hypothesis is treated as self-evident, even when it is not explicitly known … The occupation of translation brings the translator continually face to face with the most immediate corollary of the Whorf hypothesis, namely that a full or total translation is impossible" (Coetzee 1992, p. 182). There is a problem that continually torments professional translators, literary and otherwise, namely the problem of translating a word from language A to language B when there is no exact equivalent of the word in language B. Perhaps one could sit the speaker of language B down for fifteen minutes and successfully explain the concept behind that word, but this is not how communication normally works. Simultaneous oral translators do not have 15 min at their disposal—perhaps a few seconds at best—and literary translators cannot be expected to fill up a book with footnotes. It is within the space of the normal speed of communication, a space filled with all manner of social, psychological, and cultural issues, where linguistic relativism and loss in translation are performed.

The bulk of publications rejecting linguistic relativism outright are written by scholars working in the USA, and this is not surprising considering the general monolinguistic naiveté of Americans, the universalist positivism present in American natural and social science, the technocratic nature of the culture in general, and the hegemonic history of its foreign policy. It is also the culture that gave birth to the notion of a universal grammar that was initially based on data from several dozen languages. In other cultures where multilingualism is not foreign, linguistic relativism is less contended.

One of the major opponents of linguistic relativism is the noted Columbia linguist John McWhorter. His major attacks on linguistic relativism are found in *The Language Hoax. Why the World Looks the Same in Any Language* (2014) (a clear shot at Deutscher) and *Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue* (2008). McWhorter's agenda is to separate language from culture as much as possible, or at least to argue that their interconnection is much less significant than one normally supposes. He says, "Crucially, a connection between language and thought does exist," but he adds "that language's effect on thought is distinctly subtle and, overall, minor. Not uninteresting—but nevertheless, minor" (McWhorter 2014, p. xiv).

McWhorter's approach is atomistic, one that resists contextualization. His reaction to the Russian blues experiment is, basically, "big deal." The Russians identified shades of blue only 124 ms faster than did Anglophones (9). And he insists: "Upon what grounds are we to take a 124 ms difference in reaction time as signaling something about the way Russians experience *life*?" (10). Of such miniscule differences, McWhorter says, "that weensy bias has nothing to do with anything any psychologist, anthropologist, or political scientist could show us about how the people in question manage existence" (28).

His work could be improved by a notion of contingency and niche. Darwin noted, in a certain environment, the contingent interplay of the plant viola tricolor, a certain species of bee, and mice and cats. The plant had stopped seeding, as it was not being fertilized by bees, the combs of which were destroyed by mice, who thrived because there were not enough cats to keep them in check. One cannot generalize to the function of any element in this balance outside of the particular context each is found in, a context of interdependence. So it is with language and culture (Darwin 1861, p. 71).

The Language Hoax was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* by the eminent linguist and MacArthur Fellow Michael Silverstein. In his ungenerous critique, Silverstein says of McWhorter:

> He seems to combine the kind of projectively imagined 'neo-Whorfian' argument…with the kind of word-by-word translations made famous by Mark Twain…I am concerned that McWhorter seems to lack any first-hand familiarity with the relevant twentieth-century history of Whorfianism…the terminology and conceptual grammar of which, very much in debt to the linguistics of Leonard Bloomfield, he does not seem to understand…the lame invocations of expertise in matters of which McWhorter clearly has mastered only that proverbially dangerous 'little knowledge'– psychology, anthropology, sociology – are worrisome indeed…in sounding his hoax-exposing alarums for a lay public, though, John McWhorter falls distinctly short of illuminating the real issues that any linguist as scientist-citizen should want to bring to their attention." (Silverstein 2015, p. 25)

Twain's word-for-word translations parody a naïve anglocentric encounter with a foreign language that resists entry into that language's unique way of organizing things. The parody is atomistic.

For McWhorter, the Whorfian culprit is the cult of political correctness; he sees the attractiveness of linguistic relativism as coming from the current concerns of diversity and cultural relativism and their concomitant critiques of ethnocentrism: "The language-as-thought idea vibrates in tune with impulses deeply felt in the modern enlightened American's soul. Ethnocentrism revolts us … we owe it to the rest of the world to stress our awareness that the less fortunate are our equals" (McWhorter 2014, p. xv), and this causes us to make too much of linguistic relativism: "Under Whorfianism, everybody is interesting and everybody matters" (xvi); "Our impulse to identify and celebrate what we call diversity begins as noble, but it is too little acknowledged how dangerous this quest becomes" (xix)—dangerous because it warps our judgment.

But does our fascination with linguistic difference stem from concerns of cross-cultural equality? Does the fascination with discrepancies in color terms really exist because we want everyone to be equal? Is that why we are curious about the Russian terms for the color blue? Because we want the Russians to be our equals? Linguistic relativism fascinates us because it raises fundamental questions about human cognition and perception.

McWhorter also works for the libertarian Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, described on its website as "A leading voice of free-market ideas … and supply-side policies," and "an important force in shaping American political culture and developing ideas that foster economic choice and individual responsibility." It sponsors the Adam Smith Society, an organization of pro-free enterprise business students, and supports hydraulic fracturing and "welfare reform" (Manhattan Institute). This may help account for McWhorter's curious understanding of linguistic relativism as a form of political correctness. The overextension of his agenda runs into a paralogism. If it is true that all advocates of political correctness are interested in cultural differences, one cannot conclude that all who are interested in cultural differences are motivated by political correctness. Some may be just objective social scientists. It seems that McWhorter's solution to the infamous culture wars is to separate language from culture.

The matrix of language and ideology in postwar American culture has generated lexical semantic shifts in American English that restrict the possibilities of speaking outside of the parameters of the anomalous American political system. These are habitual and symbiotic modes of language and thought. And, in the perspective of the present study, Marxist theory can account for their production, and psychoanalysis for their preservation. In general, psychoanalysis has been missing from the debates on linguistic relativism. Psychoanalysis can help illuminate the tenacity of the bond between language and thought.

The ideologies of the anomalous American political economy are visible in the semantic shifts of many terms that once shared common meanings with related terms in European languages. Gradually, these terms slipped along their chain of associations and have acquired uncommon meanings that ally with ideological changes. Of special interest are the terms tipping, liberal, conservative, exceptionalism, left, right, red, ethnic, social, and English. These alterations of word-concepts function as acts of dissimulation that resist criticism, and in the alterations one finds the mechanisms of condensation, displacement, inversion, and denial. (The semantic shifts in the term English are examined in Chap. 10 below.) Let us begin with the practice of "tipping," as in the common restaurant "tip."

The *OED* defines a tip as "a small present of money given to an inferior, esp. to a servant or employee of another for a service rendered or expected; a gratuity, a douceur," and dates the appearance of the noun to 1755. In the industrialized democracies, waiters are generally salaried employees who do not depend upon gratuities for their income. They are paid a livable wage. In France, one sees *service compris*, "service included," indicated on the restaurant check. And credit card receipts have no separate line for indicating a gratuity. If one is given, it is symbolic in the form of a euro or two. There is a distinction made between service, which is included in the price of the check, and a tip or gratuity, which is not. This is, of course, not the situation in the USA, where income depends more on gratuities than on wages, and the thing called the tip increases the check by 20%. In the area I live, the standard wage for "servers" is $2.14/h, representing about 20% of total income. Thus customers pay most of the server's salary on behalf of the employer. Benefits are rare, and job security is minimal. Waiters working on a given evening will receive about $10 from the owner (which is taxed) and are expected to get the rest from customers. If customers are directly paying the server's salary, why is this called a tip? It is because the use of the term masks the exploitative economic conditions of the employees and makes it seem to be an act of generosity. It is a casino-like situation without a dependable wage that liberates the proprietor from all social responsibility.

In 1998, Kerry Segrave published *Tipping: An American Social History of Gratuities*, which illustrates the casino-like circumstances of gratuities in the USA throughout the twentieth century, especially in the restaurant industry. "Democracy's deadly foe"—one of the chapter titles—characterizes the situation well. The massive labor union activities in the early twentieth century sought to organize restaurant workers and replace an income dependent upon inconsistent gratuities with a consistent livable wage. In 1911, the International Hotel Workers' Union was formed in New York to organize bellboys, cooks, waiters, helpers, and so on. The union demanded "higher wages and no necessity of depending on tips" (Segrave 1998, p. 33). Tipping was seen as the "survival of the old master and servant days where gratuities by persons to the manor born were given as a reward to servility. The tip always goes from a superior to an inferior; never from servant to master" (31). Six states actually enacted antitipping laws between 1909 and 1915, and all were repealed by 1925.

It was not only the unions that petitioned for wages instead of tips. The Commercial Travelers' National League, an organization of travelling business people formed in Rochester in 1897, launched a nationwide antitipping campaign in 1911 with the following threat: "if there are no signs that the hotel proprietors propose to put their help upon a self-respecting basis making them wage-earners instead of beggars for gratuities, no power on earth can prevent our carrying out our programme of reprisal" (29). In 1911, an organizer for the International Hotel Workers' Union addressed the workers saying, "The tip makes of you a malicious, envious, hateful, creature" (34). Samuel Gompers, the famous president of the American Federation of Labor, said of tipping: "The system is detestable to every man and woman of the serving class possessing the lest degree of self-respect. It is demoralizing to all who either give or receive tips" (35).

American "tipping" rates are the highest in the world. In "The Political Economy of the Itching Palm: A Cross-National Analysis of Tipping," Edward D. Mansfield notes that the industrialized democracies started replacing the custom of tipping with a service charge beginning in the 1920s; virtually all European countries have now replaced tipping with such a charge, and many countries in other parts of the world do so as well. One diner travelling in Taiwan recounts having been chased down the street by a mystified waitress asking why he had left a pile of cash on the table. When he tried to explain, the waitress asked why he was paying twice, since he had already paid for the dinner. Mansfield notes that

"Communist countries have opposed tipping on the grounds that it is a capitalist practice that fosters class cleavages and aggravates social inequalities" (Mansfield 2013).

Tipping bestows an aura of gentility and affluence upon the tipper, an act of largesse that cloaks the wretched labor conditions. Cluley and Dunne's perspective can be applied here. Consumers do not want to be reminded of inequality and exploitation. The innocuous term "tip" and the associated gentility enable their amnesia. The practice not only distracts attention from the inequality and exploitation, it renarrates them onto a different stage, one where the server entertains a kind and appreciative audience. Because of tipping, servers have come to function as entertainers for the customer.

The term *tip* is anchored in the matrix of American language, thought, and ideology. It habituates Americans *not* to see exploitative working conditions. And the habituation can make it difficult to see otherwise in other economies. One often hears Americans ask, "Why don't the French tip?", when the reverse is the case. Americans do not tip in restaurants; they pay salaries. The French tip, on occasion, and depending on circumstance.

Now this is a semantic extension of the term tip to cover an unpleasant economic reality that one would rather not be reminded of. This is the function of metonymies in the psychoanalytic context; they move laterally along the chain of syntagmatic substitutions in order to avoid the stressful meaning, shifting along the semantic field to a safe place. They operate as do jokes, but not as do slips of the tongue.

The term "American exceptionalism" also underwent a semantic shift, and here for ideological reasons, as well. The term "exceptionalism" originates in the Latin *excipere*, literally "to take out." This is readily visible in the phrase "to make an exception," which conveys the original meaning of the term "exceptional" in the sense of out of the ordinary, extraordinary, etc. The Romance languages preserve the original meaning of an anomaly, while American English has shifted the meaning from anomalous to excellent. The term entered into political currency with the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, in *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1840):

> The situation of the Americans is thus completely exceptional, and it is quite believable that no democratic people will ever get there. Their totally puritanical origin, their uniquely commercial habits, even the country they live in, which seems to divert their intelligence from the studies of science, literature, and the arts; the proximity to Europe, which enables them to completely

> neglect these studies without relapsing into barbarism, a thousand particular causes, of which I have only come to know the major ones, have, in a unique way, fixed the American spirit in the midst of purely material things. Their passions, needs, education, circumstances—everything seems, in effect, to collaborate in bending the inhabitant of the United States towards the earth. Only religion makes them, from time to time, a take a temporary and distracted look at the sky.
>
> Let us stop viewing all democratic nations with the model of the American people, and let us try envisaging them according to their own characteristics. (de Tocqueville 1840, p. 40)

American exceptionalism indicates the anomalous situation of the United States and an economic system that no modern industrialized nation is interested in having. Its healthcare "system," unlivable minimum wage, ridiculously high college tuition, ghettos, highly lopsided distribution of wealth, insufficient public transportation, lack of social programs—one could continue almost indefinitely—are the envy of no first-world nation.

One can mask this reality by sliding the signifier "exceptionalism" from anomaly to excellence. In doing so, one suppresses awareness of the socioeconomic problems and replaces it with an image of superiority. Article after article in national journals speaks of either maintaining or regaining American exceptionalism, as in this example from the *New York Times*, in which the author asked, "Is America exceptional among nations? Are we, as a country and a people and a culture, set apart and better than others? Are we, indeed, the 'shining city upon a hill' that Ronald Reagan described? Are we 'chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world' as George W. Bush said?" (Blow 2011).

The author quotes an NBC News/Wall Street Journal article indicating that Americans believe the country is at "the start of a longer-term decline where the U.S. is no longer the leading country in the world." He recommends: "We must answer the big questions. Was our nation's greatness about having God or having grit? Is exceptionalism an anointing or an ethos? If the answers are grit and ethos, then we must work to recapture them."

The leading country in what? Greatness in what? There is a kind of patriotism that insists one's country is and should be the best in the world, and another that supports one's country and seeks to improve it. It is important to distinguish between the two. The author's words reflect the desire to understand exceptionalism as greatness and not anomaly, and this is quite understandable from a psychological standpoint. Imagine the reaction of a student to the following two statements, each taken in isolation:

a. you are no longer the best student in school
b. no one wants to be like you

It is quite clear which statement would be less threatening to hear. And if one had the option of sliding the signifier one way or another and suppressing one of the meanings, it is clear which meaning one would obliterate. Such is the case in the USA, which suppresses the meanings of anomaly in the term exceptionalism. This repression is a defense mechanism enabled by the semantic reduction of the term, which also reduces the field of discourse and thought. And here, one sees the confluence of psychoanalysis, linguistic relativism, and political ideology.

Another telling semantic shift has occurred in the employment of the word ethnic. If there exists a dominant culture to which the other is to be assimilated, that culture will be seen as normative. It will often remain unmarked and will mark only that which differs from itself. An example of this can be seen in the particularly American usage of the term "people of color," used as if there were humans devoid of color. A more revealing example is found, however, in the semantic field of the American term "ethnic."

The word ethnic originates in the Greek *ἔθνος*, "a people." The *OED* lists the first meaning of ethnic as: "Pertaining to nations not Christian or Jewish; Gentile, heathen, pagan." Here, the term "gentile" is used in the obsolete sense of "heathen." Also, it is curious that this usage, which is itself obsolete, should be listed primarily. This is perhaps justified by its provenance from the Greek *ἐθνικ-ός* "heathen." The second definition is more germane to this study: "Pertaining to race; peculiar to a race or nation; ethnological. Also, pertaining to or having common racial, cultural, religious, or linguistic characteristics, esp. designating a racial or other group within a larger system; hence (*U.S. colloq.*), foreign, exotic." Here, the American usage is noted as exceptional, even colloquial, and correctly so. The first example of such a usage that the *OED* lists is from the USA in 1965: "Ethnic has come to mean foreign, or un-American or plain quaint." The semantic drift undergone by the term "ethnic" is readily visible when juxtaposed with the term "ethnology," which the *OED* defines as: "The science which treats of races and peoples, and of their relations to one another, their distinctive physical and other characteristics, etc." If ethnology were understood in the sense in which ethnic is used in the

USA, it would comprise the study of those perceived as "foreign," or perhaps better said: non-normative, unmarked.

An ideology of American nativism persists in the use of the term "ethnic." All neighborhoods exhibiting a distinct and uniform gastronomy, culture, speech, religion, etc., are labeled "ethnic," except for those perceived as "American," as proper to a white culture of European provenance that is no longer seen as European. For instance, a neighborhood with a salient Hispanic population would be considered to be an "ethnic neighborhood," even if the majority population were non-Hispanic. Perhaps a quotient of 25% would suffice to label the area ethnic. At the same time, however, an affluent suburban census tract that is 100% white would not, in spite of the homogeny of shared values and behavior in that culture, be characterized as ethnic.

American supermarkets display "ethnic food" aisles subsectioned into "Chinese," "Indian," "Mexican," "Japanese," and so on, but a recognizably generic grouping of, for instance, steak, potatoes, iceberg lettuce, and corn on the cob, which together could readily evoke images of a certain type of consumer, would not be perceived as ethnic and grouped together as "white suburban cuisine." The in-power group has the privilege of nominalization but is itself not nominalized. The marker is unmarked. There are people of color and, apparently people of no color. And people of ethnicity and others of none.

Another excellent example in this regard is the employment of the terms liberal and liberalism in the USA, where their political meanings have also undergone semantic reduction and, in some cases, a reversal of meaning. In the international political polarity of left wing/progressive and right wing/conservative, liberalism has been normally aligned on the right. The word originates in the Latin *liber*, "free," and indicates, in the theater of political economy, a privileging of the individual and the freeplay of individual liberties, a limitation of the power of the state to limit those liberties, and general tolerance.

The *OED* initially defines liberalism as such:

1. Support for or advocacy of individual rights, civil liberties, and reform tending towards individual freedom, democracy, or social equality; a political and social philosophy based on these principles … [The reader is also referred to "market" and "neo-liberalism."] The citations show the conservative, free-market aspects of the term:

> 1891 "Labour…should have nothing to do with either Liberalism or Toryism."
> 1918 "German Liberalism called for the abolition of the Bund and the Diet."
> 1960 "Old-fashioned, pre-Keynesian, laissez-faire liberalism."
> 1974 "In the days and weeks after the election…polls of all parties were busy reanalyzing Liberalism's success."
> 1992 "The Western democracies, whose systems are all variants of liberalism, though a liberalism which had come to accept a large degree of redistributive social support."

The second definition, however, includes leftism:

2. Freedom from bias, prejudice, or bigotry; open-mindedess, tolerance; (Polit.) liberal left-wing political views and policies.

The Encyclopedia Britannica is more clear in contrasting the two meanings: "In the United States liberalism is associated with the welfare-state policies of the New Deal program of the Democratic administration of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, whereas in Europe it is more commonly associated with a commitment to limited government and laissez-faire economic policies."

The *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary*, however, has a surprisingly traditional definition of liberalism:

> A theory in economics emphasizing individual freedom from restraint especially by government regulation in all economic activity and usually based upon free competition, the self-regulating market, and the gold standard … —called also economic liberalism—compare capitalism, collectivism, collectivism, free enterprise, individualism, laissez-faire, mercantilism, socialism.
>
> A political philosophy based on belief in progress, the essential goodness of man, and the autonomy of the individual and standing for tolerance and freedom for the individual from arbitrary authority in all spheres of life especially by the protection of political and civil liberties and for government under law with the consent of the governed.

But *Merriam-Webster* also adds: "such a philosophy that considers government as a crucial instrument for amelioration of social inequities (such as those involving race, gender, or class)."

It is quite odd that the initial definitions clash radically with the popular understanding of liberalism in the USA. Most Americans would be quite perplexed in reading them. If someone were to offer such definitions—not quoting *Merriam-Webster*, but saying something similar—the assessment would most likely be laughed off outright.

The website *Student News Daily* (2010) offers a popular summary of "liberal" issues in the USA. Liberals support abortion, affirmative action, government regulation of the economy, public education, stem cell research, environmentalism, euthanasia, gun control, universal health care, benefits for undocumented aliens, gay marriage, social security, taxes, welfare, political correctness, etc.

The term "liberal" and its derivatives migrated along the chain of associations until it wound up at the opposite end of the American political spectrum. Initially meaning conservative, it now means anticonservative. Such a semantic reversal is not uncommon in historical linguistics. For instance, the Indo-European root for the English word "black" actually signified to shine or burn brightly. Its meaning slid incrementally along the path of things associated with fire, e.g., ashes, and the meaning eventually reversed from light to dark. "Liberal" slid along the line of social issues, indicating permissiveness and tolerance of difference, until the economic basis was eclipsed, eventually dissipating into a confused medley of social issues. Such a shift must render discussion of economic issues more difficult.

This semantic shift did not emerge independently of the political economy; on the contrary, it walked in parallel with the transition from the economic to the social, from economy to entertainment-based identity politics (see Chap. 11). And the semantic shift made it difficult to engage the root debate between a liberal free-market economy and the obligation of government to distribute wealth in a more egalitarian fashion, a debate that persists in all the industrialized democracies that discuss the liberal agendas of conservative parties.

The confusion of the term liberal has recently generated the term neoliberal, in order to illuminate the conservative economic ideology. But neoliberal has a weak presence in the vernacular and often elicits confusion, if not cognitive resistance, as the listener is habituated to read liberal as left wing, and this habituation acts as a wonderful decoy from imperative issues.

This is an inversion that leaves the dominant model unmarked. The effect of this inversion and obfuscation is to hinder the understanding and discussion of the most liberal economy in the first world, one that is *exceptionally liberal.*

The semantic shift of the term “social” in the USA is also one that eclipses discussion of economic issues, as the term has undergone semantic reduction, focusing almost exclusively on societal connotations. The political and economic aspects of the term have receded from meaning and are visible in a scant few terms, such as “social security” and the problematic “socialism.” The word antisocial is restricted to inconsiderate or belligerent behavior and has no resonances in the sphere of political and economic responsibility.

This is not the case in the uses of the cognate in other first-world countries. The French *antisocial/asocial*, the Italian *antisociale/asociale*, and the German *asozial* all carry meanings of a selfish behavior opposed to the common economic good, such as tax evasion. In public transportation in Germany, there are public officials who periodically check to see if riders have tickets. One can get on the bus without a ticket and hope not to get caught, playing a kind of roulette. Fines are fairly stiff. Often, busses will have reminders saying *Schwarzfahren ist asozial*, which translates as “riding without paying is anti-social,” a phrase that would be confusing in English. (The term “asocial” has practically no currency in English.)

The restriction of the terms social and antisocial to the societal sphere corresponds to an ideology that sees individualism and self-interest as beneficial. Antisocial or asocial actions are seen as unconventional forms of behavior and thus limited to the context of manners. And unconventional behavior is quite often celebrated in American popular culture as well as in politics. The unruly behavior in current “guy movies” and the comportment of Donald Trump serve as examples. It is seen as either beneficial or harmless, but not as opposed to the best interests of society. Social must not carry connotations pointing to socialism, and antisocial must not carry connotations that challenge a laissez-faire economy.

Another example of language and ideology concerns the disappearance of the discourse of class in the USA. This has been well researched by Margo Anderson in “The Language of Class in Twentieth-Century America” (1988). She asks the initial question, “Why don’t Americans ‘think’ in class terms when objective evidence suggests that they should? Why do Americans not have a ‘language of class’ in the way that citizens of other modern industrial or post-industrial societies do?” (Anderson 1988, p. 350). It also quite interesting that she notes the monolithic use of middle class, which dominates current class discussion, almost thirty years ago. She investigates "why we did not come to use 'working class' or 'laboring class' or 'labor' to encompass much of what we currently mean by middle class to focus on the continuing patterns of inequality in American society" (355).

Google Ngram data shows that the common terms for social class started ascending in usage in the 1950s, peaked around 1970, and have declined steadily since. The usage frequencies for lower, working, middle, and upper class, along with "blue collar" and "bourgeoisie" are roughly equal in 1958 and 2008. While this data marks the recession of the discourse of class in general, it also displays the domination of "middle class" over "working class." The usage frequencies of the two terms remained nearly identical for most of the twentieth century, rising equally until the mid-1960s, when "middle class" started to decline and "working class" continued to rise, peaking in the mid-1970s. In 1991, middle class overtook working class. Google Ngram data is, however, already a decade old. A 2015 Google search reveals 19,900,000 results for "working class" and 45,400,000 for "middle class." Lower still are "lower class" (3,750,000 results) and "upper class" (11,500,000). Clearly, middle class dominates.

In researching the discourse of class, Anderson examined "the patterns of class-related citations and the classification system of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* during the twentieth century" (356). She found that the number of pages devoted to "labor" topics grew rapidly from the turn of the century to the 1940s and then declined sharply until the early 1960s. She found similar patterns for the headings of socialism, communism, and immigration: "The patterns suggest that these issues came into public consciousness at different points in the twentieth century, were debated furiously in the periodical press and then either declined in importance or resumed ales dramatic place in popular debate" (358). The early popularity of leftist themes can be related to active union organization. By the late 1930s, industrial workers "had organizations and leadership to speak for them in a wide variety of political and economic arenas" (362).

But cold war ideology came to create a new attribute for union activity: "By the 1945–1947 compilation" in the *Readers' Guide*, a new subhead appeared under trade unions: namely 'communist activities,' which would encompass about a column of listings for each compilation in the next decade" (363). Anderson sees the years 1945–1960 as "the only period in the century when trade unions were seen as the locus, however unpopularly, of a specifically class-based political ideology-i.e., communism" (363).

The demonization of labor was not only political, however. She notes that articles on labor "of the late 1950s focused attention on 'labor ethics,' on 'labor racketeering,' on the supposed entrenched power, venality, and corruption of trade union leaders. 'Labor' became an interest group, not a social class" (364). This is a very astute observation on the removal of "labor" from class discourse. As an interest group, it becomes depoliticized and loses an obvious connection to politics and economics.

In the 1960s, one sees the beginnings of the current levelling of class distinctions: "As blue-collar workers sub-urbanized, books documented the 'working class suburb,' and advertisers described 'How to sell [to] the new mass market.' By the late 1960s, articles quite directly suggested that 'the working class has become middle class'" (365). Beginning in 1970, *Readers' Guide* users were actually directed to look up "middle classes" as a source of cross references to "labor and laboring classes" (365). "Labor" has undergone considerable semantic extension, with the result that "Public employees, teachers, nurses, as well as auto workers, construction workers, and teamsters feel themselves to be both part of the 'labor' movement and part of the middle class," Anderson notes, but "the problem is that, in the older sense of the term, much of the 'middle class' is still 'anti-labor' or 'anti-union.' The language of class is confusing" (368).

This example of semantic change is an excellent symptom of the atrophy of the analytic discourse of class. When "labor" became an interest group, it was displaced from the realm of political economy into the realm of the societal. The semantic field of the term "social" also shifted from the political to the societal. Correspondingly, Anderson notes that "Census estimates of socio-economic status indicate that the blue-collar manual work force was relatively stable in size between 1910 and 1960-comprising about 40% of the labor force. Union density rates for the non-agricultural labor force peaked in the mid-1950s, at around 30–35%" (366).

Among the semantic shifts in American political vocabulary, one of the most delightful involves the word red. It is also one of the most improbable. The color red has a long history of association with left-wing workers' liberation movements. This became iconic in the late nineteenth century. The flag of the Paris Commune was red. The flag of the Soviet Union was also red, with a hammer and sickle, but it reverted oddly to the white/blue/red colors of Tsarist Russia after the establishment of the Russian Federation in 1991. The flag of China is still red, as is the flag of Vietnam. The fear of left-wing (communist and socialist) activity in the USA, which persisted throughout the twentieth century, generated the terms "red menace," "red scare," "red tide," "red tactics," and many other permutations. The association of the color red with leftism was so common that it produced the nickname "pinko." This is no longer the case. Red now means Republican.

One normally points to the year 2000 as the starting point for this color shift. During the presidential campaign of that year, a cable news network decided to use blue to represent states voting Democrat and red to represent those voting Republican. Thus Texas is now "a red state," and Oregon is "a blue state." For most of the twentieth century, the phrase "he's a red" was unambiguous. It has no currency in the current vernacular, and one would have to asterisk it (*he's a red) as anomalous, whereas the phrase, "voter turnout in red states" is readily understood. The color shift took hold more quickly than the Russian revolution itself. The phrase "red scare" peaked in usage in 2000 and plummeted radically afterward. The phrase "red states" skyrocketed in usage beginning in 2000 (Google Books Ngram).

This most curious change emerged in the matrix of language and thought, in the symbiotic relationship between politics and language. It would be inaccurate to say that the disappearance of the idiomatic color term for leftist reflects the disappearance of communism from the American political spectrum, for communism was all but outlawed in the second half of the twentieth century. The American Communist Party stopped putting forth presidential candidates in 1984. (One wonders if the choice of year was coincidental.) The disappearance of the idiomatic color term for leftist reflects the disappearance of the *fear of communism* from the American political spectrum, oddly a fear of something that was almost entirely absent. And its reappearance on the right wing covers the historical tracks and blurs the memory traces.

Liberal means left wing, and red means right wing. Does the confusion of language reflect or determine the confusion of thought? This is a chicken-or-egg question. The answer is that they dance together and effect a disempowerment of oppositional language. If you don't have words for something, it's hard to talk about it. Especially if your emotional investment limits what you desire to know and hear.

On May 22, 2016, *The New York Times* published the article "How far is Europe Swinging to the Right?" immediately following the narrow defeat of the xenophobic Freedom Party in the Austrian elections. The article holds that this "was an example of the electoral gains made by right-wing parties in a growing number of European countries amid a migrant

(Aisch et al. 2016) crisis". The article then summarizes gains made by xenophobic parties across Europe. The article implicitly defines right wing as antiforeign and anti-immigration. It does not mention that these anti-immigration parties preserve the normal benefits of the welfare state. By limiting its understanding of right wing to antiforeign, the article implicitly contrasts this with American identity politics and liberal immigration laws, which makes the USA look enlightened and diverts attention from its own underdeveloped welfare state. This is a selective perception, a constructed blind spot that wants to see anti-identity politics but not leftism. Thus a protectionist ideology shifts the meaning of right wing; this is not only a symbiosis of language and culture, but of language and politics.

The shifts in political-economic ideology and language arose in symbiosis in the twentieth century and culminated most brutally in the anticommunist movement of the cold war period, a movement that effected a radical change in the habits of language and cognition. It is now necessary to examine that movement.

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CHAPTER 8

Cold War Cognition

The suppression of the left wing is arguably the most important transformation of the American political economy since the end of the Civil War. It struck with greatest force in the cold war era and succeeded in removing communist, socialist, and labor movements from the theater of political and economic reasoning in the USA. This created an anomalous political economy among the first-world nations.

Data from the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections demonstrates the near-invisibility of the left wing in the USA. In 2012, the most successful true left party was the Green Party, which received 0.36% of the vote, while the Libertarians received almost triple that figure at 0.99%. There were four separate socialist parties on various ballots: Socialism and Liberation, Socialist, Socialist Workers, and Socialist Equality. The Socialism and Liberation party received 0.01% of the vote; the other three socialist parties received 0%, because the scale does not descend any lower than 0.01% of the vote. Any percentage result less than 0.01% is listed as 0%. Altogether all four parties received 19,200 votes. That, too, is 0.01% of the total vote. The Communist Party was not on the ballot in any state. It has not put forth a candidate since 1984, when Gus Hall and Angela Davis received 0.04% of the vote. In the 2016 elections, the Libertarian Party received 3.27% of the vote and the Green Party 1.06%, a 300% increase over 2012! The Socialism and Liberation party received 0.01% of the vote, and the Socialist Workers Party 0.01% (Leip 2016).

Things were not always this way.

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Eugene Debs was the presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920. In 1912, he received 901,551 votes, 6.0% of the total. Together with the Socialist Labor Party, they received 7.19% of the vote in that year. In 1918, Debs made a speech opposing the military draft in World War I. He was arrested, charged with ten counts of sedition, found guilty, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. He ran for president in 1920 from his jail cell and received 919,799 write-in votes (3.4% of the total) (Leip 2016). He was freed in 1921 due to ailing health and died in 1926.

8.1 The Beginnings of Ethnopolitical Americanism

Movements to socialize the American political economy arose in the late nineteenth century and quickly became configured in opposition to a conservative ethnopolitical notion of Americanism. In this regard, John Higham's *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925*, is especially valuable.

Originally published in 1955, Higham's study is remarkably progressive in orientation. It historicizes and critiques nativism at a time when the locution "native American" indicated white Americans of colonial British descent. Xenophobia increased with Eastern and Southern European immigration to the USA and was also intensified by a fear of European political radicalism, especially of the Marxist kind. Higham holds that "Anglo-Saxonism" (Higham 1955, p. 9), clearly one of the most familiar and pernicious forms of American nativism, did not reach full force until the end of the nineteenth c entury, coeval with the flood of immigration through Ellis Island.

This form of ethnic discrimination emerged in opposition to labor unrest and the immigrant population associated with that unrest. Higham holds that "nativism, as a significant force in modern America" (53), dates from 1886, the year of the Haymarket labor riots in Chicago, which scapegoated the foreigner as the instigator of violence (54). In the same year, and as a consequence of labor demonstrations, the US House of Representatives passed legislation prohibiting the employment of foreigners who had not declared the intention of becoming US citizens (46). Nativism, for Higham, is born in the confluence of imperialist, antiforeign and antilabor sentiments; it is an expression of expansionist xenophobic capitalism that began to gel at the fin-de-siècle:

> Revolutionary immigrants never caused enough real, sustained anxiety in the nineteenth century to rouse congress to a legislative ban. Although an explicit anti-radical nativism persisted, to a considerable extent the image of foreign radicals became diffuse. It tended to dissolve into vaguer visions of foreign license, lawlessness, and disorder. The adversary usually remained a symbol of unruly discontent, but he assumed a more protean, indefinite shape. Often he seemed to lose almost all distinguishing traits and become simply un-American, so that the anti-radical tradition partially blended with jingoism. Thus the hereditary patriotic societies, while characterizing the "foreign element" as abandoned to anarchy, socialism, and lawlessness, more frequently reduced the newcomer's crime to simpler terms: he "threatens to smother and obliterate American predominance, American influence, and American ideas and institutions." (79)

The nebulousness described here corresponds well to the fabrication of a vague communist adversary after WWII. Higham notes that, in the mid-nineties, 80% of the European-born US population was from Northern Europe. The new immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe constituted a massive and radical change in that population. As a consequence, the early nineties witnessed "the first serious anti-Semitic demonstrations in American history" (92). Membership in the fiercely nativist American Protective Association peaked in the 1890s at half a million (81). At the fin-de-siècle, the undesirable immigrant became a scapegoat for economic and political anxieties. An inability to resolve these anxieties resulted in a projection of them upon a visible other and a paranoid delusion of persecution by that fabricated adversary. One sees here the early presence of primary process mechanisms, building an associative network unchecked by logic.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 was a contributing factor here, as well. Higham notes the nativist/nationalist and imperialist elements in the discourse of the war (108–109). The military excursions of 1898 into the Caribbean and the Philippines "led on into imperialism. In acquiring far-flung dependencies on the pattern of the European powers of the day … the United States felt no obstruction of the mission it proclaimed for itself" (108) and thus emerged as a confident new imperial power. Higham observes: "Every section of the country shared in the jubilant anglo-saxonism touched off by the victories of 1898. The period of overseas expansion coincided with a general tightening of race lines within the South through disenfranchisement and sterner segregation laws" (170). Hegemonic desires, both national and international, begin to construct a national identity based on the ethnicity of the class in power. The disempowered classes were to be seen as ethnically and morally separate, in order to justify dominance and hegemony.

These prejudices were also found at the highest levels of government. Woodrow Wilson made prejudicial comments on Southern and Eastern European immigrants in his *History of the American People* (1902), and Theodore Roosevelt is well known for his ideologies of Pan-Germanic supremacy in his unapologetic work *The Winning of the West* (1903), which celebrated the Anglo-Saxon cowboy as the heir of the Teutonic tribes who expelled the Romans from Germania. Addressing the president of the American Defense Society on January 3, 1919, Roosevelt said:

> We should insist that if the immigrant who comes here does in good faith become an American and assimilates himself to us he shall be treated on an exact equality with every one else … But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American and nothing but an American. If he tries to keep segregated with men of his own origin and separated from the rest of America, then he isn't doing his part as an American. There can be no divided allegiance here… We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding-house; and we have room for but one soul loyalty, and that is loyalty to the American people. (Bishop 1920, p. 474)

And in (1921), Calvin Coolidge, a month before assuming the vice-presidency, published "Whose Country Is This?" in the solidly bourgeois magazine *Good Housekeeping*. Nicknamed "Silent Cal," the Vice President Elect was not at all silent on the issue of immigration: "We might avoid this danger were we insistent that the immigrant, before he leaves foreign soil, is temperamentally keyed for our national background. There are racial considerations too grave to be brushed aside for any sentimental reasons. Biological laws tell us that certain divergent people will not mix or blend. The Nordics propagate themselves successfully. With other races, the outcome shows deterioration on both sides. Quality of mind and body suggests that observance of ethnic law is as great a necessity to a nation as immigration law" (Coolidge 1921, p. 14). Here, the racialization of the other is reinforced by erroneous references to biology.

Anti-immigrant ideology was also fueled by the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 in Buffalo by Leon Czolgosz, a leftist born into an Eastern European immigrant family. The national anxieties that were transferred and condensed onto the figure of Czolgosz became most evident in his execution and burial: Sulfuric acid was poured upon the corpse so that it would disintegrate rapidly, and his belongings were burned, as well (*The New York Times* 1901, p. 1). From a practical standpoint, this seems quite mad. But psychologically, it reflects a fear of contamination by anything associated with the source of the infection, as well as a symbolic ritualistic cleansing and disinfection in order to rid the environment of the infestation. One would not normally expect such a therapeutic ritual from a society that sees itself as enlightened. Most likely, such a society would disparage such behavior as "primitive."

Similar prejudices were certainly found in academia, as well. A major figure in that regard was Francis A. Walker (1840–1897), an American economist born into a prominent Boston family. In 1872, he became professor of political economy at Yale and, in 1881, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where the Walker Memorial Hall bears its name. In *The Atlantic Monthly* of June 1896, Walker published the article "Restriction of Immigration," in which he speaks of the necessity of protecting "the quality of American citizenship from degradation through the tumultuous access of vast throngs of ignorant and brutalized peasantry from the countries of eastern and southern Europe" (Walker 1896, p. 823). He continues:

> The population of 1790 was almost wholly a native and wholly an acclimated population, and for forty years afterwards immigration remained at so low a rate as to be practically of no account; yet the people of the United States increased in numbers more rapidly than has ever elsewhere been known, in regard to any considerable population, over any considerable area, through any considerable period of time. Between 1790 and 1830 the nation grew from less than four millions to nearly thirteen millions,—an increase, in fact, of two hundred and twenty-seven per cent, a rate unparalleled in history. That increase was wholly out of the loins of our own people. (824)

> Within the decade between 1880 and 1890 five and a quarter millions of foreigners entered our ports! No nation in human history ever undertook to deal with such masses of alien population. That man must be a sentimentalist and an optimist beyond all bounds of reason who believes that we can take such a load upon the national stomach without a failure of assimilation, and without great danger to the health and life of the nation. For one, I believe it is time that we should take a rest, and give our social, political, and industrial

> system some chance to recuperate. The problems which so sternly confront us to-day are serious enough without being complicated and aggravated by the addition of some millions of Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, south Italians, and Russian Jews. (829)

The curious phrase "national stomach" reflects the fear of bodily infection by the racialized other. That the president of MIT should make such declarations with impunity would today be unthinkable. One could only imagine Walker's reaction to the composition of the MIT class of 2014, which the institution described as 39% "Caucasian."

The reaction to immigration demonstrated an associative paranoia similar to that of the cold war era. In the first decade of the twentieth century, some states prohibited all non-citizens from certain jobs, the choice of which is quite curious. For example, New York State applied it to attorneys and private detectives, Michigan to barbers (Were they about to slit throats?), and Pennsylvania denied all non-citizens hunting licenses and the right to own rifles or shotguns (Higham 1955, pp. 161–162).

World War One would also prove to be a very decisive factor in the development of this nascent paranoia. The USA emerged from that war unscathed as the new world power. The war had ended, but nationalist mobilization had not. After 1918, there was an assumption that the war had not really ended at all, and that "the adversary had merely assumed another guise and still presented a deadly challenge to loyalty and a summons to hatred … the martial spirit of 1918 could adapt itself to changing issues and fasten itself on changing enemies with unusual flexibility" (222). Higham locates the birth of the massively influential "Big Red Scare" (255) in the aftermath of WWI, a terror to be combatted by the ideology of Americanization. The fear of Bolsheviks and American labor unions escalated, especially the phobia against leftist anarchist movement and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who were nicknamed the "Wobblies." Germany's peace treaty with the Soviet Union recast the wartime German menace into a postwar international Bolshevik conspiracy, which included the radical movement in the USA. This was coupled with the "100% Americanism" movement. The autumn of 1918 witnessed a great steel workers strike that marshalled 376,000 workers, most of whom were Southern and Eastern European immigrants. Some factories fired all their Russian workers (226). The labor strikes of 1918 and 1919 were seen as beginnings of a communist revolution, and there was a general fear that "radicalism permeated the foreign-born population" (227). In 1919, fourteen states enacted "criminal syndicalism laws" that enabled prosecution of union members. In Washington State, 86 members of the IWW were convicted of sedition. Thus the anti-immigration movement of the twenties was heavily informed by capitalist right-wing ideologies.

Higham notes that WWI created "an urgent need for national unity and homogeneity" (302). The massive efforts at Americanization can be seen in this context. The paranoid associative network encompassing the leftist is observable in the wording of the Immigration Act of 1917, which excluded: "All idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, insane persons; persons who have had one or more attacks of insanity at any time previously; persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority … persons convicted of a felony or other crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; polygamists … anarchists …" (U.S. Congress 1917). Those allowed entries were subject to official discriminatory practices, such as the Revenue Act of 1918, which taxed non-resident aliens at twice the rate of resident aliens and citizens.

On February 10, 1919, the front page of *The New York Times* displayed the headline: "54 Foreign Reds on the Way East to Be Deported." Excerpts from the lengthy subtitles include the statements: "alien prisoners"; "Immigration department determined to rid country of European anarchists"; and "A motley company of I. W. W. troublemakers, bearded fanatics, and red flag supporters were huddled in crowded berths and propaganda-strewn compartments of the prison train" (*The New York Times* 1919). In January 1920 the Justice Department organized a round-up of over 3000 alien members of the two communist parties. Almost all were Eastern Europeans (Higham 1955, pp. 230–231).

Language offers a convenient theater for the performance of interethnic strife. The language of the other carried the stigma of race and treason throughout this period, and it was felt that the threatening "foreign races" could be combatted through language itself. In 1912, the southern states voted overwhelmingly for a literacy test for immigrants (166–167). It should be noted that, between 1900 and 1910, the entire west and south (beyond the Rocky Mountains and south of the Mason–Dixon Line) had only half the new immigrants that New York City had (168). Those "purer" regions placed the immigrant influx under scrutinous surveillance. Higham supplies the astounding information that the American periodical *The Nation* printed the articles "The Proper Sieve for Immigrants" and "The Immigration Problem" asserting that a coherent modern state must be linguistically unified and recommended immigration restrictions (Higham 1955, p. 92; *The Nation* 1891a, b).

The protectionist movements during and after WWI to make immigrants "100% Americanized" (Higham 1955, p. 242) had strong lingua therapeutic policies: The "100% Americanizers opened a frontal assault on foreign influence in American life. They set about to stampede immigrants into citizenship, into adoption of the English language, and into unquestioning reverence for existing American institutions. They bade them abandon entirely their Old World customs and loyalties. They used high-pressure, steamroller tactics. They cajoled and they commanded" (247). These were sponsored by a plethora of patriotic political and social groups: The National Association of Manufacturers, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Americanization Committee, the National Security League, the American Defense Society, the Bureau of Education, the Committee on Public Information, etc. Henry Ford set up his own Ford English School and made his immigrant employees attend two days a week. The first thing they learned to say was "I am a good American" (247–248). The efforts to Americanize and Anglicize immigrants aimed to separate them from alien communities viewed as socialist and pro-labor. Thus anglicizing was seen as a cure for labor unrest.

The displacement of the theater of conflict onto language was also the result of a paranoid fear that the allophone would contaminate the English language itself. The fallacious logic held that one needed to make the aliens American in order to keep them from making Americans alien. In 1914, the noted Russian historian Stephen Graham published *With Poor Immigrants to America*. In this work, he made some influential predictions about the future of the English language in America, saying that "the contemporary language of America … is in the act of changing its skin" (Graham 1914, p. 248). The choice of the word "skin" here is hardly coincidental. The first two examples that he provides of this linguistic molting echo the concerns shared with others of the time who comment on the American language: "One, two, three, *cut it out* and work for Socialism … *I should worry* and get thin as a lamp-post so that tramps should come and lean against me" (248). The presence of loan expressions from Yiddish is represented as linguistic as well as social and political corruption. Graham summarizes his conclusions on the future of America and the American language:

> Influenced as she is by Jews, Negroes, Germans, Slavs, more and more foreign constructions will creep into the language,–such things as "I should worry," derived from Russian-Jewish girl strikers. "She ast me for a nickel," said a Jew-girl to me of a passing beggar. "*I should give her a nickel*, let her work for it same as other people!" The *I shoulds*of the Jew can pass into the language of the Americans, and be understood from New York to San Francisco … To-day the influence that has come to most fruition is that of the negro. The negro's way of speaking has become the way of most ordinary Americans, but that influence is passing, and in ten or twenty years the Americans will be speaking very differently from what they are now. The foreigner will have modified much of the language and many of the rhythms of speech. America … will be subject to a very powerful influence from the immigrants. (250–251)

Graham's discourse displays a prerational association of language with the body. Americans are speaking like Jews and negroes (as if they were not Americans), which will change the American "skin." One sees a fear of contamination by association by symbolic, but not actual touching.

In 1918, the Bureau of Naturalization and the Bureau of Education sponsored legislation to finance the teaching of English to aliens. In that year, the Secretary of the Interior organized national conferences and repeatedly petitioned Congress "for a common language as an imperative to national self-protection" (Higham 1955, p. 260). In 1919 and 1920, states enacted measures to combat Bolshevism with nationalism. In 1919, fifteen states mandated elementary education in English, public and private. Many required citizenship of all public school teachers. The State of Oregon required all non-English language publications to carry parallel translations into English (260). Clearly, this was not in order to increase readership, but to monitor content. This reveals a submerged notion that anglicization neutralizes danger. Many of the centers erected to supervise immigrant education eventually became in the 1920s adult education programs. In 1919–1920, the 100 percent Americanism movement came to see itself as a panacea for all national and social ills, advocating the "Americanization of America" (261).

While such blatant racism has largely disappeared in the twenty-first century, the use of language has remained as a displaced locus of prejudice, seen in the controversy over teaching in black vernacular and Spanish: *We* have nothing against *them*, but *they* need to learn *our* language. The associative network of prejudice becomes condensed and displaced into language.

By September 1920, there were 5000 arrivals a day at Ellis Island. There was a national fear that immigrants were ruining the economy and taking jobs away from Americans (267). Not unrelated to this problematic nexus is the emergence of prohibition, the eighteenth amendment to the constitution. The amendment caused a massive increase in crime, which was, in turn, blamed on the foreigners, who came from countries where alcohol was legal. The result was that the immigrant (Italian) became at once an economic, ethnic, legal, and moral threat. Prohibition went into effect nationwide on January 17, 1920, and caused overcrowded courts and prisons, along with massive law enforcement corruption.

And again, in the century that became infamous for its anti-Semitism, the overdetermined paranoia condensed squarely upon the figure of the Jew: "The Jews faced a sustained agitation that singled them out from the other new immigrant groups blanketed by racial activism—an agitation that reckoned them the most dangerous force undermining the nation" (278). By the end of the twenties reliable estimates claim that Jews were excluded from 90% of the office jobs in New York City (278). Jews were stigmatized as anti-American leftists.

This situation was exacerbated by the democratic aspirations of successful socialist candidates for public office. Morris Hillquit, a founding member of the Socialist Party of America. Born Moishe Hillkowitz in Riga, Latvia, he received 22% of the vote for mayor of New York City. And Meyer London, a colleague of Hillquit, was elected to congress as a socialist in 1914, 1916, and 1920. The publication *The Brooklyn Anti-Bolshevist* appeared in opposition to Hillquit and was subtitled *A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Defense of American Institutions Against the Jewish Bolshevist Doctrines of Morris Hillquit and Leon Trotsky* (*Brooklyn Anti-Bolshevist* 1918, p. 279). This displays the "red scare" combined with anti-Semitism.

Higham notes: "The Jew offered the most concrete symbol of foreign radicalism" (279). Bolshevism came to be seen as a Jewish movement, and some believed that Russian Bolshevism was inspired by the Yiddish-speaking community in New York (279). 1920 saw the American edition of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Nilus 1934), a pro-Czarist paranoid anti-Semitic vision of a world socialist Jewish conspiracy first published in Russia in 1903. It informed Henry Ford's *The International Jew* (Ford 2003), a four-volume anti-Semitic work published in the early 1920s that was positively received in Nazi Germany.

There is interesting cognitive dissonance in the construction of the Jew; on the one hand, “the Jews own all the banks,” and on the other, they are all Bolsheviks. Thus they are capitalists and communists at the same time, a dreamwork logic indifferent to contradictions. With allusions to Don Quixote, Higham remarks that sentiments began “tilting at an international enemy, half banker, half Bolshevik” (282). He sees the growth of protestant fundamentalism in the twenties as a reaction against modernity, a rural white segregationist withdrawal from an overcomplicated, decadent world (293).

This xenophobia was most successfully articulated in the immigration quota acts of 1921 and 1924, which reduced the average Southern and Eastern European immigration from an average of 783,000 per year to a maximum of 155,000 in 1921 and 25,000 in 1924 (Chermayeff 1991, pp. 70, 17). The 1921 bill passed the senate by a vote of 78 to 1 (Higham 1955, p. 311). On April 13, 1924, the Los Angeles Times published a celebratory headline, void of all irony: “Nordic Victory Is Seen in Drastic Restrictions.” The term “Nordic,” which indicates Finland and Scandinavia, is most curious here. The avoidance of southern peoples was so strong that it made the compass point as far north as possible. It was in these years that membership in the arch-racist Klu Klux Klan reached its peak.

The efforts to construct an Americanism based on ethnicity and anti-communism were frustrated during the Great Depression, when leftist parties and labor union activities grew in the face of massive poverty. The Communist Party USA (CP), founded in 1919, had its best showing in 1932, when it received 0.26% of the national vote (Leip 2016). The 1930s also saw the rise of the New Deal, an effort by the Democratic Party to harvest the growing left-wing votes. The development of the left wing was interrupted during WWII, after which the leftists awoke in the midst of a hypercapitalist nightmare.

There are excellent summaries of the anticommunist movement in the USA that reveal what the government was really up to. In *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America*, Larry Ceplair observes that “anti-Communism did not derive its power from any doctrinal or ideological qualities. Indeed, it lacked the substance and coherence necessary to be classified as a doctrine or an ideology. It was an idée fixe which simplified and reduced the complex issues facing the USA and became, as a result, an agenda item for adherents of a wide variety of other political doctrines. Thus it became a symbiotic idée fixe that did not necessarily benefit the host" (Ceplair 2011, p. 2).

On an international scale, this was a quite anomalous reaction. Ceplair notes that while communism in the USA was widely characterized as "un-American," the same movements in Canada, Great Britain, France, and Italy were not seen as "un-Canadian," "un-British," "un-French," or "un-Italian" (4). He quotes Albert Einstein, who, during the cold war, asked, "Why should America be so much more endangered than England by English Communists? Or is one to believe that the English are politically more naive than the Americans so that they do not realize the danger they are in?" (Rowe and Schulmann 2009, p. 501). In fact, in the wake of WWII, the UK was under great economic hardship—in stark contrast to the US—which resulted in the implementation of wide social programs, but in none of the anticommunist extremism seen in the USA.

Einstein himself was sympathetic to socialism, and it was perhaps his eminent standing that insulated him from anticommunist persecution. In May 1949, he published "Why Socialism?" in the journal *Monthly Review. An Independent Socialist Magazine*. It was reissued electronically in 2009. Einstein holds that "nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called 'the predatory phase' of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future" (Einstein 1949).

These are indeed interesting words coming from Einstein, arguably the preeminent scientist of modernity. He offers here a warning that remained largely unheeded and that itself contrasted sharply with the understanding of social science inquiry in the anticommunist era: "We should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems." He also offers a most astute analysis of the harm done by the individualist religion of American capitalism: "The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. The egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate."

Einstein's words seem to foretell and describe the triumph of individualist capitalism in the 1980s: "The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil." He continues: "Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before. This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career. I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion."

Einstein astutely observes the American opposition between the individual and society, where an organic connection between self and whole is seen as threatening to individual liberty and to individual identity itself. This resentment of the larger social body comes easily to articulate itself as an opposition to a socialization of the economy. Especially poignant are Einstein's observations on the education of competitive capitalist values in schools. What he said over half a century ago is clearly borne out in the plethora of majors in business, leadership, entrepreneurship, and so on, as well as in the current "crisis of the humanities."

Einstein's observations on the dependence of individual upon society as a positive asset, organic tie, and protective force can be illuminated by some perspectives from psychoanalysis, specifically Freud's last major work on malaise in human culture (1930), which is considered to be a summary of his ideas. He begins the work with a discussion of a limitless "oceanic feeling" and a "sensation of eternity" (Freud 1930, p. 422) involved in religious experience, one in which the self is felt to be part of a universal whole. He discusses the experience of love in the same light. He holds that such experiences recover the first feelings of the infant at the mother's breast (424), where there is no sensation of separation. He summarizes: "originally the ego includes everything. Later it separates an external word off from itself. Our present ego-feeling is thus only a shrunken vestige of a much more inclusive—indeed and all-inclusive—feeling that corresponded to a more internal bond between the ego and the environment" (425). Freud termed this "primary narcissism," a state that we are driven to try to recover in adult life. The infant experiences this unity at the mother's breast; thus in the psyche, the mother represents that unity.

There is a paradox at play here. The experience of a separate self, which constitutes, in effect, the ego, is both drawn to this experience of unity and alienated by it, as recovering it would constitute a dissolution of the awareness of self and thus a dissolution of the ego. American culture criticizes overdependency on the mother, and expressions such as "cutting the umbilical cord," "nanny state," and "mama's boy" indicate a disapproval of dependency. The American culture privileges independence and seeks to instantiate the triumph of the individual.

Einstein's observations help to foreground the continuation and expansion of the antisocialist model beyond the cold war era. The rabid anticommunism of the 1950s is traditionally considered to have consisted in mania and hysteria, and as such, it is seen as a sort of passing delirium from which the nation has recovered. It is commonly referred to as McCarthyism, after the Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy (1908–1957), who voiced the paranoid delusions of a communist conspiracy more than any other politician of the cold war era. But to see it this way masks the profound and lasting effect of postwar American anticommunism. Its symptoms softened, and the disease has become systemic. The target of anticommunist mania was not communism itself, but instead the socialization of the American economy and the connection of that socialization with issues of race. Soviet communism provided a useful hyperbole in attempts to eradicate the left.

One of the foremost scholars on cold war anticommunism is Ellen Schrecker, who published *Many Are the Crimes. McCarthyism in America* (1998). The epigraph to the work: "Security is like liberty, in that many are the crimes committed in its name," uttered by Justice Robert H. Jackson, in the Supreme Court case *Knauff v. Shaughnessy* (1950), resonates oddly and ominously a half century before 9/11 and the implementation of homeland security.

Schrecker notes a shift in awareness during the cold war era away from pro-labor and toward pro-capital: "Gone was the Popular Front mind-set with its glorification of the little man and its celebration of labor and cultural diversity. Gone, too, was the class consciousness and the emphasis on collective struggle" (Schrecker 1998, p. 395). This was accompanied by a change in language. "Industrialization" replaced "industrial capitalism." The word "boss" underwent semantic elevation and increased in usage (this can be confirmed by a Google Ngram search). Phrases indicating the plight of the working class, e.g., "working stiff," also declined in usage, and so did terms like "masses" and "revolution" (396).

While research shows the continual presence of antileftist sentiment in the USA since the nineteenth century, the current idiom of anticommunism really gelled in the postwar era. Schrecker claims that Franklin Roosevelt (FDR), president from 1933 to 1945, was a pragmatist who was not ideologically anticommunist (87). He opposed the American Communist Party (CP) when it interfered with his own agenda, especially when it opposed his foreign policy. But Schrecker holds that "the far right attracted much more of his attention than the far left" (88), especially Nazi sympathizers in the USA. Right-wing antilabor attacks on the New Deal tried to fabricate communist influence in the Roosevelt administration, and FDR felt compelled to respond by becoming more and more critical of the CP. The Hearst press accused him of being a communist, and the Republican vice presidential candidate in 1936 said that FDR was "leading us towards Moscow" (90). It was right-wing opposition to social programs that attempted to depict FDR as a communist. Thus their target was not communism itself, but a socialization of the economy.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which became infamous in the 1950s as a major organ of anticommunist persecutions, was established in 1938 and became more and more engaged in the service of antilabor opposition to the New Deal. Henry Ford, who was profoundly opposed to the unionization of his automobile factories, actually offered to provide automobiles to HUAC staff members (91). The automobile became quickly allied with notions of Americanism. "See the USA in your Chevrolet" was a television jingle popularized by Dinah Shore in the early 1950s. It was also sung by Pat Boone and Don Drysdale. This is the first stanza:

See the USA in your Chevrolet,
America is asking you to call,
Drive your Chevrolet through the USA,
America's the greatest land of all. (Carr 1950)

Automobile ownership is depicted here as a patriotic duty affirming national supremacy.

The name HUAC itself merits some attention. It was not named "The House *Non*-American Activities Committee," nor "The House *Anti*-American Activities Committee," but instead "The House *Un*-American

Activities Committee." Now "Non-American" would indicate not of America or not of Americans, which would not be a very useful concept. A committee on everything outside of the US? "Anti-American," on the other hand, would indicate something opposed to the USA, a dangerous national security concern, and it would be a very useful concept, if that was what the government was solely concerned with. But it was not. "Anti-American" does not take one very far in the construction of identity. HUAC wanted, in a not completely conscious manner, to create a national identity that was patriotic, political, and economic, without needing to specify what that identity is. In such cases, it is easier to do so negatively, i.e., by saying what something is not, other than what it is (which actually provides no definition at all). And doing so negatively is a good gambit, since any generalization about any national identity is easily undone by counterexamples. In such bothersome cases, it is easier to attempt a definition negatively.

The term "un-American" serves as an intangible catch-all for behavior that one wants to label as a violation of national identity. It thus constructs, in a convenient but equally intangible manner, national identity as patriotic, and any deviation becomes seen as a threat to that identity. A Google Ngram search for "un-American" shows a feeble presence for the word until the early twentieth century, when its usage skyrocketed in step with the hysteria over Ellis Island immigration. It silhouetted, by contrast, an Americanness of white protestant ethnicity. The immigration restriction acts of the early twenties accompanied a radical skydive in its usage, but it spiked again sharply during the anticommunism of the postwar era.

When antilabor forces succeeded in defeating New Deal political candidates, Roosevelt tried to neutralize the power of the HUAC. Unsuccessful, he then started constructing a clear anticommunist image for himself and his party, distanced himself from the major labor unions, such as the AFL and the CIO, and reduced the power of the National Labor Relations Board (Schrecker 1998, p. 93). This was quite awkward for Roosevelt, the author of the work relief programs that aimed to employ millions of workers.

The alliance of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and the outbreak of WWII in 1939 fulfilled the wildest dreams of the antilabor forces in the USA, giving them the opportunity to expand the network of negative associations patterned onto American leftists to include fascist aggression. Schrecker notes: "Once World War II transformed communism from a political issue into a matter of national security, the Roosevelt administration, hitherto an often reluctant and fitful participant in the anticommunist crusade, definitively turned against the CP…Within a few months of the Nazi-Soviet pact, the Roosevelt administration was openly repressing the CP. Earl Browder, the party's general secretary, was the first and most prominent victim" (95). Browder was interrogated by the HUAC on September 5, only a few days after the outbreak of war, and subsequently sentenced to 4 years in prison for having used a different name on a passport (95–96). The CP also became excluded from the voting ballots by 15 states in the 1940 presidential election.

The New Deal itself had succeeded well in coopting leftist votes. In the 1928 presidential election, all communist, socialist, and labor parties together received: 344,009 votes. That number increased dramatically to 1,029,661 in 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression, which was also the first year that Roosevelt was elected. With the New Deal in power, the votes for the leftist parties declined to 280,024 in 1936 and 180,039 in 1940 (Leip 2016).

During the American armament escalation in anticipation of entry into WWII, the traditionally conservative arms industry undertook measures to thwart organized labor, which resulted in widespread strikes in 1940, and which, in turn, made it easy to paint labor unions as unpatriotic and their strikes as "a communist attempt to sabotage the war effort" (Schrecker 1998, p. 100). The defense contractor Allis-Chalmers suffered a 76-day walkout in 1941, and the notoriously antiunion company "mounted a massive campaign to convince the federal government and broader public that its labor troubles originated in Moscow. And it succeeded" (101).

This abated when Germany invaded the USSR in 1941, and the US entered the war as a Soviet ally. Schrecker notes: "It was, after all, hard to insist that Communists threatened national security when Roosevelt embraced Stalin as a valued ally" (102). It was no coincidence that 5 months after the entry of the USA into WWII, Roosevelt released Earl Browder from prison, saying that it "will have a tendency to promote national unity" (103). Support of the USSR became good for the arms business, and principles of morality marched in unison. Ceplair notes that the Communist Party USA gained back some of its supporters during that period. During the allied period, a slight majority of Americans "believed that the Soviet Union could be trusted to cooperate with the United States after the war, and most published commentaries on the subject expressed an optimistic tone" (Ceplair 2011, p. 74)

While the anticommunist fears abated, they did not disappear altogether, and efforts continued to combat domestic communism in the USA. "Communism" underwent semantic extension to include anything non-conservative at that time. The poet Archibald MacLeish, who headed the Office of Facts and Figures during the war, complained to Herbert Hoover about the conflation of the words liberal and communist in official documents: "I notice the recurrence of the phrase that the applicant is said to be 'associated with various liberal and Communistic groups.' This suggests that investigators have been told to consider liberalism as suspicious…for the sake of our reputation in the history books, don't you think it would be a good thing if all investigators could be made to understand that liberalism is not only not a crime but actually the attitude of the president of the United States and the greater part of his administration" (Schrecker 1998, p. 114).

The alliance of the USA and the USSR acted to restrain, but not eradicate, the power of antileftism. That power unleashed once the war ended, and American culture flourished with fictions of the evil of the "red menace." These fictions sought to connect the image of the USSR with the image of anything that could curb individual freedom in the USA.

The classic cold war film *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (Foy and Douglas 1951) is an excellent early example of such fictionalization. The amusing title evokes some of the monster movies of the cold war era, such as *I Was a Zombie for the FBI, I Was a Teenage Werewolf,* and *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. The film is based on the true story of Gerhardt Eisler, a German spy for the USSR, and Matt Cvetic, undercover FBI informant and the hero of the film, who is summoned from his mother's birthday party to meet Eisler. The two meet, toast Stalin, and discuss a plan to sabotage the steel industry in Pittsburgh. This provides a locus for the USSR in the American labor movement and is set in opposition to the fundamental human value of motherhood, which is what Cvetic leaves in order to meet Eisler.

Schrecker says of Eisler that his "appearance has to do with his symbolic value as the personification of the foreign elements that allegedly controlled the American Communist party…if Gerhardt Eisler hadn't existed, the Cold War would have had to invent him. He was the quintessential embodiment of the specter of international Communism, invariably portrayed as a sinister Central European whose shadowy presence was all the more terrifying because it was so intangible…His German nationality was a major boon. It was hard to come up with a convincing personification of the Russian enemy, but Eisler's antagonists could tap into two world wars' worth of evil Huns and Nazis" (122–123). This indicates the necessity of establishing a network of associations in order to embed the threat into the fabric of American culture. *Life* magazine characterized Eisler as "almost a separate species of mankind" (135), and one can associate this with the notions of alien invasions in cold war American culture.

Schrecker observes that never was there "any hard evidence that Communists, at least within the United States and outside of the movies, had actually assassinated anyone" (136–137). The communist became a cold war cultural icon, a straw man in the service of the antilabor movement. A straw man is a device in a fallacious type of argumentation that attacks the adversary's statement by referring to a nearby easy target, something easily refutable that is associated with the adversary's statement or with the adversary per se. It thus exploits associative and metonymic primary processes. The expression derives from the practice of erecting a flimsy image of an enemy soldier for shooting practice. It is also historically associated with the scarecrow, a form of trickery by weak and false imitation. The straw man resembles, or is associated with the target, and is thus a subset of the target related by association or metonymy.

In 1947, Herbert Hoover addressed the HUAC, saying, "In 1917 when the Communists overthrew the Russian Government there was one Communist for every 2277 persons in Russia. In the United States today there is one Communist for every 1814 persons in the country" (143). One wonders where Hoover got his data. Nonetheless, the juxtaposition in his phrase gives the impression that Soviets are in the USA. The next step is to associate someone with communists, which then yields an association with the Soviet Union. This sets up a chain of contagion.

Schrecker notes that "disease metaphors were common. Communism was like a plague." In 1950, the US Attorney General said that each communist "carries in himself the germ of death for our society." Communists were "poisonous germs," reported a former FBI official to the National Security Council in 1948. And both parties—as one says in the USA, as if it were perfectly normal to have only two—colluded in this conspiracy, the Democrats wanting to distance themselves as much as possible from a socialist image. While Hubert Humphrey spoke figuratively in saying that the CP was "a political cancer," Adlai Stevenson abandoned all metaphor, but not hyperbole, when he said that communism was worse "than cancer, tuberculosis, and heart disease combined" (144).

In the 1950s, a loyalty oath was required when applying for a permit to fish in the NYC water reservoirs. The oath was intended to deter people from poisoning the drinking water. A most curious thing happened in 1957, when the State of New York denied permits to two communist fishermen who had taken the loyalty oath (154). Apparently, communists, who want to topple the government by force, could not be trusted to keep their word. Water has a profound psychological presence. In dream analysis, it is associated with birth, the uterus, the image of the mother, and wholeness, as seen in the "oceanic feeling" discussed by Freud. It is also seen as a cleansing and purifying element. It has immense subconscious resonance. The possibility of its contamination triggers a tidal wave of primal fears that can be manipulated to demagogic ends.

In 1957, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black advised his daughter not to attend her cousin's wedding, because some of the people on the guest list were alleged to be communists (359).

Other examples of the fear of contamination test the limits of the imagination. After Sylvia Bernstein, the mother of Carl Bernstein (the *Washington Post* journalist who investigated the Watergate scandal), was interrogated by HUAC in 1954, her daughter was expelled from nursery school. Was the nursery school afraid of infiltration by communist babies? And the best friends of 10-year-old Carl were told to avoid him (367). This sheds some interesting light upon the demise of Richard Nixon, a fervent HUAC anticommunist himself, as a result of Bernstein's Watergate investigations. Schrecker observes, "The taint of Communism was like a contagious disease. People shunned the carriers, dropping close friends and colleagues, even cutting family ties. Almost every survivor of the McCarthy years—Communist and political innocent alike—has a story of someone crossing the street to avoid eye contact" (367).

The phenomenon of the paranoid fear of contamination by association can be illustrated with examples from Freud's anthropological studies on indigenous cultures in *Totem und Tabu*. In these cultures, the clan is identified in and through the totem animal, which is considered to be the paternal ancestor of the clan and its guardian spirit. Members of the clan are forbidden to kill the totem animal and should avoid eating its flesh. And exogamy rules: Clan members are prohibited from sexual intercourse with each other, as they are all seen as blood relatives. (The presence of the totem animal in "enlightened" cultures is seen in the practice of animal mascots for sports teams.)

Freud employed the anthropological studies of James George Frazer and concentrated on the incest taboo, a prohibition common to all human cultures, especially the taboo against intercourse among members of the same clan. These are cultures of forced exogamy and forbidden endogamy. What fascinated Freud was the extent to which a culture would go to in order to avoid anything remotely associated with incest. The punishment for this violation is usually death, meted out to both the man and the woman, and it occurs even if the union produces no offspring. And it applies to all members of the clan, even those who are not related as cousins (Freud 1912–1913, p. 9).

Freud notes that in Vanuatu (called the New Hebrides at that time)

> when a boy reaches a certain age, he leaves his maternal home and moves into a "clubhouse" where he eats and sleeps. He can still visit his home to ask for food, but if his sister is there, he has to leave without eating. If no sister is there, then he can sit near the door and eat. If brother and sister accidentally meet outdoors, she has to run away or hide. If the boy recognizes his sister's footprints in the sand, he will not follow them, just as she will not do with his. He doesn't even mention her name and avoids using common words that are associated with it. This avoidance begins in puberty and lasts throughout life. The distance between a mother and her son increases with time and is predominately on her part. If she brings him something to eat, she does not hand it to him herself, but puts it down in front of him, does not speak intimately with him, and addresses him with the formal pronoun. Similar practices are found in New Caledonia. If brother and sister meet, she flees into the bushes, and he continues on without turning to look at her. On the Gazelle Peninsula in Papua New Guinea, a sister is not allowed to speak to her brother from her marriage on; she does not even say his name but uses a circumlocution instead. (15–16)

Writing over 100 years ago, Freud nonetheless made some astute observations on the incest taboo in a framework that anticipates evolutionary psychology. He held that the maniacal aversion to incest cannot be an innate instinct, although it is common to all human cultures: "Not only must the aversion to incest be older than all forms of animal husbandry, by which humans could have made observations on the effect of inbreeding on racial characteristics, but also the detrimental consequences of inbreeding are even today not determined beyond doubt and are difficult to demonstrate in humans" (151). Thus one is not performing an instinct, but rather a cultural adaptation.

The associative phenomena involving the taboo manifest themselves in displacements. For instance, "a Maori chief will not fan a fire by blowing on it, as his sacred breath would transfer his power to the fire, the fire would transfer his power to the pot, the pot would transfer his power to the food cooked in the pot, the food would transfer his power to the person who eats it, and thus the person has to die, who ate the food that was cooked in the pot that stood in the fire that had been blown upon by the sacred and dangerous breath of the chief" (38). This resembles a Rube Goldberg caricature of causality. Freud compares this associative chain of displacements to the behavior of one of his compulsive patients: "The patient demanded that an article that her husband had bought be removed from their home, otherwise it would be impossible for her to live in that space. She heard that the object was purchased in a store in, let us say, Deer Street. But Deer is the name of an old friend who lives in a city far away, and whom she had known by her maiden name. This friend is currently for her an 'impossible' taboo, and the article purchased here in Vienna is just as taboo as the friend herself with whom she does not want to come in contact" (38). One sees here that the psyche is susceptible to stimulation by a vast array of images remotely associated with the base source of anxiety. And these proceed as primary processes along a chain of associations.

Freud summarizes: "Compulsive prohibitions place great resignations and restrictions upon life just as do taboo prohibitions, but some of them can be dealt with by the performance of certain practices. These practices then become obligatory and compulsive—compulsive behaviors—and they are clearly in the nature of repentance, atonement, defense mechanisms, and purification. The most common of these practices is compulsive washing. Freud adds that purification by water is the preferred method for dealing with the transgression of taboos" (38).

The communist contagion had to be eradicated by compulsive cleansing and purging of all elements in the remotest contact with the infection. "If nothing else, McCarthyism destroyed the left," Schrecker adds. "It wiped out the communist movement—the heart of the vibrant left-labor Popular Front that had stimulated so much social and political change in the 1930s and 1940s. Though the party itself survived, all the political organizations, labor unions, and cultural groups that constituted the main institutional and ideological infrastructure of the American left simply disappeared" (Schrecker 1998, p. 369). To say that the party survived gives the wrong impression, however. As stated earlier, the communist party was not on the ballot in any state in the last presidential election. It has not put forth a candidate since 1984, when Gus Hall and Angela Davis received 0.04% of the vote (Leip 2016).

Schrecker adds: "The left-labor coalition that McCarthyism destroyed might have offered an alternative to the rigid pursuit of the Cold War and provided the basis for an expanded welfare state. But such a development never occurred" (369). This was the environment that labor found itself in after World War II. The gains that labor had made during the depression had to be undone by American businesses. When widespread labor union strikes started appearing in the wake of the war, businesses took advantage of the strikes to build up sentiment against the unions, and they made great use of the conditioned fear of communist contamination to campaign against them. "Red-baiting was an effective part of that campaign," Schrecker notes. "By 1946, it was possible to link Soviet intransigence in Eastern Europe with labor troubles in the United States and claim that they were all part of a single conspiracy against the American way of life" (185). Antilabor lobbying resulted in the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which severely limited the right to strike. This was successful, despite the fact that "communists actually had little to do with most of the big post-war strikes" in the major coal, steel, railroad, and automobile industries (185).

A massive strike against the defense contractor Allis-Chalmers in 1946, an 11-month one, was answered by a fabrication of communist causation, which all but destroyed the union that called the strike; its membership fell from over 8000 to 184 in 6 months (186). After Taft-Hartley, propaganda abounded. Unions active in defense-related industries were depicted as pretending that they wanted wage increases and better working conditions, when what they really wanted was the USA to lose the Korean War, and this because of their communist sympathies (188).

During the same period, the FBI characterized communism as "broadly the doctrine of the necessity of the violent overthrow of capitalist governments" (193), in order to justify legal measures taken against American communists, since it had become illegal, under the Smith Act of 1940, to advocate the overthrow of the US government. The FBI's efforts were very successful. They informed the most influential Supreme Court decision in this matter, *Dennis v. The United States* (1951), which upheld the arrest of 12 CP members charged with sedition. Schrecker says of the decision, "it confirmed all the stereotypes about the CPs conspiratorial goals and activities. Because of the importance of the case and the prestige of the high court, the case shaped the way in which people like intellectuals and educators came to view Communism" (200).

Silenced by postwar antilabor tyranny, the CP offers no data between 1952 and 1968. In 1948, Gus Hall, the chairman of the CP, and 11 other party leaders were indicted under the McCarthy-era Alien Registration Act for advocating the overthrow of the US government by force. This fell nowhere within the political platform of the CP; it fit instead into the definition of communism held by the US government. The backward reasoning, which seems like a parody of a syllogism, went something like this: If communism is "broadly the doctrine of the necessity of the violent overthrow of capitalist governments," then communists want to overthrow the US government; ergo, if you are a communist, then you want to overthrow the government. Hall was found guilty in 1949 and sentenced to 5 years in prison, to which three more years were added after he jumped bail and was subsequently captured. He was imprisoned in the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. After he was freed in 1957, The State of New York revoked his driver's license. Gus was not going to see the USA in his Chevrolet.

Schrecker also observes how McCarthyism is and was a label that masked a much larger movement. She says of McCarthy, "The Senate had merely disciplined him for his bad manners" and goes on to quote New York State Senator Herbert Lehman, who said, "We have condemned the individual, but we have not repudiated the 'ism'" (265). She continues, "McCarthyism outlasted McCarthy, just as it predated him. The official campaign against domestic Communism…would have ruined the lives and careers of thousands of people without the help of Joe McCarthy. It would also have been as damaging to the American political system" (265).

The condemnation of McCarthy was not a condemnation of anticommunism. It said that McCarthy was crazy, that persecution, blacklisting, and denial of the freedom of speech were wrong, and, at the same time, that communism was wrong, too. "McCarthyism" is a metonymy that acts to reduce the systemic problem to an extreme individual example, that of a deranged paranoiac with delusions of a communist conspiracy who died of alcoholism in 1957 at the age of 48. Reducing it as such masks the true conspiracy, one that sought to annihilate the left wing. The "ism" that was permanently repudiated was not McCarthyism; it was communism, along with socialism and the related labor movement.

The false remembering of McCarthyism can be illuminated by applying the psychoanalytic concept of the screen memory (*Deckerinnerung*), explained in Freud's study of everyday psychopathology. A screen memory is a memory that covers up an earlier recollection. It is a substitute for an unpleasant memory; resistance causes the memory to be displaced. In other words, the memory becomes renarrated in order to suppress the traumatic aspects. And this happens, again, through displacement and condensation (Freud 1901). McCarthyism is falsely recalled in condensed and displaced form as a maniacal suppression of freedom of speech and thought, a premodern form of witch hunting, that is over with. As such, the traumatic systemic effects of the movement become occluded from cultural memory and thus from the construction of national identity.

The true damage to the American political system consisted in an eradication of the left wing, a radical spectrum shift to the right, and a new misunderstanding of what it means to be left. When the left wing was lopped off the political spectrum, what was left on the left was a conservative capitalist party, the Democrats, which came to be known as "the left wing." One could imagine an earthquake that would sink the west coast into the Pacific Ocean, and Utah would become the new west, the end of the known world, a frontier on the left not to be crossed. The right became the left. And the far right became the right. And now the "neo-cons" pull the spectrum to even farther extremes.

Schrecker also astutely observes another casualty of the anticommunist movement: the opposition to imperialism. Since US foreign policy presented itself as a noble anticommunist endeavor, any opposition to it could easily be tagged as procommunist. Fear of persecution essentially numbed the criticisms of American intervention abroad: "The destruction of the anti-imperialist left changed the way Americans viewed the struggles for independence in Africa and elsewhere" (Schrecker 1998, p. 375). This also resulted in a restriction of the perspective of the civil rights movement. She argues that in the 1940s, the civil rights movement had a global perspective; the black community was exposed to extensive political information on African liberation movements, and it "linked their struggle for racial equality to that of the Africans and other colonized peoples for national liberation." They saw American racism as "rooted in the same kind of economic exploitation that let to imperialism elsewhere in the world" (375).

In the postwar period, the repression that severely limited free criticism of both domestic and foreign US politics also restricted the focus of the civil rights movement. "Because the United States was aligned with the main colonial nations of Western Europe, the NAACP thus had to mute its opposition to imperialism" (376), with the result that the civil rights movement became more cultural than political, more social than economic, and concerned with promoting black culture and encouraging polite and tolerant behavior of whites toward blacks. This would have clearly contributed to the development of identity politics, but it alone could not have created those politics. And it alone cannot account for the scarcity of political economy in the discourse of the civil rights movement.

Fear of McCarthyism caused the NAACP to distance itself from the American left. They fired their founder, W.E.B. Du Bois, because of his support of Marxism. This also contributed to the crystallization of the organization in a procapitalist direction (393). Even Martin Luther King capitulated to this pressure, breaking with aides who had been in the CP (395). "Even when someone like Martin Luther King, Jr., called for economic as well as racial equality," Schrecker asserts, "the McCarthy era had so thoroughly erased class issues from the political agenda that his words did not get heard" (395). This is a good observation. It helps explain why the USA has difficulty discussing economic causes for poverty. Instead, detours are taken into the foggy regions of behavior, upbringing, morality, and even drug use as causal factors. Clearly, class issues have been erased from political discourse, as is evident in the current vision of a universal middle class; anticommunism should be viewed as a cocontributor to the absence of the discourse of class, obviously an immense one, and also as symptom thereof.

Desegregation movements in the south also became labeled as procommunist. This enabled segregationists to pass off their racist efforts as a battle against communism. In Louisville in 1954, the courts suppressed attempts to integrate the housing market by labelling them as backed by communists (392–393). In 1946, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. published "The U.S. Communist Party" in *Life* magazine, in which he said that, among the conspiratorial activities of the CP, "Second only to the unions is the drive to organize the Negroes." He also said that CP was "sinking its tentacles into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People" (Schlesinger 1946, p. 90). Schlesinger was appointed Special Assistant to the President during the Kennedy Administration.

Schrecker cites a figure of between ten and twelve thousand people who lost their jobs and could not find new ones either because they were communists or because they had refused to testify against communists (Schrecker 1998, p. 363). "Nowhere was that damage as extensive as in the labor movement," she notes, "where the political repression of the 1940s and 1950s wiped out an entire generation of activists by driving the communists and their allies from the mainstream unions and destroying the left-wing ones" (370–380). This had serious consequences for the future of the labor movement: "When McCarthyism splintered the labor-left coalition, the drive to obtain the kind of social democratic welfare state that existed in Western Europe sputtered to a halt" (383), and "as a result, by the 1970s, when the postwar boom began to falter and the well-paid blue-collar jobs of its members began to disappear, labor was unable to mobilize either the political or the economic clout to protect its earlier gains. Its numbers dropped and its percentage of the overall workforce declined even more drastically," from 35% of non-agricultural workers unionized in 1945 to 16% in the early 1990s (381). For 2016, the bureau of labor statistics puts the figure at 10.7% (US Department of Labor 2017).

In the late 1940s, Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York referred to welfare programs as a "communist concept," in which children were "the property of the state" (385). This is an excellent ploy. If the government can be successfully depicted as harming the family, instead of helping it, then one makes great strides toward a deregulated ultraliberal economy, a right-wing dystopia.

Schrecker makes an argument about the women's movement similar to the one she makes about the civil rights movement. The Congress of American Women (CAW) was active in the 1940s and was the American branch of the leftist Women's International Democratic Federation, which had ties to the USSR. It supported economic reforms, such as equal pay, child care, and workers' strikes, and it tenaciously fought against racism. But it was attacked by HUAC and evaded harassment by shifting its concentration to a pacifist anti-cold war stance. It became, in Schrecker's words, "a small, middle-class women's peace group" (388), which the CP had little interest in maintaining. Consequently, it disbanded in 1950, and with it "the nexus between race, class, and gender that a group like the CAW had forged had largely disappeared" (388).

Now this is an interesting observation. American feminism has often been criticized for being a conversation among white upper middle class college educated women. The lack of emphasis on race and class within the movement is brought to light here as a consequence of postwar anticommunism.

"The work of Betty Friedan reveals the consequences of that disappearance," Schrecker notes. Friedan was active in the Popular Front and worked as a reporter for The United Electrical, Radio and Machine

Workers of America (UE). Her 1952 pamphlet "UE Fights for Women Workers" was a strong polemic on working women's rights, equal pay, and racial discrimination. Schrecker describes the pamphlet as "one of the last pieces of overtly class-conscious writing that Friedan had ever published" (388). She left the UE when anticommunism severely reduced its membership (it had over 600,000 members in the 1940s—it now has 35,000) and directed her major work *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) toward a "safe" audience. Schrecker suggests that "her book's main weakness, its single-minded focus on the problems of relatively privileged, middle-class white suburban housewives, is a legacy of the McCarthy era" (389).

Schrecker invokes the concept of "cold war liberalism" to broadly characterize this movement. The term captures the essence of a movement that is ostensibly oppositional but actually conventional. A fear of association with socialism and communism "may have induced the Cold War liberals to pull their political punches" (411) and to avoid issues of class.

Blacklisting resulted in a timidity in popular culture, especially in television. Schrecker cites an article from *The Lincoln Star* from 1951 observing that "virtually everything from pregnancy to freedom of religion is considered a controversial subject, leaving almost nothing except homicide as a fit topic to enter our houses" (400). Schrecker observes: "Most of the entertainment that reached the nation's living rooms during the 1950s supported the status quo. Quiz shows celebrated capital accumulation. Westerns and crime stories offered simplistic morality tales that got resolved by violence…the news was equally oversimplified and militaristic…though television inherited talk-show panels from radio, it narrowed the range of opinions expressed on them" (400). "Not much has changed," Schrecker concludes, "the patterns of institutional restraint and self-censorship established during the McCarthy era are still around" (400).

Even more absurd was the wave of "commie hunting" in Hollywood, which succeeded in planting an image of communism in one of the most innocuous media in the country. Schrecker notes, "Ironically, the one area in which Hollywood's Communists had very little impact was in the films they made. It was hard to insert proletarian class consciousness into such vehicles as *Sweetheart of the Campus*, *Charlie Chan's Greatest Case*, or *Our Blushing Brides*" (317).

In 1948, the Washington State Legislature's Un-American Activities Committee launched an anticommunist witch hunt directed against University of Washington faculty and staff, along with local labor unions.

In March 1998, the University of Washington organized *The All Powers Project*, which observed the 50th anniversary of the anticommunist harassment. The project included *The Red Scare: A Filmography*, which compiled a lengthy list of films with anticommunist propaganda content, both explicit and implicit. The project also compiled a list, understandably short, of "films that portrayed socialist ideas or the working classes in a positive light" (Pearson 1998).

There were only six such films made before the USA entered WWII. Of the seven films made during the war, all depicted the USSR in a positive light as an ally of the USA. Of interest is *Mission to Moscow* (Buckner and Curtiz 1943), a pro-Soviet film that idealized the Russian people. It is based on the book *Mission to Moscow* (1941) by Joseph Davies, who was ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938, and who admired Stalin. The book consists of correspondence and State Department reports from Davies's years as ambassador. The film version was produced by Warner Bros. and starred Walter Huston. There was also *Days of Glory* (Robinson and Tourneur 1944), in which Gregory Peck plays a Soviet guerrilla fighting the Nazi invasion of The Soviet Union. It was Peck's feature film debut. Only two films of clear socialist sentiment were produced between 1945 and 1970, the most significant being *Salt of the Earth* (Jarrico and Biberman 1954), about a mining strike in New Mexico. Beginning in the 1970s, films critical of the commie hunting of the 1950s started being produced.

Perhaps the most interesting of the anticommunist films was *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Wanger and Siegel 1956), which depicts alien pod people who take over Americans' bodies while asleep. When they awaken, they are automatons devoid of feeling and individuality, but physically indistinguishable from their former selves. The film portrays well the fear of infection and contamination by aliens, but also the fear that the communists among us can silently infiltrate and pass as "normal Americans."

Anticommunism can account for political reticence, both historical and current. The anticommunist mania did make people afraid to criticize the USA, but does this suffice to explain the current timidity and lack of oppositionality? If the current absence of socialist discourse is a result of what happened over 60 years ago, then there must be something afoot currently; it must be connected to recent and current material causes.

The Google Ngram Viewer reports an increase in the frequency of usage of the terms communism and socialism in American English beginning with the Russian revolution and peaking in 1963. It declined steadily until

1983, when it began to rise again in the Reagan era. It peaked again in 1993 and has been in steady decline since. The massive propagandistic forces succeeded in stigmatizing the terms by repetition and displacement until the project was complete. The terms underwent extreme semantic degradation and extension. The increase in negative usage of the terms during the Reagan era acted as a final thrust, exhausting what energy remained in them until they disappeared from the semantic field of political discourse.

8.2 The Anti-father Father: Ronald Reagan

In 1961, Ronald Reagan issued the vinyl recording *Ronald Reagan Speaks out Against Socialized Medicine*, which was an antileftist and antilabor rant about the dangers of Medicare:

> The doctor begins to lose freedoms…first you decide that the doctor can have so many patients…but then the doctors aren't equally divided geographically…and the government has to say to him you can't live in that town, they already have enough doctors. You have to go someplace else. And from here it is only a short step to dictating where he will go. This is a freedom that I wonder whether any of us have the right to take from any human being…Take it into your own occupation or that of your husband, all of us can see what happens – once you establish the precedent that the government can determine a man's working place and his working methods, determine his employment. From here it is a short step to all the rest of socialism, to determining his pay and pretty soon your son won't decide when he's in school, where he will go or what they will do for a living. He will wait for the government to tell them where he will go to work and what he will do. (Reagan 1961)

The phrase "to the rest of socialism" encourages associative reasoning by metonymy. The background motif that he accesses is clearly the Soviet Union, which has socialized medicine. If the USA has socialized medicine, then it will become communist. One wonders where he got the idea that the Medicare system would make doctors relocate. The recording exhorted its listeners to write their "congressmen" and oppose bills that would implement health care for the elderly:

> Write those letters now; call your friends and tell them to write them. If you don't, this program I promise you will pass just as surely as the sun will come

> up tomorrow and behind it will come other federal programs that will invade every area of freedom as we have known it in this country. Until, one day, as Normal Thomas said we will awake to find that we have socialism. And if you don't do this and if I don't do it, one of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children, what it once was like in America when men were free.

The full title of the recording is: *Ronald Reagan Speaks out Against Socialized Medicine: "Operation Coffee Cup": Project of Woman's Auxiliary, American Medical Association*. (The AMA published the recording.) The name "Operation Coffee Cup" rings of espionage and military engagement but also softens the enterprise by evoking images of 1960s domesticity. This speech shows that, in 1961, the specter of Soviet communism was strong enough to condition fearful responses to a host of activities brought into its orbit, no matter how distant.

One particularly fascinating aspect of American political culture is the attitude of American conservatives toward government, which must be considered as the oddest political attitude in the industrialized world. It can be summarized in the following *reductio ad absurdum*: I love the government because there is no government. The oxymoron of wanting a government that is no government was most persuasively articulated and represented by Ronald Reagan.

A famous conservative anthem was introduced by Reagan in his first inaugural address when he said, "Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." (Reagan 1981). Some of his other maxims are:

> "If you analyze it, I believe the very heart and soul of conservatism is libertarianism." (Klausner 1975)

> "The ten most dangerous words in the English language are 'Hi, I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." (Reagan 1981)

This is indeed a very odd form of patriotism.

The word patriotism dates in English from 1716 and is a compound based on patriot, which entered English in 1577. The *OED* defines patriot as "a person who loves his or her country." The root is the Greek *patér* (πατήρ), cognate with the Latin *pater*, both meaning father. There is also a connection to the fatherland, also seen in the Latin derivative *patria*, "fatherland."

The contradictory reasoning publicized by Reagan basically amounts to loving the father because there is no father. This is a good example of the primary processes found in dreamwork, which are quite comfortable with paradox and contradiction. Reagan's discourse invoked and exploited a profound ambivalence in the structure of human culture. I am not saying here that Reagan was a psychoanalyst or that he even knew anything about psychoanalysis; nonetheless, his rhetorical skills were remarkably persuasive.

What Reagan was tapping into can also be illuminated using Freud's *Totem und Tabu*. As explained above, the clan is identified in and through the totem animal, which is considered to be the paternal ancestor of the clan and its guardian spirit. The injunction against killing the totem animal, the ancestral father, is a primal taboo.

Psychoanalysis also discusses the contradictory and ambivalent nature of taboos, especially those prohibiting incest, but also those prohibiting contact with the sacred as well as the unclean. Freud has astutely observed something that would seem self-evident but that generally goes unnoticed: The strong taboo must mask a strong desire or temptation. Thus the maniacal prohibitions against the proximity of brother and sister, which originate in the incest taboo, but which manifest themselves as a purge of anything that could remotely allude to incest. Freud notes, however, that the ban does not do away with the impulse; it only banishes it into the unconscious: "Prohibition and desire are both preserved; the desire, as it is not eradicated but only repressed, and the prohibition, because if it were lifted, the desire would surface into consciousness and be acted out" (Freud 1912–1913, p. 39).

"Taboo" entered English from Tongan in the late eighteenth century and indicates something both sacred and dangerous, holy and unclean at the same time. A similar contradiction is found in the verb to sanction, which means both to prohibit and allow, to condemn and to sanctify. Its root is in the Latin *sancire*, to consecrate and to forbid. (It has also yielded the word sanctity.) Freud concludes that the most ancient and important taboos, the prohibition against killing the totem animal and against intercourse with members of the same clan, must also reveal the oldest and most powerful of human desires (41).

Since the totem animal is the ancestor of the clan, its present incarnation, the clan father, must be subject to both reverence and hostility, adoration and patricide. Attitudes toward kings reflect this; in the game of chess, the all-powerful king is also, after the pawn, the weakest chess piece. Freud notes that "for superstitious and other reasons, there are many tendencies in the treatment of kings that go to extremes with no consideration of the other ones. Contradictions then arise that the primitive mind, by the way, has just as little trouble with as the 'highly civilized' one in matters of religion or 'loyalty'" (62). He refers to Frazer's report on the Temne culture of Sierra Leone who have a constitutional right to beat their king on the eve of his coronation to the point where he occasionally does not live long after his ascension to the throne.

Freud also notes that attitudes toward rulers sometimes exhibit delusions of persecution. The omnipotence of the ruler is exaggerated to an improbable degree, so that he can be blamed for anything bad that happens under his rule—floods, droughts, etc. This effect is also found in "enlightened" societies. In their entertaining study on the impact of natural disasters on voting behavior, "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks", Achen and Bartels find that voters systematically blame the government for acts of God (Achen and Bartels 2004).

Freud anticipates developments in psychoanalytic feminism that have deconstructed the incest taboo. He bases his theories on Darwin's assertions that humans initially lived in small groups where the jealousy of the oldest and strongest males, especially the father, hindered sexual promiscuity. He speaks of Darwin's "primal horde," where one finds "a violent, jealous father who keeps all the females for himself and drives out the maturing sons" (Freud 1912–1913, p. 171). The younger males would have been forced to mate outside of the group, which would have prevented close interbreeding, thus setting up the exogamic system. The sons would have then repeated patriarchal dominance in their own families.

But there is another possibility, one that determines the structure of human culture in a profound way: "One day, the exiled brothers banded together, killed and devoured the father, and thus brought an end to the paternal horde. United they could risk this and accomplish what would have been impossible for each of them alone…The violent father was certainly the envied and feared exemplar for each member of the band of brothers. Now the process of ingestion made an identification with him possible, and each one of them incorporated a piece of his strength. The totem meal, perhaps the earliest human celebration, would then be the repetition and commemoration of this memorable, criminal act, where so many other things found their inception: social organizations, moral restrictions, and religion" (171–172). (Freud places the sacrament of the Eucharist in this context.)

The next step would have been the beginnings of guilt. “They hated the father who stood in the way of their quest for power and their sexual demands, but they loved and admired him, too. After they had gotten rid of him, satisfied their hate, and realized their identification with him, the suppressed feelings of affection had to surface. This occurred in the form of remorse—a collectively felt remorse—and a guilty conscience arose. The dead father was now stronger than the living one had been” (173). The remorse and guilty conscience caused the band of brothers to repent for their crime by making the totem animal—the father substitute—sacred and the clan women off-limits. These two taboos correspond to the two repressed desires of the Oedipus complex.

The guilt originating in the patricidal wish subsequently caused the construction of an omnipotent and omniscient god, a divine father-protector who watches over all. Freud sees the “nostalgia for the father” (*Vatersehnsucht*) as the root of all religion: “The elevation to a deity of the murdered father—the ancestor of the tribe—was a far more serious attempt at penance than the earlier covenant with the totem” (179–180). The ambivalence, the interplay of love and hostility, is clearly insoluble and sets up a compulsion to repeat, as with the fort/da problem, in which the child tried to master the trauma of the absence of the mother by discarding the toy—the stand-in for the mother—and retrieving it. So it is as well with patricide and patriphilia: The individual wants to perform the action over and over, but abhors it as well.

One of the solutions to this impasse of ambivalence is to engage in the process of doubling, in which the object of the love/hate dyad becomes divided into two separate images, usually one positive and one negative. In this way, the psyche can satisfy both its benevolence and hostility toward the figure in question.

Bruno Bettelheim, in *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), examines fairy tales in this light, which offer many examples of such doubling, in which the parental figure becomes divided into a loving mother and a hostile stepmother. *Aschenputtel* (*Cinderella*), in the Grimm version, serves as a good example. Here are the opening lines:

> A rich man’s wife took ill, and when she felt that her end was near, she summoned her only little daughter to her bedside and said, “My dear child, stay pious and good, and the good lord will always be with you, and I will also look down upon you from heaven and be with you.” With that, she closed her eyes and passed. The girl went to her mother’s grave every day and

> cried and remained pious and good. When winter came, the snow laid a little white cloth upon the grave, and when the spring sun took it back again, the man took another wife.
>
> The woman brought her two daughters along into the home, who were pretty and white of countenance, but mean and black of heart. (Grimm and Grimm)

And so it continues. The loving mother recedes, but is still present, and she becomes doubled into the evil stepmother with evil daughters. Thus the child's hostility toward the parent becomes channeled into the step-parent, while the filial love is reserved for the biological mother, and all of this along a clear divide of good and evil.

The doubling of the mother also occurs in *Schneewittchen* (*Snow White*). The good mother gives birth to Snow White (the symbolism of which is evident), after which the mother dies and is replaced by the evil queen who is jealous of Snow White's beauty and orders her murder. She also puts in a special request for Snow White's liver to dine on afterward. Snow White escapes, of course, and the wicked queen is punished at the end of the fairy tale. Similarly, in *Hänsel und Gretel*, it is the evil stepmother who abandons the two children in the woods. In turn, they are taken in by the cannibalistic witch, another evil mother substitute, and must rely on their own devices to survive.

Bettelheim offers an entire chapter on wicked stepmothers and also sees doubling in the representation of the grandmother in *Little Red Riding Hood*: "In 'Little Red Riding Hood' the kindly grandmother undergoes a sudden replacement by the rapacious wolf…the child truly experiences Grandma as two separate entities—the loving and the threatening. She is indeed Grandma and the wolf. By dividing her up, so to speak, the child can preserve his image of the good grandmother…similarly, although Mother is most often the all-giving protector, she can change into the cruel stepmother if she is so evil as to deny the youngster something he wants" (Bettelheim 1976, pp. 66–67).

One could ask why the dominant trope is the wicked stepmother and why, in Bettelheim's words, "replacement of an original 'good' father by a bad stepfather is as rare in fairy tales as the evil stepmother is frequent" (114). Bettelheim attributes this to the traditionally less frequent presence of the father in the home, saying, "Instead, the oedipal boy projects his frustrations and anxieties onto a giant, monster, or dragon" (114). The monster serves as a double for the father who punishes the boy for his attachment to the mother. The *Doppelgänger* of the father is thus at greater distance and less evident than the doubling of the mother into a visible homologue.

The conservative aspects of the American political system have generated a fairy tale response to the ambivalence toward parental, especially paternal authority. The hostility toward the father becomes doubled into the figure of the good father and the evil government, in which the government is perceived as an overwhelming monster, a dragon in need of slaying by the good prince. Moreover, the hostility toward the father undergoes projection. The child feels guilt over its hostile urges and assuages that guilt by creating the monster who hates the child; it is not I who hates him, it is he who hates me. Thus the government threatens me, and we need to "get the government off our backs."

But there is another aspect in this matrix of doubling, projection, and repetition that Bettelheim does not discuss. The differences in the doubling of the father and the mother cannot be solely explained by the relative absence of the father at home. The mother remains in the psyche as the bearer of the "oceanic feeling," the experience of oneness between self and world that the infant experiences at the mother's breast. Maturation consists in individuating from the mother and, consequently, having to fend for oneself. This accounts for the fairy tale convention of the absence of the mother, an absence that represents the reality of individual responsibility. Thus the orphaning of the protagonists in, for instance *Hänsel und Gretel*, is represented as one-sided, matrilateral, an abandonment from the mother but not the father.

The government is represented in the conservative paradigm in a contradictory and overdetermined fashion and incorporates family dynamics in tripartite form: mother, father, and child. The reactions to parental authority and dependency are ambivalent; the child resists authority but, at the same time, seeks protection. The child also seeks and rebels against maternal dependency. Thus the welfare state is represented as a coddling if not suffocating institution that encourages dependency and maintains the umbilical cord. Pulling one's own weight, not "milking" the system (a wonderful maternal metaphor, not coincidentally), and taking responsibility for one's own lot in life are constituted as a conservative anthem. It is this environment that generates the limitless American narratives of individual triumph over the menacing and ineffectual government.

As stated earlier, economic and racial issues become conflated in the USA, and each can communicate the other in disguised and displaced ways. The appearance of the term "welfare queen" is an interesting example, and it communicates the hostility toward (maternal) dependency on the welfare state.

During his 1976 presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan enjoyed telling the story of a woman who was arrested for welfare fraud. *The New York Times* quoted from one of his speeches in February 1976: "She has eighty names, thirty addresses, twelve Social Security cards and is collecting veteran's benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands. And she is collecting Social Security on her cards. She's got Medicaid, getting food stamps, and she is collecting welfare under each of her names. Her tax-free cash income is over $150,000" (*The New York Times* 1976, p. 51). It is interesting that a presidential candidate should engage in such stand-up comic hyperbole. It is nonetheless very effective and can be analyzed using the mechanisms Freud described in *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, translated as both *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* and *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious.*

The joke employs the techniques of condensation and displacement. The target here is the welfare system in general, but the bull's eye is placed upon a hyperbolic, even comic, and exceptional abuse of that system. The true subtext "we want to keep our money for ourselves" cannot be uttered in an ostensibly moral society, so one chooses a pathological case within the welfare system, a minute abscess, and recommends removing the abscess by removing the entire system, as if one recommended curing an abscessed toe by amputating the entire leg. In this way, the subtextual prejudice escapes censure. Shortly after Reagan's statement, the phrase "welfare queen" entered into the vernacular and skyrocketed in use until the early twenty-first century, when it began to decline (cf. Gilliam 1999). The joke also alludes to the supposed exploitation of welfare benefits by blacks by deftly creating an image of a black woman by allusion. It is racist, but also sexist, as well, as it feminizes the dependency upon the welfare state: a woman dependent upon the mother. And the joke is uttered by a free-range cowboy who would never be a mama's boy.

In a letter to *The New York Times*, Jack Kemp, the former football player turned Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Reagan administration, said that welfare recipients needed to develop their own "asset-base": "As chairman of the White House Empowerment Task Force, I have promoted the development of an asset-based welfare strategy that provides new incentives for work, entrepreneurship and home ownership" (Kemp 1992). Perhaps all the indigent need is stock brokers.

During Reagan's first term, the phrase "nanny state" entered into the American vernacular and rose rapidly in usage. It indicates an overly protective government that coddles people, keeping them in a state of infantile dependency and discouraging individualism. This fits well into the discussion above on the infant's feeling of oneness at the mother's breast and Einstein's comments that the individual sees societal dependency as "a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence." The Cato Institute, which is euphemistically called conservative (a remarkable understatement), has a website on the nanny state, which begins as such:

> One of the more disturbing trends in government expansion over the last 30 years has been the collection of laws, regulations, and binding court decisions that make up the "nanny state." Those laws and regulations represent government at its most arrogant. Their message is clear: politicians and bureaucrats know more about how to live your life, manage your health, and raise your kids than you do. Former president Ronald Reagan once said: "Government exists to protect us from each other. Where government has gone beyond its limits is in deciding to protect us from ourselves." Today's policymakers would do well to heed Reagan's words. (Cato Institute 2017)

Some studies from American psychology demonstrate the generalizing of anticommunist sentiment in the late twentieth century. "Enemy Images: The Psychology of US Attitudes and Cognitions Regarding the Soviet Union" (1989), by Brett Silverstein, is a survey of psychological research on US prejudices toward the USSR. It also makes use of psychoanalysis. Silverstein cites data from 1984 demonstrating that readers of *Psychology Today* were unable to differentiate between the actions of the USA and the Soviet Union if the respective countries were not identified. This demonstrates the conditioning of perception by ideology. Similarly, another study from 1988 found that a sample of college students with negative opinions of Iran and the Soviet Union thought that the two countries were friendly with each other (Silverstein 1989, p. 907).

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents to a survey published in 1985 thought that the Soviet Union fought against the USA in WWII (903). They were unaware that Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, 6 months before the USA entered the war. About 24% of the students surveyed at three colleges in 1985 thought that the Soviets first invented the atomic bomb (907). Most of the undergraduates surveyed in a study published in 1989 greatly underestimated the number of Soviet deaths during World War II. Historians generally agree on the figure of about 20 million, but 26% of the students surveyed thought that fewer than 20,000 had died (908).

Silverstein also cites some studies on anti-Soviet reporting in *The New York Times*. One study from 1982 shows that the *Times* reported more about Soviet dissidents than about dissidents in nations that were friendly to the USA. Another study from 1989 shows that the *Times* was over five times as likely to mention martial law in articles about a Soviet ally than about an American one (909). Also, negative articles about the USSR in the *Times* were longer than positive ones (909). As a summary, Silverstein cites research hypothesizing "that people who are unable to deal on a conscious level with their anxieties and hostilities may project or displace them onto a socially accepted source of hostility and fear such as an enemy nation" (905).

And this is precisely what was accomplished by American anticommunist propaganda. It led people to believe that the source of their anxieties did not lie in the American economic system; instead, foreign communism was responsible for their problems, along with the local labor and leftist activities that could be connected with them. The construction of a massive communist/socialist/labor menace gave people a monster to redirect their anxieties upon. The creation of mass panic facilitated the transference. And it worked.

Attempts to account for anticommunism by invoking an essential individualism in the American soul are quite daft. When an ideology of independence and non-governmental intervention exists, it is a product of current material forces. The figure of the Horatio Alger self-made man is often evoked as the quintessential American whose independence lies in his nature. But this individualism is not ahistorical; it gets reconstructed in each period—reconstructed by oligarchic forces that do not want their own economic freedom curtailed. The paradigm of an invisible threat to "the American way of life," which was simply a slogan for celebrating the antilabor hypercapitalist movement, became concretized in the cold war era and persists into the current one. Not because American nature creates it, but because it creates American nature.

In the afterword to *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America*, Ceplair says, "An examination of the writings of the proponents of anti-terrorism (many of whom were anti-Communists and anti-Russians) indicates that they are functionally equivalent to the writings of Cold War anti-Communists" (Ceplair 2011, p. 222). He refers to an article in the conservative journal *Commentary* from 2001 saying that the American Muslim population includes "a substantial body of people…who share with the suicide attackers a hatred of the United States and the desire, ultimately, to transform it into a nation living under the strictures of militant Islam…they harbor designs for this country that warrant serous and urgent attention" (222). This resembles the fear of a government takeover by communists fabricated in the cold war era.

Ceplair discusses statements made by William Bennet and the right-wing journalist Norman Podhoretz that compared the danger of "militant Islam" to the former Soviet threat, quoting from the cold war rhetoric of the 1940s and 1950s. Podhoretz used the phrase "World War IV" to describe the battle against "islamofascism." This alludes to the image of World War III and thus evokes the specter of a US–USSR nuclear holocaust. The fact that there never was a WWIII does not seem to concern Podhoretz at all. William Bennet, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, saw the events of September 11, 2001, as "a moment of moral clarity—a moment when we began to rediscover ourselves as one people even as we began to gird for battle with a not yet fully defined foe" (223). This call to arms is surprisingly frank in saying that we don't really know who the enemy is, but we have to fight them anyway. It also recalls the similarly nebulous enemy of the cold war era. It seems that the bellicose momentum that remained after WWII, instead of being dammed, was able to be rechanneled toward a vague enemy. The vagueness of the target necessitated a large net of associative connections, a wide semantic field for catching host of phenomena that could be possibly related to the central fear and marshalled into antidemocratic forces.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the phantom communist enemy became replaced by the invisible "islamofascist" one, which Podhoretz called "the latest mutation of the totalitarian threat to our nation" (223). The use of "totalitarian" here clearly and conveniently evokes communism, both Soviet and Chinese, as well as Nazism. The Patriot Act of 10/26/01 allowed warrantless searches and extensive wiretaps. The Department of Homeland Security was created in June 2002. Its mission statement was to protect the country "against invisible enemies that can strike with a wide variety of weapons" (225). The conditioned anticommunism set up a template of the nebulous foe that the newest one could be readily scripted into.

The conservative attack on the New Deal social programs braked the evolution of the capitalist welfare state. Fueled by anticommunism, this conservatism brought about the disorganization of labor and a confusion of the language of class. Labor was left with nowhere to organize, and no language to organize with. During the era of postwar prosperity and the rhetoric of a "rising tide that lifts all boats," some of those who fell overboard were seen as the victims of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination, an interest group with problems. For others, missing the boat was their own fault. None were seen as casualties of a right-wing political economy.

The Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) is normally credited with the development of classical conditioning. While experimenting on dogs, Pavlov noticed that they started to salivate at the sight of the assistant who regularly brought them food, even though the assistant had no food at that time. Pavlov wanted to see if a random stimulus could become connected with food and cause the dogs to salivate by itself. He used a stimulus to signal the presence of food, and then fed the dogs. After several repetitions, the dogs salivated at the stimulus alone. Once the conditioned response was programmed, the process became autonomous, and the food could be completely removed. Legend holds that the stimulus was a bell, but this has not been attested.

The anticommunist propaganda of the postwar era was extremely effective in pushing the left wing off the political radar. It began as a form of classical conditioning. For decades, the government, media, and popular culture bombarded Americans with a fear of Soviet infiltration and nuclear attack. The resultant horror and paranoia was a response that could be easily associated with a neutral stimulus. That neutral stimulus was the image of the American communist, socialist, and labor movements. The connection of American leftism with Soviet communism underwent interminable repetition, and the point was quickly reached where the image of leftism alone elicited the horrific response by itself.

The original stimulus disappeared when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, but the conditioned response bulldozed on, having been fueled by decades of propaganda. Anticommunist ideology had removed leftism from the women's movement and the civil rights movement and converted them into discourses of individualism. The momentum created a new cognition and a new language, where red states are conservative, liberals are leftists, everyone is middle class, etc., etc. In the current theater of political correctness, the ethnic elements have receded, the fabrication of the "islamofascist" menace being an exception. The jubilant anglosaxonism that Higham speaks of is a thing of the past. But minorities have been reconfigured as deserving recipients of individual recognition. And equally reconfigured as undeserving recipients of welfare.

An identity was slowly constructed based on an ideology of individualism in opposition to a misperceived maternal dependency upon a supportive state. President Clinton's 1996 State of the Union address declared that "the era of big government is over" (Clinton 1996). And "get the government out of the way" may just as well be the new national slogan. The ambivalence toward authority—the need for protection and the resentment of dictatorial control—resulted in a doubling into images of totalitarian government and the liberating father figure. The evil empire is to be destroyed by individual rebellion. This can be seen as an oedipal victory, a wish fulfillment fairy tale where all can have their cake and eat it too.

Cold war ideology was immensely pervasive and consequential in its reconstruction of the American political economy. And its consequences are still felt in American academia.

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CHAPTER 9

Anticommunism and Academia

The phrases "commie hunting" and "McCarthyism" are quite current in the American vernacular and are viewed as a remote part of the country's past, a violation of individual liberties eventually vanquished by the principles of freedom of speech. There is an active cultural memory of a maniacal persecution of actors and academics that eventually ceased, and then things returned to normal. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, this screen memory masks the most profound and lasting effect of postwar anticommunism—the destruction of the left wing. In Schrecker's words: "From Harvard to Hollywood, the process followed the same trajectory—from initial tolerance for dissent and hesitations about violating people's civil liberties to the conviction that Communists were so uniquely dangerous that their rights could be ignored" (Schrecker 1999). Yes, free speech was restored. But anticommunism had particular consequences for American scholarship. This chapter focuses on the lasting effects of anticommunism in academia.

Schrecker invokes a "depoliticizing zeitgeist" in the postwar era that "pervaded even those disciplines like English…under the influence of the 'New Criticism' that dominated the field, America's English departments disengaged from history and looked only at texts. Literature was put on a pedestal." She holds that, "by embracing 'art for art's sake,' literary critics, both in the academy and elsewhere," sent a "libertarian, subliminally anticommunist message" and embraced an "elitism that isolated high culture from ordinary life so as better to defend it from the unwashed

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masses." She sees "a retreat of literary scholarship from political reality" (Schrecker 1998, p. 405).

The depoliticizing of English studies is well researched by Richard Ohmann in the article "English and the Cold War." Ohmann observes that "literary Studies played a small part in the Cold War, not by selling our unwanted expertise, not by perfecting the ideology of free world and evil empire, but by doing our best to take politics out of culture and by naturalizing the routines of social sorting" (Ohmann 1997, p. 85). In the era of new criticism, students were yelled at for departing from the text *an sich* and entering into indemonstrable speculations about historical causes and authorial intention. Postwar anticommunism is partly, but not wholly responsible for this. Clearly, it was best to steer clear of politics at that time. But one can usually steer clear of a danger without shifting the entire paradigm of one's journey and reconfiguring the entire geography of one's terrain, which is what the skepticism of the new criticism aimed to do. There was another force that motivated that paradigm shift.

The technocratic spirit of the cold war period is equally responsible, if not more so. The worshiping of the empirical methodology of the natural and social sciences caused studies in literature and language to try to imitate that methodology. Literary interpretation became an exercise in microscopic laboratory observation. And similarly, philology turned into linguistics and created math-like symbols for its object of investigation. Ohmann observes: "The academic professions enter this process in obvious ways, benefitting from and advancing ideologies of merit, claiming privileges accordingly, helping sort out those who will and will not succeed, administering systems of knowledge and expertise in service to (though often critical of) ruling groups, and singing anthems of culture. Within a discipline, rituals and assumptions reproduce hierarchies and proclaim the legitimacy—the objectivity—of the ranking and sifting. When the hegemonic process is working smoothly, not only its main beneficiaries, but also its victims see their life chances and trajectories as resulting from differences in individual ability, effort, choice, and luck" (94).

He comments on George Bush's assertion that education "leads to higher incomes for everyone," saying, "The insistence on an economic rationale for education flatly ignored not only the liberatory ideals of the 1960s and 1970s but also humanistic ideals that dominate 1950s thought on the subject" (97). He says of the original leftist movement, "When the movement began to lose what coherence it had…many of its constituent groups veered toward identity politics or, worse, a politics of lifestyle" (102).

This also caused the right wing to follow the moving target and focus on affirmative action, women's rights, and lesbian and gay rights.

Of special interest in this regard is the manifest *The Rights and Responsibilities of Universities and Their Faculties* authored by The Association of American Universities in 1953. The document reveals the influences of the era upon academia, a subtle pressure to speak within the patriotic discourse in order to avoid suspicion. It opens with a disclaimer: "a university does not take an official position of its own either on disputed questions of scholarship or on political questions or on matters of public policy" (Association of American Universities 1953, p. 3). Declaring that professors are "united in loyalty to the ideal of learning, to the moral code, to the country, and to the form of government" (3), this academic loyalty oath also includes a homage to free market economics: "free enterprise is as essential to intellectual as to economic progress" (3).

The section entitled "The present danger" contains a yet stronger disclaimer that distances the professorate from leftism: "We condemn Russian Communism as we condemn every form of totalitarianism. We share the profound concern of the American people at the existence of an international conspiracy whose goal is the destruction of our cherished institutions. The police state would be the death of our universities, as of our government." Leading the list of the principles of "Russian Communism" that "in particular are abhorrent to us," one finds "the fomenting of world-wide revolution as a step to seizing power" (9). The report, which reads like a parroted oath, was published by Princeton, endorsed by 37 universities, and the committee that issued it was chaired by the president of Yale. One could risk the assertion that it was representative of the ethics of the highest higher education in the USA.

Historical inquiry also succumbed to this influence. In *That Noble Dream* (1988), Peter Novick observes that "It was the community of diplomatic historians who contributed most wholeheartedly and directly to the support and defense of the American cause in the Cold War. These scholars' principal contribution was providing a version of recent history which would justify current policy, linking America's struggles with the Axis and with the Soviet Union as successive stages in one continuous and unavoidable struggle against expansionist totalitarians" (Novick 1988, p. 6).

The humanities were influenced by cold war politics, but the social sciences more profoundly so. Schrecker notes that "By the 1950s, social science had become even more methodologically rigorous and ostensibly neutral. It embraced survey research and quantitative analysis. Controversial questions about class structure or the allocation of economic resources simply disappeared from the academic mainstream" (Schrecker 1998, p. 407). This "created an intellectual climate that promoted elitism and avoided embarrassing questions" (407). During the height of the McCarthy era, the NSF cautioned social science grant applicants to avoid "social reform movements and welfare activities" (407).

While the National Science Foundation was culpable in this regard, a much greater influence was exercised by philanthropic foundations. *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*, edited by Robert F. Arnove, is an excellent anthology of research on the capitalist ideology of deregulation that informed philanthropic foundations in the USA. Arnove's *Introduction* states the thesis of the anthology, "that foundations like Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford have a corrosive influence on a democratic society; they represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentrations of power and wealth… delaying and preventing more radical, structural change. They help maintain an economic and political order, international in scope, which benefits the ruling-class interests of philanthropists and philanthropoids—a system which…has worked against the interests of minorities, the working class, and Third World peoples" (Arnove 1980, p. 1). The "big three" foundations "represent a sophisticated conservatism, supporting changes that help to maintain, and make more efficient an international system of power and privilege" (18). Arnove adds that "foundation patronage has helped impede the formation of a critical scientific and intellectual community which examines basic mechanisms and thought systems of repression" (18).

Peter J. Seybold's contribution to the anthology "The Ford Foundation and the Triumph of Behavioralism in American Political Science" observes that in the 1950s, "the new realism" (a behavioral approach) entered political philosophy and eclipsed political theory. This also accompanied "the disappearance of the notion of the state" (Seybold 1980, p. 269). This engendered political sociology and impeded the "flowering of large scale survey studies" (270). Many studies agree that the rise of the behavioral sciences was precipitated by the development of the Behavioral Science Division of the Ford Foundation in the 1950s, which provided multimillion dollar funding for the training of behavioral scientists, with the result that "a narrow, pragmatic orientation became prominent which excluded other perspectives" (274).

Seybold credits the Ford Foundation with coining the term "behavioral sciences" (277; 297). The image of democracy became invoked in the foundation's own reports; empirical science was to address "internal conflicts in a democratic society" that could be ameliorated by giving the people a viable definition of democracy (275). An entire area of the foundation's organization was entitled "Strengthening Democracy" (280). This clearly indicates an ideology at work, one that would promote specific configuration of democracy in the interests of the USA. In the 1950s, leading universities began to establish programs in "political behavior" on an empirical model. Seybold adds that "representatives of other approaches were excluded from a process that was crucial in shaping the development of the field" (275).

"The outcome of this massive program of support was to institutionalize the behavioral sciences and to foster the behavioral revolution on political science" (284–285), Seybold adds, and characterizes this as "a part of their effort to enlist the social sciences in the struggle to promote social stability" (285). Seybold does not note that the current Ford Foundation website quotes its own mission statements from 1950, one of which was to support "the establishment of a world order of law and justice" and another to "secure greater allegiance to the basic principles of freedom and democracy in the solution of the insistent problems of an ever-changing society" (Ford Foundation). The Ford Foundation also built the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and the Social Science Research Council (both in 1954).

Seybold concludes: "rather than attempting a program of far-reaching social reform, the foundation focused instead upon the legitimacy of existing social arrangements. It did so by remapping the world at the level of ideas and providing practical support for extremely limited social reforms." It "tried to develop new justifications for the social order". It sought "to reestablish ideological hegemony rather than restructure fundamentally social institutions" (Seybold 1980, p. 298). His concluding sentence could hardly be more condemnatory: "In the final analysis, the foundation's activities can be seen as critical to the struggle to establish cultural domination" (298).

Donald Fisher's contribution to the anthology, "American Philanthropy and the Social Sciences: The Reproduction of a Conservative Ideology" draws similar conclusions. Fisher studies the influence of the Rockefeller foundations on the development of the social sciences in Britain: "Rockefeller philanthropy had an enormous impact on the development of the social sciences in Britain. Insofar as the Rockefeller foundations wished to make the social sciences more 'scientific'—that is, in their terms, more empirical, more realistic, more practical—then this was achieved. Insofar as they wished to make the social sciences utilitarian and respectable, then this also was achieved" (Fisher 1980, p. 258). He holds that the Rockefeller foundations "were the 'gatekeepers' who determined that the social sciences in Britain should help preserve the economic structure, and the resulting social inequality, in British society and its overseas empire" (258).

Putting "scientific" such in quotation marks and qualifying it further with the string "in their terms" helps reduce the phenomenon to its proper relative corner and deprive it of its stance as a given. As stated in the introduction, the semantic field of "science" in the USA has undergone radical semantic reduction for ideological reasons.

Christopher Simpson, in his introduction to *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (1999), says, "By now it is clear that military, intelligence, and propaganda agencies provided by far the largest part of the funds for large research projects in the social sciences in the United States from World War II until well into the 1960s…The interweaving of social scientists with the national security apparatus was at last as pervasive and suffocating in the USSR as in the United States" (Simpson 1999, p. xii).

Of interest here is the information on "Project Camelot," a program sponsored by the Department of Defense and launched in 1963. It has been studied by Ellen Herman in "Project Camelot and the Career of Cold War Psychology" (1999). The program aimed "to involve behavioral experts in predicting and controlling Third World revolution and development in order to gain the upper hand" (Herman 1999, pp. 98–99). The project was cancelled (by the then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara) in 1965 after its imperialist motives became public. Nonetheless, similar projects continued, also funded by the Department of Defense. Herman quotes a Department of the Army field manual from 1962, apparently born of a bellicose cosmology, characterizing peace as "simply a period of less violent war" (99). She also quotes an observation by John G. Darley, who taught psychology at the University of Minnesota, and who had worked for the National Defense Resources Commission: "Psychology is perceived as a vehicle that will assist in bringing about the American Creed of equality, fair play, and minimal group conflict." Herman adds: "The alliance between psychological knowledge and power may appear ideological in retrospect, but during much of the postwar era it was considered so axiomatic as to be nearly invisible" (98). In order to perform this ideology, it was necessary to expel psychoanalysis from psychology.

In 1997, Noam Chomsky published "The Cold War and the University" in which he has some words to say about the triumph of behaviorism and the narrowing of research in American psychology in the postwar period: "Here, the American way entered in, through behaviorism. That was the heyday of the 'behavioral sciences,' and that was supposed to be an American innovation, not mystical like what the Europeans did. We are serious scientists, we study behavior, and are hard-headed and operationalist—Skinner had shown this, the behavioral sciences have shown that, and so on. That was very much the mood of the 1950s—thinking of itself as innovative, very arrogant, ahistorical—part and parcel of the general sense of America taking over the world" (Chomsky 1997, p. 175).

This is a curious statement coming from Chomsky. His universal grammar theory can be seen as a product of the same cold war ideology. It turned American philology into a form of theoretical linguistics and extracted it from all history and applied science. Applied linguistics developed in reaction to the abstract Chomskian theories of universal grammar, which were not very interested in "permutations" (i.e., languages) of the universal grammar, and even less so in the history of language. And he developed it at MIT, which was, in his own words "heavily military" when he arrived in 1955. It was basically an engineering school until around 1960, when a political science department was formed: "it was openly funded by the CIA; it was not even a secret" (181).

But Chomsky does make an interesting observation on American philosophy: "At Harvard, where I was, virtually no interest existed in Continental philosophy, or even history of philosophy. That was virtually unknown except for Frege and early Russell, or parts of logical positivism" (175). He continues: "I believe something like this was happening across a large part of American intellectual culture in those years…the beginnings of the Cold War increased the jingoism, the sense of self-righteousness, the narrowness of perspective, the rallying around the flag" (175–176). Yes, a narrowness of perspective that affected "the sciences," the social sciences, literature, and "the languages."

A lengthy investigation of cold war philosophy is found in John McCumber's *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (2001). McCumber thinks that Americans have been operating under the belief that "American philosophy is an autonomous, indeed overwhelmingly tenured, discipline in the freest country on earth. The only important force shaping it has, it appears, been reason itself." But reflection reveals "evidence suggesting that American philosophy largely remains, even today, what Joe McCarthy's academic henchmen would have wanted it to be" (McCumber 2001, pp. xvi–xvii). He observes that "between 1992 and 1996, the United States closed down philosophy departments at the rate of one hundred per year" (xx). Perhaps a different grammatical construction is necessary here; otherwise, it sounds like a government purge. Not shying away from hyperbole, he calls McCarthyism "perhaps the greatest intellectual purge in the history of Western democracy" (17–18). Well, this would depend upon one's definition of democracy.

He claims that it lasted from 1949 to 1960 (18), during which period analytic philosophy became to dominate the field. American philosophers were largely unresistant to the colonization of philosophy by logical positivism because "they had been told what, in the climate of the times, they needed to avoid: anything unscientific or subjective. Logical positivism provided a philosophical framework for doing this…finding respectability for their political prudence by claiming to deal with timeless truths" (45–46). McCumber does, however, qualify his assertions with a fine distinction: "Analytical philosophy is far from being a mere artifact of the McCarthy era; Its *dominance* in America, however, is I think precisely such an artifact, and an unfortunate one" (50).

McCumber takes an interesting riff on Americanism: "A sort of fear of the history of philosophy is deeply American" (89), with the result that by the late 1970s most new philosophy PhDs could not converse on the history of philosophy, in much the same way that psychology PhDs know little about the history of psychology: "American philosophers had thus managed…what the most extreme postmodern theorists can only hope for today: they threw out the canon. With that, there was no one for them to read except each other" (51). Perhaps the most pathological instance of that is found in the APAs recommendation to disaccredit the philosophy program at the New School for Social Research because of its heavily historical, humanist and continental orientation. "Nonscientistic approaches were at a significant disadvantage" (88) as a result of the McCarthy era, McCumber believes.

McCumber quotes Harvey Cox from his article "The Market as God" in the *Atlantic Monthly*: "Soon I began to marvel at just how comprehensive the business theology is. There were even sacraments to convey salvific power to the lost, a calendar of entrepreneurial saints, and what theologians call an 'eschatology'—a teaching about the 'end of history'… there lies embedded in the business pages an entire theology, which is comparable in scope if not in profundity to that of Thomas Aquinas or Karl Barth. It needed only to be systematized for a whole new *Summa* to take shape" (Cox 1999, pp. 18–19).

He adds, "The view that philosophy must, in order to be rigorous, be restricted to investigating the truth of sentences or propositions is a hidden protocol, inflicted on it during the McCarthy era" (McCumber 2001, p. 163). American philosophers became "sadly ignorant of the real condition of their own profession and or the political events and forces that had shaped it. A greater turn from the Delphic maxim *gnôthe seauton*, 'know thyself,' could hardly be imagined" (166). He criticizes "Quine's cold war 'naturalization' of philosophy into something differing from science only in degree" (133).

McCumber recommends that philosophy recover "a critical cultivation of language…a philosophical approach to language that does not view it merely in terms of timeless and selfless notions such as truth and reference, but that seeks to articulate and evaluate the ways in which the words *now* available in *our* language guide our thoughts and action" (125). This cannot be done in an anglocentric framework, but in a comparative intercultural and interlinguistic one.

Universities clearly became centers of progressive politics in the 1960s, and this progressivism was largely fueled by student activism. This effected systemic changes at the postsecondary level. But the empirical model of the social sciences persisted. And the progressivism itself was never modeled upon socialist or communist principles; it remained largely within an individualist model of civil liberty. And while campus activism certainly contributed to the American withdrawal from the Vietnam War, one should recall that Nixon won 49 states in the 1972 election, and that the majority of Americans under 25 voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984. Tax rates have been in steady decline since 1960. The 1960s are typically represented as an age of radical progressivism in the USA, but if one concentrates on reforms in political economy, the legacy of that period is far from radical. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs ushered in Medicare and Medicaid, imperatively necessary as they were, but national healthcare programs had already been in place in all the industrialized democracies for decades. There is nothing left wing about them outside of the USA.

As has been illustrated, the absence of a proper vocabulary for leftism renders a leftist discussion nearly impossible. Surveys of political identification employ the terms liberal, conservative, moderate, left, and right without examining their meanings. This is like trying to discuss evolutionary adaptation using only the vocabulary of medieval ecclesiasticism. Some interesting examples follow.

The publication *Inside Higher Ed* published the article "Moving Further to the Left" (2012), by Scott Jaschik, which noted that a "survey finds notable increase in proportion of professors who identify as 'far left' or liberal, and declines for all other groups." The data was from the University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute. The categories used were: far left, liberal, middle of the road, conservative, and far right, and were employed as if they were describing concrete objects (apples, shoes, etc.) instead of being seen as the social constructs that they are. The terms socialist, communist, environmentalism, and green are not found in the document at all (Jaschik 2012).

Why Are Professors Liberal and Why do Conservatives Care? by Neil Gross, has gotten a lot of attention as an analysis of faculty politics. Gross does a decent job of analyzing the cultural stereotypes of professors as dogmatic and intolerant liberals who discriminate against conservative students, and he shows these stereotypes to be false. He takes a cautiously descriptive stance, trying to account for the differences between "liberals and conservatives," the fact that the professoriate is largely "liberal," and the perceptions of "conservatives" and those outside of academia that "liberalism" rules on college campuses. His claims are supported by statistical studies.

But Gross's work, too, performs the problems of the language of politics instead of accounting for their origin and development. And shoring them up with empirical surveys gives it all the appearance of a reality show. It is a good example of writing within the system. "Socialism" occurs only three times in the book and is used to show that professors who vote democratic are not really socialists. "Green" is not found not once. "Environmental" is found six times. "Liberal," however, is used 263 times. His breakdowns are as follows: The majority of US academics occupy the left end of the political identity spectrum: 9% say they are far left, 31% are progressives, and 14% are center left. 19% of the professors are moderates and another 27% are conservatives. Of the 9% on the "far left" or "radical left," only 2/3 of them say that the government should reduce income differences between the rich and poor. Their radicalism consists in an overwhelming support of same-sex relationships, abortion rights, equality for women, environmental regulation, and a stiff opposition to the death penalty. In the end, however, nearly all wind up voting democratic (Gross 2013, p. 43–45).

Using such concerns to describe the far left is patently absurd. Same-sex marriage is, after all, legal in all states. The only first-world countries performing capital punishment in 2014 were The USA (35), Taiwan (5), Japan (3), and Singapore (2). And equal rights for women is supposed to be a concern of the radical left? Of all of the member states of the UN, only seven have failed to pass a bill of rights for women: Iran, Palau, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tonga, and the USA (Ravitz 2015).

Writing in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Jeffrey J. Williams offers an excellent critique of Gross's work:

> Yet for all the book's various insights, its blindness is to the actual conditions of higher education. It takes politics entirely as a matter of discourse and exemplifies the disconnect…between the purportedly liberal views of professors and the neoliberal policies and practices that, over the course of the last 40 years, have remade the institutions of higher education they inhabit. Gross seems to take professors' political views at face value, but one might wonder whether those views are in fact a façade, abandoned when push comes to shove (for instance, during the graduate student strike at Yale, when many self-proclaimed leftist professors threw the union overboard and sided with the administration), or a form of false consciousness, in which academics misrecognize their true position (as many critics in the 1960s claimed of professors' complicity with the war state).
>
> Another possibility is that the kind of liberalism that contemporary professors espouse—a liberalism that focuses largely on cultural diversity and sensitivity to racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual difference, and not so much on economic equality and the redistribution of wealth—goes hand-in-hand with neoliberal policies. In other words, professors tend to be what David Brooks calls "bourgeois bohemians," adopting the culturally liberal attitudes of the counterculture while remaining comfortably bourgeois, if not economically conservative, themselves. The trend away from radical views in the academy over the past few decades would seem to support this explanation. (Williams 2013)

Gross had also coauthored and circulated a "working paper" online: "The Social and Political Views of American Professors" in 2007, which suffers from the same problem. The terms socialist, communist, and green are not found once in the document. Environmentalism is found only once (Gross and Simmons 2007).

Postwar American ideologies have restricted the semantic fields of political economy, with the result that discourse itself performs those ideologies while appearing to analyze them. The technocratic thrust of the postwar period elevated "the sciences" to the paragon of thought. An atmospheric change invaded all academia and was inhaled by the social sciences and humanities alike. And it left the liberal arts gasping for breath. This period witnessed the real closing of the American mind and the fields of discourse. The limiting of discourse is also enabled by one very important phenomenon: that the USA has become progressively and devoutly monolingual.

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CHAPTER 10

Anglocentrism in the American Century

The previous chapter examined the research on the influence of political and economic ideology on academia, including fields as unlikely as history, philosophy, and English studies, but there is one aspect of English that remains largely a victim of cognitive repression. It concerns English as language and English as literature, and it is of immense significance.

Tu connais Tolstoï? Oui, j'ai pris un cours de français.
Kennst du Tolstoi?Ja, ich habe einen Deutschkurs genommen.
Conosci Tolstoj? Sì, ho preso un corso d'Italiano.
Ulisoma Tolstoy? Ndiyo, nilijifunza Kiswahili.

What are these sentences attempting to do? Something impossible. They are attempting to transculturate the following dialogue I recently heard while passing by two American undergraduates:

-Y'know, like, Tolstoy?
-Yeah, I took English.

Why is this utterance intelligible and transparent in American English but absurd in any other language? Indeed, had I interrupted and attempted to qualify the utterance and say, "Excuse me, but that was not an English course; it was a literature course," my interjection would have likely been met with utter befuddlement. The USA is the only nation that uses the name of its majority language as a trope for world literature; other nations do not use the name of the national language in this context. In

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Italy, *italiano* does not mean the study of all world literature, nor does *français* mean that in France. Faculty who teach in departments of allophone (non-English) literatures and cultures continually have to educate the public, and other academics as well, that the degrees they grant are not "in a language," but in the literature, culture, and linguistics expressed in the given language. They continually encounter resistance to the fact that the courses in their majors are content based, and that the content is not just a vehicle for practicing language skills. English studies are but a subset of literary studies, which include texts from many national traditions, such as French, Italian, Chinese, and so on. These texts are studied in their original languages. French studies read French texts in French, German studies in German, and so on. This is a fact that Americans have a very hard time understanding.

The operative American formulae are: English = literature: French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc. = languages as skills. Americans are comfortable perceiving English as a clear window to all the world's information. They do not need to know second languages. Someone will translate the ideas expressed in the foreign language into English for them, and the content will be the same. They resist knowing that content could be language specific, because such knowledge threatens the hegemony of their language.

And why does the following idea seem counterintuitive in the United States: An American could learn a second language well enough to perform in that language in a manner not qualitatively dissimilar from the manner in which that person performs in English? Why is this idea met with skepticism, denial, and disbelief? The familiar explanations refer to American monolingualism, American isolation(ism), the globalization of English, etc. These are not really explanations, but descriptions, even tautologies, that do not account for the phenomenon of resistance, which can only be explained by reference to ideology, to American ethnocentrism. The idea of effective bilingualism, as well, is resisted because it threatens the hegemony of English. These developments in the USA can also be understood in the context of the anticommunist, antilabor, anti-immigration, mercantile, militarist, and technocratic ideologies that arose in the USA in the twentieth century; these forces elevated English to the sole medium of meaning.

American attitudes toward languages and literatures other than English were largely unproblematic until the end of the nineteenth century. This has been well documented in Nancy Sterniak's study *The American*

Attitude Toward Foreign Language Education from the 1700s to 2006. Sterniak notes that, in the eighteenth century, many settlers were educated in their own language: "they not only had the freedom to choose their language of instruction but they were afforded with funding to satisfy their interests" (Sterniak 2008, p. 72). In that century, "American citizens were not bound by their languages" (72). Being multilingual was a common trait in the nation and was found in the educated elite, as well as in the slave population. Many public schools in the nation offered courses in several languages: "During the 1750s foreign language knowledge was a skill possessed by people from various social strata, including slaves … It was a common practice for U.S. educational institutions to offer instruction in many languages, such as German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic" (119).

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, "the attitude of some Americans, including political leaders, changed due to the fact that the number of German immigrants was increasing. Immigrants were taxed at times based on immigration status and at other times based on language issues" (125), and an English-only movement started to arise. After World War I, German immigration as well as German language education almost disappeared; French became the language of choice (125). By the dawn of the twentieth century, some states were already advocating education either entirely in English or in English along with another language, instead of education entirely in a language other than English (120). In 1915, immigrant parents were remaining allophone but encouraging their children to learn English (120). In 1919, Nebraska passed a statute that forbade non-English language instruction in elementary schools and required that all subjects be taught in English. The statute was repealed in the US Supreme Court case *Meyer v. Nebraska* in 1923 (121).

A crucial player in the study of modern languages other than English was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which was amended in 1964 (United States 1964). It was born in the midst of the anticommunist era, which declared language study as one of its critical subjects. Funding for education tripled in the fiscal year 1959, and language study could only benefit from the composite effects of the Sputnik crisis (Sterniak 2008, 91). In 1958, approximately one in seven public high school students was studying a modern language other than English; in 1962 the ratio had increased to one in four, an enrollment increase from 14 to 25% (49). While the Sputnik renaissance did mobilize interest in languages other than English, this interest was short-lived. Enrollment in languages other than

English as a percentage of total college enrollment peaked at 16.4% in 1965 and steadily slid to 7.2% in 1980. It rose to 8.6% in 2002 (150). Between 1960 and 2002, overall college enrollment quadrupled, but non-English language enrollment only doubled. The year 1982, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, was the year when the fewest high school students enrolled in the study of non-English languages. In that year, 45.6% of US high school graduates had studied no language other than English. This declined steadily to 17.3% in 2004 (109). Nonetheless, more than 60% of the US high schools had no non-English language requirement in 2005 (124).

Sterniak invokes the work of Burn & Perkins to explain how English became the global language: "After World War II we [the United States] were the ostensible scientific leader of the world. The countries that had competed with us, France and Britain, were exhausted; a good part of their youth had been killed. The Russians, Germans, and Japanese had lost tens of millions of people and many of their factories and laboratories were destroyed. The United States dominated science, which incidentally led to English becoming the monopoly world language because everybody wanted to plug into our science" (Burn and Perkins 1980, p.19). She concludes: "As a result of this historical consequence, the United States may have become the source of a monopolistic world language and 'devoutly monolingual'" (Sterniak 2008, p.18). In the data collected by Sterniak, one sees that an ideology of monolingualism began to appear toward the turn of the twentieth century. And it continues into the twenty-first.

10.1 Martial Culture and the Modern Language Association of America

The influence of ideology upon English studies is indeed surprising, as English studies are held to be a bastion of "liberal" issues. The organization that comprises the study of national literatures is the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), which was founded in 1883. Its major publication is the *Publications of the Modern Language Association* (*PMLA*). The histories of the MLA and *PMLA* reveal a choreographic coordination with the ideologies outlined here. The organization was not at all immune to the influences of US foreign policy, the enormous effects of the world wars, the xenophobic and antilabor movements, the increasingly technocratic orientation of the country, and the waxing anglocentrism in American culture, nor could one reasonably expect the organization to possess such an immunity. While there was clearly no vocal xenophobia in the MLA, the movements of the organization came to harmonize with the massive influence of the cultural chorus enveloping it. The ideologies slowly informed the taxonomies of "literature and language" in higher education in the USA.

A unique coincidence of contingencies acted to stage the configuration and performance of literature and language in the arena of the great wars of the twentieth century. The anti-immigration and antilabor movements of the period, the emergence of the USA and the Soviet Union as rival superpowers, and the increasingly technocratic orientation of the US acted together to determine the discourse of language and literature in an exceptional manner, a discourse also spoken by the MLA and *PMLA*.

The anxieties surrounding the first world produced a bellicose rhetoric within the MLA. The presidential address of the 1915 meeting of the MLA, "Our Opportunity," by Jefferson D. Fletcher, was given well into the war, but two years before the American entry. Fletcher begins: "All the world has mobilized, or is mobilizing. American commerce has mobilized, or talks of mobilizing, for the conquest of the markets of the world … the prophets of our press … have invited also American scholarship to go in and win" (Fletcher 1915, p. xxxiv). Fletcher is broaching here an ideology of American mercantile opportunism in the face of anarchy in Europe, and he offers parallels in the academic sphere. Europe's "young men—teachers, scholars, writers with the rest—are falling like leaves. And those who may survive, in what mood can they be for calm and disinterested scholarship?" Here, the aftermath of war is seen as a scholarly vacuum waiting to be informed by American academia: "conquest for us in these realms, therefore, might well appear to be pathetically easy (xxxv) … there may be small danger of our becoming the one-eyed master in any schoolroom of the blind" (xxxvi).

"Now there is, I think, an opportunity growing out of this world-war … it is an opportunity not of competition, but of help. We shall not prove our equality by beating Europe now she is down, but, by so far in us lies, by helping her up … for Europe in her moral convalescence literature can be made a healing power" (xlix). The use of the phrase "moral convalescence" is especially telling. It places the USA on a moral high ground as the nation that can supply ethical guidance during the postwar period of soul searching. This is the period of war that offers America the entrepreneurial opportunity to develop and dominate and to reinvent itself as a world power. The political and economic template here generates a permutation in the sphere of academia. The American professor is to reinvent *him*self as the international marketer of noble academic standards. In this case, one can see the materialist generation of cultural ideologies.

The great theaters of international violence were the most determinative cultural factors in the reconfiguration of the study of language in the USA. Of all the conflicts, the Second World War was of uniquely massive significance. Of interest here are two reports issued by The Commission on Trends in Education of the Modern Language Association of America during WWII. They are *Language Study in American Education* (1940) and *Literature in American Education* (1943). They are remarkably different in orientation and objectivity.

Language Study in American Education was completed under the auspices of "The Commission on Trends in Education of the MLA," and the foreword assures the reader that the essay was "formally adopted as representing the views of the Commission" (Fries et al. 1940, p. 6). The study reveals the massive socioeconomic and political infrastructural forces that radically reconfigure the modern languages in the mid-twentieth century. And this text is especially valuable as representative of the confluence, in one single essay, of two major contributory phenomena in that reconfiguration. The first concerns an anxiety of class and labor, the second an anxiety of nationhood and empire. These anxieties codetermine the representation of the study of language and literature in the USA.

The essay begins with an outright statement of ideology; it seeks to investigate "the bearing of language experience on intellectual freedom … in preparing youth for the democratic 'way of life'" (5). The invocation of democracy arouses suspicion; there is clearly an agon at work here, a surreptitious perception of a threat to the integrity of the nation. And here, one must imagine the anxieties in the year 1940 in the USA; the other major world powers are all at war, Japan is warring with China, and the collaboration of German fascism and Soviet communism looms immensely as a menace to American notions of democracy. The United States is engaging in a massive military buildup in anticipation of the inevitable. Consciousness exists in a state of distraction, and the preoccupation acts to detour narratives in the direction of the anxieties. In this text, choral repetitions of democracy and freedom distract the reader. The preoccupation resembles a paranoid fixation that bends information to conform to its single narrative.

"Foreign language" is valued "because of the insight it gives into the nature of all language and in particular the mother tongue" (5). The use of the term “mother tongue” as a replacement for English, however, raises some questions: Whose mother tongue, and what about those Americans whose first language is not English? It continues to discuss the study of “the mother tongue and of foreign languages as two phases of the same general problem,” while not seeing one big problem in its own discourse: Those without Anglophone mothers become alienated.

One of the major threats to the essay’s conception of democracy seems to be presented by the issues surrounding the education of the masses. The essay handles the problem quite clumsily, treating it like a pest that will not go away, and concludes by throwing up its hands in resignation and moving on to something else.

The study holds that it is impossible “to procure ‘universal secondary education’ under the present economic conditions” (13) and claims that “‘Democracy’ cannot shut its eyes to all the evidences of the differing capacities of our youth … and attempt to operate its school system as if all youth were created equally able … we cannot afford to sacrifice the ablest 15 or 20% of our youth” (14). This is a thinly disguised elitist rhetoric of inversion and denial. The gratuitous and nearly obsessive repetition of the words “democracy” and “democratic” in this essay are generated by a denial of its fundamentally undemocratic orientation. The study asserts that “the happiness of man … depends upon the quantity and the quality of one’s *freedom … to be free to do as one wills*” (18). This liberty for the privileged “15 or 20% of our youth” contrasts crassly with the condition of the masses. The reader is told that the desired milieu for the class of free men is “liberal education,” which contributes to the “democratic ideal.”

The conclusion repeats that “we are concerned then with the education of what must be the selected leadership in our democracy” (38), and that “our democratic way of life demands fundamentally a liberal education that looks toward ‘freedom’” (39), and emphasizes that “a liberal education for the democratic ideal” depends upon “language experience and historical perspective” (39). But the conclusion is much like that of the unfortunate study *General Education in a Free Society* (see below): “we believe that foreign language study can more effectively and more economically than any other activity arouse and develop an essential sensitiveness to the connotations of the linguistic materials of his own language. Only the study of a foreign language provides the experience basis necessary for an objective view of the structure of one’s own language” (39–40).

The study leaves a bit of room for “a certain few … who are equipped to procure, at first hand, information concerning the activities, the scientific advances, and the literary products of those of foreign speech"; this provides "very practical advantages to a democratic society" (40). Thus this essay concludes on a note consonant with its schizoid theme: "a certain few" can contribute to "a democratic society."

This text is a highly significant indicator of the confluence of anxieties that were combining to determine the configuration of language, both anglophone and allophone, English and other, in the middle of the twentieth century. The conservative resistance to the social changes and labor movements that had begun to emerge in the late nineteenth century acted to identify the exotic provenance of those threats as alien and, at times, unchristian. This particular anxiety expresses itself in the opposition to the vocational training of the working class.

The emergence of the USA as an international power after WWI, along with the international instabilities caused by the onset of WWII, created a form of illiberal nationalism, an anglocentric retrenchment and a closing of ranks about the "mother tongue" and the fatherland. "Foreign languages" became subjugated to the needs of the national security of the national identity. This particular anxiety expresses itself in displaced form via the obsessive repetition of the tropes of "democracy" and "democratic" in *Language Study in American Education*. This study demonstrates how "foreign languages" became reconfigured as skills for the improvement of the mother tongue. Recognized for the power of their alterity, for their power to destabilize hegemony, and subsequently disempowered thereof, they emerged as slaves to the master class of English. They became, in effect, denatured and deontologized.

The equally significant *Literature in American Education* (1943) was also issued by The Commission on Trends in Education of the Modern Language Association of America. The foreword to the essay asserts that the study of literature is paramount for the development of "a future citizen of a free country" (Lowry 1943, p. 5). The purpose of the essay is "the study of literature in democratic American education" (5). It emphasizes that the value of the study of literature is self-evident and in need of no justification: To defend the study of literature is to engage in an act of "supererogation," a gratuitous act as unnecessary as defending "Christianity, or democracy" (5). On the first page, the words "democracy" and "democratic" are used as often as the word "literature" (5). The words "democracy" and "democratic" are used ten times each in the text, "free" seventeen times, "freedom" four times, and "liberty" three times. The conclusion to the essay recovers the ideologies that frame it, affirming that "humane letters … must not be neglected if we are to have free men in a free democracy," for "human liberty depends not on charters and institutions alone" but on a heritage that "it is the business of literature to make known" (28). The encounter with literature helps one "become an initiate in the world of the free" (29). The essay ends: "This is the true freedom we covet for our children here" (29).

These two reports, one on language and one on literature, issued by the same commission, share in an implementation of a narrow concept of democracy, one that, either by outright denial or implicative silence, invokes "democracy," "freedom," and "liberty" while suppressing awareness of the inequalities of race, class, and gender (there were no women or blacks on the executive committee of the MLA in 1943) in American higher education at that time. This was, in effect, democracy for the few.

The end of World War II witnessed the appearance of the highly influential Harvard report *General Education in a Free Society. Report of the Harvard Committee*. The report, here studied in its thirteenth printing, was first published in 1945. It begins: "The war has precipitated a veritable downpour of books and articles dealing with education" (President and Fellows of Harvard College 1950, p.v). The first two words clearly indicate the principal causal factor: The Second World War. The title reveals an implied ideological antagonism, a "free society" opposed to a dictatorial one, and the implicit totalitarian nemeses are clear: fascist Germany and the Soviet Union. Thus the publication reveals, in a displaced manner, that education is being configured in a form that is both nationalist and oppositional. And it is done so by Harvard, the institution that is arguably the nation's flagship university. Education is represented as "the ways and means by which a great instrument of American democracy can both shape the future and secure the foundations of our free society" (x).

The words "free," "freedom," and "democracy" are scattered liberally throughout the text. The first chapter begins with a quotation by Pericles, "from another democracy," one that "breathes the pride of a free society which, through the released energy of its citizens, had achieved a power, wealth, and height of material progress unknown until that time" (3). By allusion to Ancient Greece, this thinly disguised self-reference actually seems to configure the USA as the unprecedented preeminent world historical power. It also configures second language study as irrelevant for those with a terminal high school diploma: "Foreign language, for instance, though necessary for much of college work, is surely of far less use to these young people than music or the arts or more English or more study of American life" (101). As only 5% of the population of the USA had a college degree at the time this report was written (US Census Bureau 2003), it effectively declares second language (and intercultural) studies irrelevant for the vast majority of the national population. Instead of intercultural studies, a more monocultural "study of American life" is recommended in their place.

The report also separates "English" from "foreign language." The use of the term "foreign language" here is quite curious. The study prefers it to "foreign languages," and its use in the singular implies an undifferentiated homogeneous mass, a comfortably useful generalization. On the one side, there is English, and, on the other, "foreign language." The effect of this is twofold: It acts to separate English from language(s), and it also levels languages into one unified object, implying that the vast differences among them are less important than what they all have in common: They are not English, and they exist in subordinative contrast thereto. "Foreign language" only has value "for the understanding of English and its help in developing a mastery of English composition. It is certainly possible, without great expense of time, to make comparisons between English and other languages which yield fruit of the utmost value" (President and Fellows of Harvard College 1950, p. 120), fruit, however, for nourishing the knowledge of English. Thus the entity "foreign language" has value only as it relates to English studies; worthless in itself, its utility lies in the act of translation: "there is no better practice in reading or in writing English than translation," but "*provided the translator knows the other language sufficiently well*" (120).

The report reflects the very familiar American skepticism toward the possibility that an L1 speaker of American English could be quite functional in a second language; second language fluency is, in effect, not *American*, perhaps even *un-American*: "Few of the many who begin this labor finish it. Few, that is, bring their grasp of another language to a point where it has both an explosive and a disciplinary effect on their English … those who thus fail to bring language to the kindling point are certainly wasting their time … they might have learned more from something else" (121).

One wonders what international relations would be like if all countries had similar ideas on second language learning, if the Netherlands, for instance, had decided that studying English, French, or German was fine for helping your Dutch, but beyond that, not worth the trouble, because you are not going to be really fluent in any of them anyway. The hegemon does not need to know the language of the other.

The report contains statements that may be characterized as among the most outrageous indications of the newly nascent anglocentrism issued by an institution of higher education: “Meanwhile, the teaching of a single language will remain far the commoner way of giving perspective to English. There are few subtler tasks than this early stage of language teaching. Moreover, it is hard to estimate, since its results should appear primarily in a student’s English, not in his grasp of the new language” (124).

The report continues: “of the early stages of language teaching, its prime function is not to give a practical command of the new language; on the contrary, it is to illuminate English” (124). The report emphasizes “that teachers fully understand and never forget the reasons why a foreign language should be taught at all at this early stage which reasons, to repeat, have chiefly to do with a student’s growth in his own speech, not in the foreign speech.” Concentrating on the second language is perilous: “The danger is that it shall be studied only for itself without relevance to English” (125).

The report does acknowledge the intellectual value of language study in itself for college students “whose serious interest is in the humanities … they must at the same time find in language more than a tool—an insight into another culture, a vision of the history of ideas, something which in depth and vitality far surpasses translations. The French or Latin begun earlier will be for many the natural avenue of this further humanistic study,” but “German and Spanish will presumably be studied largely as tools” (126). The report goes on to recommend the study of Russian and ancient Greek, while bracketing entirely the study of Italian.

While the recognition of the humanistic value of Latin, French, and Greek in this highly utilitarian and ideological report is, at least, encouraging, one must question the relegation of German and Spanish to “tools,” along with the entire omission of Italian literature, while the literary value of Russian literature is preferred: “One need hardly dwell on the greatness of Russian literature or on the import of Russian thought and history for any future that we can foresee” (126). The Italian renaissance is the cradle of Western vernacular literature, and the traditions of Spanish and German literature are clearly older than that of Russian. The key to the importance of Russian is revealed in the phrase “for any future we can foresee.” This is the early cold war vision of the formidable menace to “a free society” presented by the Soviet Union, a menace projected well into the foreseeable future. It is the anterior voice of pathological anticommunism speaking here, however elliptically and politely.

This report signals a paradigm shift in the configuration of literary studies in the American academy. This may be the point of bifurcation, the Rubicon crossed on the path that leads to the separation, in the United States, of literature (English) from language (French, German, Spanish, etc.). This is a bifurcation imprinted on the American mind, as a fixed blueprint, for the consequent production of thought. As Harvard does, so does academia.

While the MLA and academia in general progressed beyond such xenophobia, the damaging ideologies remained in American culture nonetheless. 1974 went unnoticed as one of the most significant years in the history of the *PMLA*. In the 90th year of its publication, the *PMLA* printed its last two articles in a language other than English. Both articles were written in French and appeared in the October issue. This was a form of de facto segregation: There was no official injunction against non-English articles until 1992, when the flagship journal representing "the modern languages and their literatures" stated in its editorial policy that "manuscripts in languages other than English are accepted for review but must be accompanied by a detailed summary in English (generally of 1000–1500 words) and must be translated into English if they are recommended to the Editorial Board" (MLA 1992, p. 4). The issuance of this edict 18 years after the disappearance of articles in languages other than English seems quite perplexing. It is not mentioned anywhere in the *PMLA*'s centennial and millennial retrospective issues. It appeared in January 1992. December 26, 1991, is recognized as the official date of the dissolution of The Soviet Union and the end of the cold war.

In 1981, the annual MLA convention began segregating its principle residences into separate hotels: one for "English" and one for the "foreign languages" and indicating that separation on the first page of the conference program: "Meetings will be held in the New York Hilton (primarily English sessions) and Sheraton Centre (primarily foreign language sessions) hotels" (MLA 1981, p. 964). The previous year's convention in Houston was held in three separate hotels, and no such language-based segregation into English and other was enacted. While meetings and sessions had for a long time been classified according to national distinctions, but clearly not exclusively so, 1981 marked an important milestone, for it instantiated and set in concrete (and steel) a separation between the monolingual and the multilingual, English and "foreign languages" respectively, and recognized and sanctioned the notion that these two communities were comfortably distinct and had little in common. The

MLA generously provided frequent and free bussing between the segregated residences.

The separate hotel for scholars of literatures other than English was termed "the foreign language hotel" in the May 2002 issue of the *PMLA* (Franklin 1984, p. 530). This segregation was and is transparent. It is autoperformative and perceived as natural, to the extent that it needs no justification or enforcement. It is transparent within the cultural habitus.

The ideology of American mercantile opportunism in both postwar periods displayed a self-consciousness of entitlement and presumption, and American English became the idiom of that ideology. Anxieties of class and labor and nationhood and empire combined to supervalue English as the sole forum for discourse and devalorize other languages. Academia fell victim to these ideologies, which one sees in the representation of "English and the (foreign) languages," in an increase in literature in translation, and in a shift from an understanding of English as language to English as literature. A waxing culture of pragmatism that takes "a mechanistic view of life" reconfigured "foreign languages as tool subjects," the value of which became relegated to the service of English. This was accompanied by the separation of English from the modern languages (in unawareness of the logical error therein) and the separation of literature from language. The organization founded in support of the modern languages and their literatures came itself to perform the ideologies detrimental to its own cause.

Vicente Rafael, in the article "Translation, American English, and the National Insecurities of Empire," offers valuable observations on the importance of anglocentrism in the American view of international politics. His focus is on the Bush administration, but he astutely observes the origin of the phenomena he analyzes in the 1950s, the same period from which Higham generated his observations. Rafael points to the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 (United States 1964), which was enacted in response to the launching of the Soviet Satellite Sputnik, as a principal indicator of ideology. The opening page of the bill states its justifications and reasoning: "The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available. The defense of this Nation depends upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex scientific principles … We must increase our efforts to identify and educate more of the talent of our Nation." The bill calls for an improvement of the "educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology." Page one concludes: "To meet the present educational emergency requires additional effort at all levels of government … in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States" (United States 1964, p. 1581).

Rafael says of the presence of "modern foreign languages" in the document:

> From the point of view of the state, the teaching of foreign languages was not about eroding the primacy of English but, rather, the reverse … they were designed to create area studies experts whose knowledge of other cultures would help to shore up "our way of life," where English naturally held unchallenged supremacy. We might paraphrase the logic of the law this way: By fostering the ability to translate, "we" make use of the foreigner's language in order to keep their native speakers in their proper place. In learning their language, therefore, "we" wish not to be any less "American" but in fact to be more so. For "we" do not speak a foreign language in order to be like them, that is, to assimilate into the culture of their native speakers. Instead, we do so because "we" want to protect ourselves from them and to ensure that they remain safely within our reach whether inside or outside our borders. (Rafael 2009, p. 3)

It should be emphasized that "foreign languages" are represented in the document in association with "technical skills," "defense," "modern techniques," and "scientific principles." They are firmly nested in the string recommending that students be educated in "science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology." This may be the most powerfully reductive statement of the fate of the semantic field of "the languages" in the USA. Do they no longer constitute a *science humaine*, "a humanity," as Americans tend to say when speaking of one example of "the humanities?" Where is the humanity here, the literature?

Rafael notes how translation fits into this paradigm: "In the context of this militant monolingualism, we sense how the work of translation was geared to go in only one direction: toward the transformation of the foreign into an aspect of the domestic, and thus of the plurality of native tongues into the imperious singularity of a nation alone. The imperative of assimilation underlay the substitution of languages so that translation was directed toward not only the subordination of the original but its outright abandonment" (11).

This illuminates the nature of translation within the American paradigm, and one can extend this beyond the military application. In the area of literature and languages, all literature is (translated into) English, and the alterity of the non-English source disappears in the Anglicization. One may recall the section at Border's Books named "untranslated literature," which contains mostly works in Spanish, along with a few in European languages. These are represented as if in suspension, awaiting processing and transformation, awaiting *naturalization*.

Rafael concentrates on the procedures of translation and interpretation in the Bush administration of "critical languages," namely those of the mid-east considered to be strategically important during the Iraq war:

> By placing these languages in a series so that they all appear equally foreign, the president reduces their singularity. Setting aside their incommensurability, he sees them all terminating in English. He thereby evacuates foreign languages of their foreignness. From this perspective, learning one language is no different from learning another in that they are all meant to refer to English. In this way, all speech comes to be assimilated into a linguistic hierarchy, subsumed within the hegemony of an imperial lingua franca. The strangeness of "Arabic," "Farsi," and so on … can be made to yield to a domesticating power that would render these languages wholly comprehensible to English speakers and available for conveying American meanings and intentions. As supplements to English, so-called critical languages are thought to be transparent and transportable instruments for the insinuation and imposition of America's will to power." (2)

Rafael's words are remarkably echoic of those of Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility*. Venuti sees translation in the USA as an act of assimilation into a monolingual monoculture unreceptive to alterity. For Rafael and Venuti, translation is a form of reconnaissance without reflection, a kind of surveillance and espionage, a purposeful gathering of information that maintains the values of the spectator.

He continues: "Nowhere is this strange intimacy and impossible possibility of Babel and America more apparent in recent years than in the U.S. occupation of the country of Iraq, which holds the very site of the biblical Babel (or Babylon, as it is more commonly called), along the Euphrates River near present-day Baghdad. It is there where the allegory of Babel is literalized even as the metaphorical towers of American exceptionalism are reerected" (15). The Tower of Babel is used here as a metaphor for attempts at monolingual supremacy in denial of the fact of heteroglossia, a

Sisyphean "impossible possibility." From this perspective, there is danger in becoming operational in a language other than English. The specter thereof poses a threat: One can become immersed in the other culture and transformed by it. The engagement must remain prophylactic. One uses the other language as a tool for penetration and withdrawal. One relies on translators who remain ideologically on this side of the divide, whose linguistic talents render the content of the other in familiar English. The languages must remain skills. One could offer the hypothesis that the resistance to recognizing that an American could be operational in an L2 is not innocent: It is an ideological denial.

This isolation from foreign influence also seen in the data on texts translated into English in the USA. In his seminal work *The Translator's Invisibility*, Laurence Venuti gathers comparative international data on the publication of texts in translation in selected occidental countries in the 1980s and 1990s. The percentage of books in translation sold in the USA consistently hovers under 3% of the total for all titles sold, while the data for Western Europe is significantly higher. For those decades, translations published in France range consistently between 8 and 12% of total book publication. Germany recorded 14.4% in 1990 and Italy 25.4% in 1989. Most of the translations are from English. Venuti remarks that "English has been the most translated language worldwide, but it isn't much translated into" (Venuti 1995, pp. 13–14).

For Venuti, "the consequences of this trade imbalance are diverse and far reaching." He sees a "global drift toward American political and economic hegemony in the postwar period, actively supporting the international expansion of Anglo-American culture." He inculpates the practice of generating a culture that is "aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (15).

But the problem is not simply that Americans prefer a text translated into a familiar idiom. The paucity of translations in the USA reveals a culture that wants to recognize itself *period*, an insular readership that excludes alterity a priori. UNESCO provides the online *Index Translationum*, which supplies worldwide data on publications in translation between 1979 and 2009. The countries publishing the most titles in translation in that period are Germany (258,053), Spain (232,835), and France (198,540). The USA ranks twelfth with 52,240 titles, a fraction of the data from any of the top three countries. Germany actually translated more texts from German into English (10,391) than did the USA (9765).

The comparative data on Spanish is positively numbing. Between 1979 and 2009, the USA published 3817 titles translated from Spanish into English. In the same period, there were 121,621 titles translated from English into Spanish *in Spain alone*. In view of the fact that there are more hispanophones in the USA than in Spain, this data may well be the most incontrovertible indicator of an anglocentric American culture. The United States did, however, narrowly escape the embarrassment of publishing fewer translations from Spanish into English than did Spain, which published 3568 titles, thus 249 (6.6%) fewer than the USA.

Venuti's invocation of a translational "trade imbalance" is indeed an appropriate metaphor. Between 1979 and 2009, Japan published 95,658 translations from English, while the USA only published 2060 translations from Japanese. France fares much better in the balance of trade with Japan, having published 8342 translations from Japanese, while Japan has published 9240 translations from French.

There arose in "the American century" an environment of opposition to foreign languages and cultures and a radical movement to replace them with the language and culture of American English. This was, in effect an "English only" movement that arose from the most potent presence of "Anglo-Saxonism" in the nation's history. The foreigner, a threat to American language and government, was to become Americanized, and the culture was to remain homogeneous, "100% American." This indicates a fear of the power of the "foreign language" as a threat to the stability of American capitalism. The USA emerged from three wars as a confident new imperial power, and language was one of its weapons. In order to "meet the national defense needs of the United States," the NDEA insisted on training in "modern foreign languages," which then became understood as skills in the service of English. The USA emerged from WWII dominant in the field of the natural sciences and became the source of a monopolistic world language. The country became "devoutly monolingual," articulating the hegemony of an imperial lingua franca.

American exceptionalism is maintained by the marginalization of "foreign languages." They represent the threat of entering into the complex of language and thought of another culture, potentially an oppositional one. The ideologies of anglophone hegemony have created a discrete and insular semantic field around the terms: English, foreign, language, and literature. English has undergone a radical semantic extension and elevation and come to signify all literature, and literature has undergone a correspondingly radical semantic reduction and come to signify aesthetic writings in the English language, regardless of the country of their origin. Language has undergone semantic reduction and degradation and has been reduced to a set of mechanical skills. Foreign is used to separate languages and their traditions from the dominant one, and this occurs in a country that has no official language. We continue to perform this prejudicial lexicon, and many of us complain of its effects while doing so.

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CHAPTER 11

From Economy to Identity: How Many Ends Does It Take to Make a Middle?

This chapter examines the discourses of diversity and affirmative action as forces that serve to reinforce social and economic stratification in the USA. At first glance, this can seem at best to be counterintuitive and at worst to smack of racism itself and to resemble some contorted neoliberal arguments, e.g., that welfare creates poverty, and that affirmative action is racist because it discriminates against whites. This study has no such agenda. It argues for "more government" and not less. It argues that equality can best be achieved through a socialization of the economy based on the models of the capitalist welfare states of the industrialized democracies. It argues that the USA avoids such a socialization in order to maintain inequality and generates the discourses of diversity and affirmative action as strategies for just that avoidance.

There are many critiques of multiculturalism and identity politics from a universalist perspective. These are Marxist approaches that oppose capitalism wholesale and tend to coalesce around a communal ideal of universal identity. Žižek's excellent work on multiculturalism and identity politics is perhaps the best example of such a critique. In Žižek's view, the success of multiculturalism has seduced leftists into believing that one can arrive at democracy through a multiplication of the rights of individual minorities (Žižek 1999, p. 276). Simon Tormey offers an excellent summation of Žižek's approach in the article "Do We Need 'Identity Politics'? Postmarxism and the Critique of 'Pure Particularism'": "The politics of multiculturalism and minoritarianism is…a politics that promises an ever-expanding equality of opportunity rather than more radical forms of

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equality which presuppose meaningful control over global resources; of ever expanding rights, rather than the freedom to control the conditions of our individual and collective existences. Above all it is a politics of victimhood, a politics for those who feel that they have not received their fair share from the social pot, rather than a politics which fundamentally questions where the social pot came from, who controls it and how it is kept in being. This is not a politics of universality, but rather one of pure particularity dressed in the clothes of the universal" (Tormey 2013, p. 9).

The present study does not enter into the debate on universalism, on how to construct a communal human identity in the struggle against classism, which seems to be a sort of theopolitical mission. This study is not critical of that, nor of multiculturalism, nor of communism or capitalism in principle. It merely seeks to demonstrate how, in the USA, the discourse of identity politics and multiculturalism is employed in order to distract attention from a more egalitarian distribution of income. To debate on whether a universal human identity is possible distracts attention from the real economic problems of the disadvantaged.

The noted literary theorist Walter Benn Michaels has an excellent assessment of the ideological function of diversity in the neoliberal economy in *The Trouble with Diversity* (2006). His study serves as a gateway for studying the ideology of identity politics in the USA. Michaels does an excellent job of showing how the discourse of diversity acts to reinforce economic inequality in the USA.

Michaels holds that "the goal of overcoming racism, which had sometimes been identified as the goal of creating a 'color blind' society, was now reconceived as the goal of creating a diverse, that is, a color-conscious society…indeed, race has turned out to be a gateway drug for all kinds of identities" (Michaels 2006, pp. 4–5). The argument is that, in effect, identity politics has reinforced attention to race and therefore race consciousness. The German language supplies a useful perspective here, as the German word for racism is *Rassenbewusstsein*, literally "consciousness of race." (The term *Rassismus*, "racism," does exist, but it is a recent loan word from English.) The term indicates that to be aware of race is to be effectively racist. This may seem extreme at first glance, but if one invokes the common question, "What is the first thing you notice about a person?", then it starts to make sense. If the first thing you notice about a stranger is whether they are black or white, instead of other aspects, say, if they are tightrope walking, dressed for a fund raising dinner, or wearing a florid Easter bonnet, then one could conclude that you have a motivated focus on race. Would not a truly postracial society mean that the perception of skin color would be of secondary or tertiary importance in human interaction, such as noticing eye color or whether the person is wearing earrings? A continual focus on race and ethnicity could only indicate a fixation on an unsolved social problem.

The system has created a palette of identities, a multicultural banner proclaiming the inalienable right to each identity. As all banners, this one is symbolic. In the context of this study, symbolic is used to indicate a non-solution, a response in image only that appears, however, to be a solution. And in this sense, if the response is no solution, then it reinforces the problem. Writing in 2006, Michaels observes how "celebrating the diversity of American life has become the American left's way of accepting…poverty, of accepting inequality" (7). This has since become, however, true of the two major parties, but it shows well the act of displacement. And the displacement will fabricate a kind of straw man, a scapegoat who is held responsible for something systemic: "what American liberals want is for our conservatives to be racists. We want a fictional George Bush who doesn't care about black people rather than the George Bush we've actually got, one who doesn't care about poor people" (11). Thus the real battle, which should be directed against poverty, becomes redirected against racism, and this is bound to fail. How can one convince college educated Republicans that their politics are racist? That they discriminate against minorities? And how does the system trick one, in this regard?: "The trick is to think of inequality as a consequence of our prejudices rather than as a consequence of our social system" (20). Thus if I display no prejudices, then I must automatically advocate equality. And here, social should be understood in the sense of political economy, as in "social security."

One of the substitutions necessary in order to maintain the false conflict is found in the culture wars, which are the highly polarized debates over subjects such as abortion, gun politics, affirmative action, gender issues, gay issues, etc., especially as these apply to university curricula. For decades, notions of Western cultural and intellectual superiority embodied in canonical texts dominated higher education. This was the "great books theory" of values, which was slowly replaced by perspectives from multiculturalism and cultural relativism, and rightfully so. During the Reagan years, a conservative reaction arose lamenting the putative permissiveness in American culture, the loss of a moral compass and of absolute values, in favor of the notion that everything is relative. One generally points to Allan

Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) as the shot that started the culture wars. A ferocious debate ensued over the curricular menu in American colleges. Multicultural studies clearly emerged victorious, but, at the same time, the fundamentals of political economy were evaded, and the political spectrum shifted slowly but radically to the right. Cultural hegemony and neocolonialism were severely critiqued, while "homeland security" became the most vital of issues, and the USA entered into the longest period of war in its history—one for the control of global resources.

Michaels observes that "we like the idea of cultural equality better than we like the idea of economic equality (and we like the idea of culture wars *much* better than we like the idea of class wars)" (17). The question remains, however, as to why Americans fight the proxy battle so very viciously, when the stakes are so low, when winning or losing the battle will not alter the overriding problem of poverty. Is it because the battle is fought in order to maintain poverty?

A clue to the problem may be found in Michaels's view is that there are two dominant forms of antiracism in the US; one "argues that we can solve our problems by respecting racial difference," and the other "maintains we can solve our problems only by eliminating or ignoring it"; but "either way, economic inequality is absolutely untouched" (75). This polarity plays out in the debates on affirmative action at universities, where one side insists that preference to race in admissions will decrease racism, and the other side insists that race blind admissions will decrease racism. This sets up a symbolic proxy battle that substitutes for the real battle that needs to be fought, one over the drastically lopsided distribution of wealth. If economic inequality were eliminated, would racism exist? If so, then what would be its manifestations? Are not the effects of racism basically economic? But if racism were eliminated, would there still be economic inequality? And one is speaking here of drastic economic inequality, not the inevitable economic inequality characteristic of the capitalist welfare state.

Michaels observes that one does not "need quotas in order to keep down the numbers of black people in universities. The effects of several centuries of slavery and half century of apartheid have made artificial limits entirely supererogatory" (52). One could add to that the underdevelopment of social programs. The system itself gatekeeps quite well. The underprivileged tend not to complete university; the privileged do. Sprinkling images of some minorities, and not "liberally" so, upon the panorama of the student body, and foregrounding these images on college websites, while making us feel better, is guaranteed not to ameliorate the problem. The quarrel between conservatives and liberals "is a quarrel over management techniques, not over political ideology" (77).

If this is true, if it is just a quarrel over management techniques, then why is the proxy battle so vicious? Why do the so-called left and right detest each other with such magnitude, if the differences are so minimal? If you say something nice about George Bush or Donald Trump around American "liberals," why do they act as if you were saying something nice about Hitler?

Freud's concept of the narcissism of minor differences, as expressed in his late writings on malaise in human culture, can help explain this: "It is always possible to unite a large group of people in reciprocal love when there are others left over to take aggression out on. I once discussed the phenomenon of how neighboring societies and others that stand in close relation feud with and make fun of each other, e.g., Spaniards and Portuguese, northern and southern Germans, English and Scots, etc., I called it 'the narcissism of minor differences,' which does not go very far as an explanation. It has to do with a comfortable and relatively harmless satisfaction of aggressive impulses that makes it easy for the members of a society to bond together" (Freud 1930, pp. 473–474).

The narcissism of minor differences acts to strengthen group solidarity. It redirects internal aggression externally and helps in the construction of a collective identity. This anticipates poststructuralist studies of *différence* in the formation of identity, where alterity is a determinative factor. Identity is constructed in opposition to something or someone else. One is reminded of the Martian invasion of Earth in Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan* (1959). The Martian army is absurdly underprepared and underequipped, and the entire planet Earth unites in jubilant slaughter of the invaders. One must remember that aggression is a constant in human culture and must be processed. The juxtaposition of self and other is to a certain extent an aggressive one a priori.

In addition to the sublimation of aggression, the narcissism of minor differences is concerned with the magnification of difference where there is little. One can take a useful example from the American college fraternity system. One hears that the Tri Delts are this way, the Sig Delts are that way, and please don't ask about the Phi Delts. But one knows only too well of the homogeneity and shared behavior of the members of the "Greek system." The fabrication of difference creates, as Freud says, "a comfortable and relatively harmless satisfaction of aggressive impulses that makes it easy for the members of a society to bond together." And the bonding occurs at the microeconomic and macroeconomic level: both within the individual fraternity and within the entire system. It is an effective way of maintaining the system and processing symbolic difference.

But this does not bring us very far in explaining the viciousness with which the symbolic battle is fought. Another process is necessary: the defense mechanism of projection. As has been already discussed, in projection, desires that we cannot accept in ourselves—that cause feelings of guilt—become repressed, denied, and attributed to others. These desires can be combatted much more easily when externalized, and it is important to keep them external. *They* are being undemocratic, not us. As Michaels noted: "what American liberals want is for our conservatives to be racists. We want a fictional George Bush who doesn't care about black people rather than the George Bush we've actually got, one who doesn't care about poor people" (Michaels 2006, p. 11).

The conditions of poverty must elicit feelings of guilt and responsibility in the contented classes. At an unconscious level, one knows that "liberal" policies will not eradicate poverty. And one surely knows that free market "trickle down" policies will not work either. So one engages in reciprocal projection. Each side blames the other for the economic situation that they have created together. And the battle works best with only two opponents; it is a battle to deny ownership of the problem. "We prefer fighting racism to fighting poverty," Michaels asserts (77). This is because the stratified system must resist a reduction in poverty, which would effect a redistribution of income and result in a destratification. One knows subconsciously that a reduction in racism will not threaten the percentage distribution of wealth in the current hierarchy.

The defense mechanisms of denial and projection offer a temporary simulacrum of a solution. It is in the nature of the return of the repressed that the denial comes back to haunt us. The boomerang function of projection sets up a process of doubling and repetition; the process is continually repeated, and more and more proxy permutations are doubled and redoubled in the form of identity politics. The neoliberal battle is refought upon secondary and tertiary battlegrounds, and the opponent is detested. Hating the other makes it easy not to see one's own deficiencies. The American political arena is a safe zone for the maintenance of class difference. One plays at winning and losing, but the system does not lose. The house always wins.

Michaels says that humanities departments are “the research and development division of neoliberalism. The more kinds of difference they can come up with to appreciate…the more invisible becomes the difference that a truly leftist politics would want to eliminate: class difference” (200). This puns well on university research, which, in this context, invents differences for ideological reasons.

This functions like the marketing techniques that create cultural subgroups in order to sell things to them. This has been very effective in the creation of age-based cultures unknown until the twentieth century. Marketing goods for children began in the early part of that century and was followed by the invention of the teenager, and then the preteen, late teen, twenty something, etc. Generations were also created, such as baby boom, generation x, generation y (and, briefly, generation z), and now “millennials.”(While the term “baby boom” is properly descriptive of a generational shift, the subsequent terms are largely media and marketing techniques.) Just as marketers need to sell goods, so do media need to sell attention time. They piggyback on the marketing niche and report on trends among “millennials.” The question of whether or not 25 year olds are really living differently than 50-year-olds is not investigated with any scientific validity in the popular sphere. Colleges are also targeting subgroups in their own admission recruiting and advertising, with the newest subgroups being “first gens” and “trans.”

Michaels argues that the system stratifies by privileging the affluent who can afford the private schools and SAT preparation courses needed to gain admission into prestigious colleges. Scholarships are generally given to students who are going to college anyway (88). Affirmative action does little or nothing to change that. But what is absent from his argument is the psychological factor, which is of paramount importance for maintaining the current hierarchies. One intuits that affirmative action will maintain the economic status quo, and that is why it has been widely implemented. One also intuits that the debates on affirmative action will loom large and conceal the real problems; one reenlists in the battle in order to keep the fires of the smokescreen going. That is another reason for the ferocity of the debates.

There is “no poor people’s history month” and no “Poor House alongside Latino House and Asia House” (88) on campus, Michaels notes. One could add that the college websites are decorated with images of a “multicultural” student body displaying “students of color,” but there are no pictures of trailer parks. There are no poor students on campus; there are “first gens,” a term that has emerged very recently indicating students whose parents did not graduate from college. This alludes tangentially to the poor as a metonymy, a displacement that serves to detensify the anxiety over poverty and mute the background cacophony of inequality that haunts us. In Michaels’s words, this “reassures us that the problem of poverty is like the problem of race and that the way to solve it is by appreciating rather than minimizing our differences” (89). And behind all of this is a semi-conscious idea that this will all trickle down to the rest of the minority population whose children will then go to college, so that all will be lifted.

As long as there are “first gens” on campus and “students of color,” then higher education feels entitled to claim that it is not elitist. But one forgets that money is needed to go to college in the first place, even for the student on full scholarship, for the simple reason that the student is not working. There must be money somewhere in the family for the student to be able to afford to study for four years. In destitute families, teenagers must work, and many of those who do start college cannot afford to finish.

The college retention rate is pyramidal, with over twice as many students entering as graduating, and as the pyramid narrows, family incomes increase. It is quite clear that the system privileges the privileged. In 1950, 34% of the population ages 25–34 had completed high school, and only 6% had a bachelor’s degree. In 2009 32% of the population ages 25–34 had a bachelor’s degree. Thus one sees that around one-third of the population had a high school diploma in 1950, and 1/3 had a college diploma in 2009. This indicates that the postwar economic miracle was largely performed by high school graduates. The median years of school completed by persons 25 years and older in 1950 was 9.3 (The College Board 2009).

Thus the entry-level qualification for a middle-class job in 1950 was a high school diploma. 60 years later, it had become a college diploma. *The high school diploma is free*. The average college graduate nowadays has a higher ed loan debt approaching 30 k. How is this to be interpreted sociologically? The professional environment in 1950 was self-selecting and self-stratifying. The systemic ethnic and gender prejudices at that time facilitated advancement for white males, especially for white males of Northern European family background. They were unmarked and did not really become marked until the 1960s, when the term WASP skyrocketed in frequency of usage (Google n-gram). (The term has recently waned in usage; in a recent first-year seminar, I had no students who recognized the term.) The term was perceptual more than accurately descriptive, as many "passed" into the category based on appearance or surname. There are a host of non-English surnames that, due to ease of pronunciation, consonant final termination, monosyllabicity, etc. (e.g., Beck, Petersen, Mann, Carlin), are not perceived as exotic.

In a panorama of the office workplace in the 1950s, minorities are generally off the radar, and the women present are mostly secretaries. The poor did not generally complete high school, dropping out in order to work. In and of itself, the prejudiced system weeded out the "undesirables." It was not necessary to insert economic barriers protecting the affluent. The progressive movements of the 1960s certainly brought about changes. During that decade, the poverty rate was cut in half, massive programs combating racial prejudice were implemented, and minorities began to obtain jobs previously reserved for whites. The system responded to this invasion in most clever ways. In and of itself, it evolved camouflaged protectionist strategies. The expensive college degree gradually became the entry level diploma for the middle-class job. And as more and more students entered higher education, tuition rose. From 1978–2008, it rose at four times the rate of inflation for private colleges.

One argument that attempts to justify the requiring of the college degree for an entry level position is that knowledge has become more and more specialized and complex; thus more years of preparatory study are needed. This would be true if the specific college degree prepared the student for a specific line of work, but this only the case for a scant few degrees, such as engineering, accounting, and finance, where one can study the subject and then work in the corresponding field. Otherwise, it does not hold true. A bachelor's degree in anthropology will not get you a job as an anthropologist, one in physics will not get you a job as a physicist, let alone history, English, international studies, and so on. The bachelor's degree has developed into a form of general education, albeit with a concentration in some field or another, after which one goes out and looks for a job or goes on to another degree. In this sense, it replaces the high school diploma of 60 years ago, which offered no particular specialization. Another phenomenon to the point concerns the increasing popularity of self-designed majors. More and more colleges are announcing on their websites that you can go there and design your own major. Now what on earth could that prepare you for?

Thus the system itself ratcheted up the customary acculturation process in order to secure the status of the class in power. As Marx said, "the class that is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (Marx 1969, p. 46). What for Marx is true of material production, is also "true of intellectual production, as it presents itself in the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc."(26). It cannot be overemphasized that this is a semi-conscious or unconscious conspiracy, reflexive in the system itself, camouflaged with all manner of displacements, denials, inversions, etc. Michaels notes that, in a recent survey, 3% of the students in the 146 colleges that count as selective come from the lowest socioeconomic quarter; 74% come from the highest. He asserts that affirmative action tells us "just to give up our prejudices" Whereas "solving the problem of economic equality…might require us to give up our money" (Michaels 2006, p. 89), and this is what is fiercely resisted.

"Identified with the commitment to diversity," Michaels adds, "left-wing politics is here transformed into a code of manners, a way of talking and acting designed not to produce radical social change but to ensure instead that no one is offended" (90). This is the code of the class in power, "as it presents itself in the language of…morality" (Marx), a code of politeness that offers polite terms "for them," such as African American, people of color, Native American, etc. And it is the element of educated discourse that may help explain the unacceptability of the term "colored people" and the acceptability of the term "people of color." As has been already pointed out, the temporal distance will allow the older term to reenter, with a slight modification (displacement) after the current term has undergone semantic degradation. In this case, the change proceeds from adjective-noun to a genitive construct more common in cultivated speech. Compare, for instance, "poetry book" with "book of poetry"; the slight syntactic change elevates the discourse, thus moving it into a sphere of cultivation and politeness. It is in this sphere of politeness that silence reigns; in the protected sphere of suburban affluent comfort, far from the inner city, one issues no prejudicial statements. One may use the phrase "n-word" but never say the n-word. As Freud said, the taboo cloaks a strong desire.

The symbolic battles over naming are increasing in frequency and intensity at American colleges and universities, especially at elite north-eastern schools, where one finds recent controversies that pit the rhetoric of racial equality against freedom of speech. Princeton and Harvard have both abolished the title of "master" for residential college heads, and Yale students are demanding the same. At Yale, the residential heads of one college are husband and wife, and both bear the title of "master."

(A change to "master and mistress" could show how the terms were coterminous in the past; both indicated authority equally. In Shakespeare, the locution "my mistress" meant something like "my boss." This could also show how "mistress" has undergone semantic degradation in a sexist patriarchy.) Also at Yale, a controversy ensued over an Intercultural Affairs Committee email urging students to avoid offensive Halloween costumes.

Some of the controversy concerns naming things after people with racist views. Amherst College was named after Jeffery Amherst (1717–1797), who served as commander in chief of the English Army, and who recommended the use of biological warfare (via smallpox) against Native American rebellions in the Colonies. The college mascot, "Lord Jeff," is also named after him. A group of students demanded the removal of the mascot. They did not, however, demand changing the name of the school. This symbolic demand is interesting, in that it calls for the removal of the totem animal, the mascot, but not the totemic name.

Some of these recent phenomena have been discussed by David Cole in "The Trouble at Yale," an article in *New York Review of Books* from January, 2016. Cole observes that "students have sometimes sought to suppress or compel the expressions of others, a fundamentally illiberal tactic that is almost certain to backfire, and that risks substituting symbol for substance in the struggle for justice." He comments that "it looks not unlike the rage that many teenagers occasionally vent at their parents" (Cole 2016). This ungenerous statement is, however, on the mark. It is not to say that the students are immature. It is to say that there is a dissatisfaction with autocracy and a desire for democratic empowerment that, however, are poorly organized and misdirected, a scattershot response to anything that sounds like the approach of an undefined enemy.

Cole believes that "It is a mistake to seek to suppress speech in the name of equality. Free speech and association are rights of special importance to the minority—as the Yale students themselves have demonstrated. The freedom of speech empowers them to express their views, to dissent from majority policies, and to organize politically to advance their interests, just as, before them, it lent protection to…civil rights activists. The last thing a minority group should seek is the suppression of nonviolent free expression." And this is just the point where the system wants the unsettling controversy to settle, at the opposition between racial equality and free speech, volleying between the two instead of changing the rules of the game.

Cole observes well that "Focusing on offensive speech also distracts from the more significant issues of racial injustice that persist more than sixty years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declared segregation unconstitutional." He adds that "The demands to remove the names of ancestors with racist views from college buildings is similarly misguided (though admittedly less directly threatening to values of free expression). Changing the name of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton or of Calhoun College at Yale is a sideshow; it will do little or nothing to advance racial justice at either institution. It substitutes cheap symbolism for the concrete measures needed to achieve real progress."

The neoliberal symbolic playing field monitors speech scrupulously, penalizing players for the slightest verbal infraction. Generalizations are screened for any possible allusion to negative stereotypes, both inside and outside academia. Recently, presidential candidate Bernie Sanders was criticized for using the word "ghetto" in a primary debate in Michigan. He said that white people "don't know what it's like to be living in a ghetto. You don't know what it's like to be poor." He was admonished for implying that all ghetto residents are black and all are poor. MSNBC published the title "'Ghetto' Gaffe Highlights Bernie Sanders Campaign's Struggle with Race," which held that "His comment drew swift condemnation on social media, since it appeared that the Vermont lawmaker was implying that only black people live in impoverished communities, reinforcing inaccurate and painful stereotypes that have dogged African-Americans for years" (Howard 2016). Apparently one is expected to understand that American blacks are impoverished by stereotypes, not by the economic system. It is fine to imply this.

The *New York Times* was also swift to criticize. The article "Mothers of Slain Black Teenagers Assail Bernie Sanders for 'Ghetto' Comments" contained protests of this sort: "Senator Sanders is wrong to suggest that the concept of the ghetto is inextricably connected to black America…We need a president who understands black families don't all live in ghettos—and who has a plan to end the racial violence that too often plagues families like mine" (Alcindor 2016).

Now "ghettoization" is an invaluable concept for describing the creation of poverty in America and the impoverishment and disenfranchisement of blacks. Making discourse polite in order to avoid taboo subjects chastises the use of a term that has become correctly descriptive. One must avoid the use of words that spark the conscience and awaken the awareness of shameful inequality. There is a tendency to avoid the term black, which has undergone semantic degradation, and prefer African American, which distances the issue and reroutes it to Africa. One should also avoid the term ghetto, which is too descriptive. Perhaps one should speak of a "predominately African-American community." But that, too, may be dangerously descriptive. Perhaps: "predominately minority community," or "community with fewer whites than you find in the suburbs." Thus the dignity of the impoverished and marginalized is symbolically elevated by employing euphemisms. This acts to maintain the actual circumstance of impoverishment and marginalization.

Returning to higher education and examining the distribution of SAT scores by annual family income, one sees for the year 2004 an average rise of 27 SAT points for every increase of $10,000 in income (charted between less than $10,000 to over $100,000). If one gauges by net family worth instead of income (stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.), one sees wealth and SAT scores rising in direct proportion for both whites and blacks. "It's their lack of family wealth, not the color of their skin, that keeps blacks out of elite colleges" Michaels notes, "but this doesn't mean that these solutions to fake problems serve no purpose. The purpose they serve is to disguise the real problem…the function of the (very few) poor people at Harvard is to reassure the (very many) rich people at Harvard that you can't just buy your way into Harvard" (Michaels 2006, p. 99). This is also the function of decorating the student body with images of color. The issue then settles into a debate on whether or not to continue affirmative action instead of whether or not to socialize education. Or better said, the system constructs a proxy left–right debate on whether or not to continue affirmative action, in order to suppress a discussion on whether or not to socialize education. This is, as Michaels holds, "a quarrel over management techniques, not over political ideology" (77). And "when it comes to antiracism, the left is more like a police force for, than an alternative to, the right" (75). This is a very astute observation. The affirmative action policies act as gatekeepers, admitting only those carefully chosen on a quota basis.

Affirmative action "functions to convince all the white kids that they didn't get in just because they were white" (100). It actually leads some to believe that they got in *despite being white*. One often hears conservative students claim that the scholarships all go to blacks instead of whites. This is impossible, of course, since most college students are white. They receive 76% of all institutional merit-based scholarship and grant funding, even though they represent 62% of the student population. Whites are in general

40% more likely to win private scholarships than minority students (Kantrowitz 2011).

In 2015, *The New York Times* published the article "Education Gap Between Rich and Poor Is Growing Wider," which showed that the education gap between rich and poor has now surpassed the education gap between black and white (Porter 2015). In the 1970s, the massive education discrepancy between blacks and whites began to narrow, while the discrepancy between rich and poor started to grow. In the USA, among those aged 25–34 whose parents have no high school diploma, only 5% have a college degree. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has data showing that, for the same demographic (the 25–34 year old age group), the average among 20 wealthy countries (including the US) is 20% (OECD 2014). In those countries, tuition costs little or nothing. It is the systemic governmental subsidizing of education that compensates for the education gap between generations. How could an optional "first gen" recruitment policy have a similar effect? It cannot. Largely symbolic, it functions as a decoy, an effective deviation from the systemic engagement of the economic necessity.

"What the right wants is culture wars instead of class wars because as long as the wars are about identity instead of money, it doesn't matter who wins. And the left gives it what it wants," Michaels notes, and he sees the neoliberal project as one of "eliminating inequality without redistributing wealth" (Michaels 2006, pp. 109–110). This is of course unfeasible, because a lopsided wealth distribution ensures inequality. "The value of mixing rich people and poor people is real only if it contributes to the poor becoming less poor, which is to say, if it *decreases* economic diversity… economic diversity is just another name for economic inequality" (121). Diversity fits perfectly into the pluralist ideology of the ultraliberal American economy. It gives the same impression as the availability of a wide buffet of choice in American commerce. American commerce must provide customers with too many items to choose from in order to reassure people that their freedom of choice is near-infinite in the "free world." One could call this "commercial pluralism."

The image of the multicultural palette drawn by the ideology of diversity is designed to maintain economic inequality. The redistribution of color and ethnicity will not bring the redistribution of wealth. One may say that the system is trying to free ethnicity from poverty but not society from poverty. Michaels describes this as "leaving the economic inequalities of

American society intact while rearranging the skin color of those who suffer from and those who benefit from those inequalities" (129).

This is designed to be a great colorblind game of musical chairs. Let us say that there are 84 chairs for 100 people. 16% will be left out, regardless of race, color, or creed. (Equal rights for all!)16% was the poverty quotient for households in 2012, and these are the very unlucky. Slightly less unlucky are the 25% of households who made less than $25,000 in 2010. A society free of all prejudices would be "a neoliberal utopia where all the irrelevant grounds for inequality…have been eliminated." This enables a "truly free and efficient market" (Michaels 2006, p. 75). And quite lucky are the percentage of households earning more than $250,000, roughly 3% of the total. But this game of musical chairs is rigged, because front-row seats are reserved for the privileged. Income and educational level correlate strongly by generation; if your parents are affluent and educated, it is more likely that you will be so too, than if your parents are poor and uneducated.

All forms of capitalism are economically hierarchical and pyramidal. Even in the enlightened capitalist welfare states, there will be a wide level at the bottom of the pyramid. This is a necessary consequence of the form of government that the industrialized democracies have settled upon. The enlightened democracies compensate for this as best they can by offering a battery of social programs for those at the bottom. Benefits such as a livable minimum wage, free education and health care, low-income housing, four to five-week vacations, strong labor unions, graduated income tax, etc., are generally agreed upon by all major first-world political parties *outside of the USA*. The economic inequalities *necessary* to capitalism are counterbalanced by strategies for distributing income in a *reasonable* way. Among the industrialized countries, the worst job of this is done by the USA. But the USA does by far and away the best job of inventing ridiculous excuses for unjustifiable poverty.

School tuition in the industrialized democracies is kept sufficiently low so as to allow easy access for all. This applies to private schools, as well. In France, the private schools, almost all of which are Catholic, cost but a few hundred euros a year. Michaels observes: "If we are committed to equality of opportunity, we should be funding all school districts equally and abolishing private schools, thus removing the temptation for rich parents to buy their children an unfair advantage. But we don't do this, and we can't even imagine it on a ballot" (135–136). Outside the USA, the images of a high school costing 30 k per year and a university 60 k seem to be absurdist parody. And apologizing for this unabashed elitism by sprinkling around some scholarships equally so. If college and medical school in the USA were to cost only a few hundred dollars a year, as it does in many industrialized democracies, would affirmative action be as necessary?

Michaels notes an odd phenomenon, namely that the majority of Americans think that there should be no inheritance tax. This is quite curious, as most of the people who oppose the inheritance tax will themselves not inherit much or pass much on to their beneficiaries. He correlates this with the survey *Attitudes Toward Economic Inequality* (Ladd and Bowman 1998), which shows that most Americans think that hard work leads to success. Thus the rich are rich because they work hard. This dissonates, however, with the fact that the inheritors did not themselves earn what they are inheriting. This indicates a reluctance to relinquish a profoundly held belief in the system, even when it means voting against one's own economic interests (139). Thomas Frank studies this phenomenon in his wonderful book *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004), in which he shows how several counties in Kansas that suffered most from Republican policies continued to vote Republican. They believe in the political ideology as a religion and maintain their faith in the face of hardship. In the psychoanalytic perspective, this results from the infantile belief in the omnipotent father; one resists doubting the authority that one believes in.

In the USA, "the justice of the free market seems so incontrovertible that it renders new economic models almost literally unimaginable" (Michaels 2006, pp. 143–144). This is very well put and shows how profoundly anchored free market ideology is in the bedrock of the American political economy. One cannot only not see outside of the system, but one also takes the customs of the system as self-evident and self-justifying. Take for example the phenomenon of child labor in the USA. It is taken for granted that teenagers will work in the summer. *The New York Times* article "Why a Teenage Bank Teller May Have the Best Summer Job" extolls the virtues of a teenage summer job in a bank "that combines the acquisition of intensely practical knowledge and the opportunity to have conversations about important and personal topics with people two or three times (Lieber 2015) your age". Thus the article holds that the best summer activity for a student is outside of academia. The article also links to and follows a *Times* article from July 3 "It's Summer, but Where Are the Teenage Workers?", which opens: "Ice cream still needs scooping, beaches still need guarding and campers still need counseling. But now, there are way fewer teenagers doing it all this summer" (Lieber and Cohen 2015).

The ultraliberal economy represents the employment of non-adults as virtuous, moral, character-building, and simply just what is supposed to be done. On the other hand, articles in French newspapers on teenage employment represent it as a problem. In 2006, *Le Monde* cited a study reporting that 18% of academic high school students (*lycéens*) work outside of school, and underscored that the figure rockets up to 28% if the summer vacation is included (Laronche 2006). (The figures do not include, of course, vocational high school students in apprenticeships.)

The self-evident liberal employment of teenagers in the USA provides a free market for employers, who are free to pay adolescents minimum wage with no benefits and hire and fire them at will with impunity. It also frees the employers to act in the worst interests of organized labor. In the Western socialized economies, however, the support of organized labor, which acts to secure solvency for working class families, regulates the employment of teenagers *in everyone's best interests.* The fabrication of a moral justification for teenage employment in the USA is a good example of Marx's view that economics creates ethics, and that the economic system will generate ethical justifications of that system. And these will appear properly moral. Summer jobs build character.

Michaels's phrase: "the justice of the free market seems so incontrovertible that it renders new economic models almost literally unimaginable" (Michaels 2006, pp. 143–144) is an excellent point of departure for an assessment of the elasticity of the American system, which neutralizes opposition. The first line of defense is built by the conditioned distrust of government and the illusion that unfettered individualist competition will be more effective. Obviously, this takes out most proposals at socialized alternatives right off. The command "get the government out of the way" kicks the issue back into the free market, which means that nothing will change. It is the particular beauty of the American system that it neutralizes and consumes all threats and converts them into fuel for the system. This can be described using the metaphor of an immune defense system.

The immune system responds to the invading microbe or pathogen, which is sensed as a threat to the organism. When a pathogen enters the body, the immune system produces antibodies against it. The antibodies destroy the pathogen, which is then engulfed and digested by cells called macrophages, literally "large eaters." This is an especially useful metaphor, as the immune system is purely reflexive and not activated by conscious intent. So does the American organism sense the pathogenic threat to its integrity, produce antibodies to neutralize it, and digest it into the system.

This is a very useful metaphor for illustrating Marx's observation that economic systems will *reflexively* conspire to protect themselves. And they will engage in all manner of justifications and diversions.

Writing after the 2008 election, Michaels broaches the possibility of "a debate over whether America should continue to worship at the altar of the free market" and says that "the last election almost completely avoided the subject, and both the war on terrorism and the red state/blue state issues… have helped us continue to avoid it. Indeed, even the war in Iraq has functioned as a distraction, since opposition to the Bush administration's criminally reckless foreign policy has taken pride of place over opposition to its at least equally destructive domestic policy" (189–190).

One of the most effective strategies in the suppression of the discourse of poverty that Michaels discusses concerns the use of the term *middle class* in the USA. "If you can get everybody (the rich and the poor) to think they belong to the middle class, then you've accomplished the magical trick of redistributing wealth without actually transferring any money" (167), he notes. While the wide use of the term middle class does make it seem like wealth is distributed, it is important to note, however, that the breadth of the term serves as a very effective distraction that diverts attention from egregious deviations. It's an apology for simultaneous destitution and affluence, for poverty and prosperity.

A "White House Blog" of October 2, 2014, contained the title "'A New Foundation Is Laid:' President Obama on America's 21st Century Economy," which reported on an address given by the president to "the young entrepreneurs of Northwestern University's School of Management." The president is quoted as saying, "Our economic greatness rests on a simple principle: When the middle class thrives and people can work hard to get into the middle class, America thrives. When it doesn't, America doesn't" (Somanader 2014). In the text of the blog, the phrase middle class occurs seven times. The phrase *working class* is not found once. The fact that the president indicated that the middle class is the foundation of the American economy may indicate a new configuration of geometry, in which the base of a structure is also the middle point of that structure. It could also herald a revolutionary development in postmodern architecture.

Many notable figures, including popes and politicians, have said that a society should be judged on the basis of how it treats its most unfortunate. One of the most succinct of such statements was issued by Pope John Paul II: "A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members" (John Paul II 2000). One of the most touching was given by former Vice President Hubert Humphrey in his last public speech: "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped" (Humphrey 1977).

In current American discourse, the term working class is clearly off the radar, and for good reason. Middle class is a very elastic term that invokes a comfortable life style; at the upper end, one sees images of considerable affluence (large suburban homes, nice lawns, several cars, etc.). These upper-end images have the greatest gravitational power and pull the imagination in a fictional direction that covers the realities of poverty and destitution in the manner of a fairy tale romance. This is a narrative of wishful thinking that sweeps away the undesirable realities of economic inequality and replaces them with a fantasy.

In normal geometry, it takes two ends to make a middle. In the curious geometry of the American political economy, there is only a very large middle class and a very small but very rich class, nonetheless quite visible. This materializes in popular culture as "the one percent."

This would, if left unexamined, render 99% of the population middle class. But in 2011, 40% of black households earned less than 25 k, and this is clearly well below the average household income of 50 k, thus well below the level of what one could reasonably call middle class. If everyone is seen as middle class, however, this issue never gets spoken.

A good example of the reflexive expression of this ideology can be found in the May 16, 2016, edition of *The New York Times*, which had two articles taking up the same entire page. The title of one article was "Where the Middle Class is Shrinking" (Bui 2016), a theme that had been of some concern to the Times for a while. Eight similar titles heralding middle class erosion had appeared in the previous two years. Now the focus here is quite interesting. The titles alert the upper middle class readership that their class is declining, but omit the obvious and more serious consequence that the lower classes are increasing. This is reminiscent of: "Fog in channel- continent cut off," which was a regular weather forecast in Britain in the 1930s (Sykes 2009). This is an egocentric dynamic that reorients larger phenomena in terms of one's own self-interest, a kind of Ptolemization that reorganizes data to keep the agent at the center of the universe.

The ignorance of the poor has willful elements to it. In his study of poverty *Pauperland. Poverty and the Poor in Britain*, Jeremy Seabrook sees a sadism in the treatment of the poor, also visible in the English Poor Laws, which mandated that the poor work; he sees this as a sort of forced labor; the ruling classes need to conceptualize the poor as lazy and thus in need of discipline and punishment. He notes that in the eighteenth century, "The poor were said to 'breed,' while the rich possessed 'breeding'" (Seabrook 2013, p. 75).

He speaks of the establishment of the welfare state in Britain in the wake of WWII:

> That the interests of workers and employers were identical was apparently institutionalized in 1945. It seemed that the gulf between rich and poor would be bridged, the dignity of labour no longer disputable and political quality established. The weak would be protected, those who fell by the wayside lifted up, and the hard-working rewarded. Of course, the rancour of centuries was never completely allayed; but it was reduced to murmurings about the effects on character of feather-bedding by the welfare state. Some alleged that the unreconstructed of a primitive materialism used their new bathrooms to store coal, and wasted money on things a newly penurious middle class could no longer afford. But resentment was muted; and was not reciprocated by those made secure for the first time. If only such moments could last. If only societies could know a serene stasis…If only sufficiency had been enough. (23–24).

Clearly, sufficiency is insufficient; marketing strategies continually tell the real middle classes that they need more than they need.

Seabrook has a wonderful observation on the preservation of poverty: "One of the uncelebrated wonders of the modern world has been the survival of poverty, in the face of the vast productive power of globalism. It seems more care has been bestowed upon protecting the poor than upon the conservation of any endangered species…the poor are essential to the doctrines of wealth-creationism; for without their spectral presence, we might be in danger of declaring ourselves satisfied with what we have" (153). There are several ironic turns in the construction of this statement. "Protecting the poor" does not mean protecting them from poverty, but instead protecting their poverty from the threat of prosperity. One needs the poor in order to justify one's own affluence; one needs fictions of crime, sloth, drug abuse, immorality, etc., to rationalize destitution, to rationalize the indirect punishment of the poor and to cover up the true cause of poverty: negligent social policies. The inferior class is also represented as encroaching on *our* territory. It is a force to be resisted, a class that one defines oneself in opposition to, a class that one must remain ahead of.

In no first-world country is the denial of poverty more pronounced than in the USA. Blanketed by ideologies of diversity and affirmative action and off the radar of the middle class, it exists in a ghettoized sphere (the name must not be spoken), where the inhabitants are held responsible for constructing that sphere themselves. Poverty is seen as a necessary consequence of the best of all possible worlds, the result of a system that moralizes self-determination and self-responsibility.

In the science fiction novel *Foundation* (1951), Isaac Asimov imagined a planet that discovered how to use the difference between surface temperature and subterranean temperature to generate all the energy it needed. The greater the difference, the more energy produced. A similar science fantasy seems to inform the structure of the particularly American form of capitalism, which sees wealth discrepancy as the motor to its economy; it serves as an incentive to those below to become those above, and it wants to believe that the creation of stratospheric wealth will in turn create precipitates that trickle down to the underground. This beneficent difference results from the deregulated economy.

In the morality of the capitalist welfare state, income inequality is seen as the lesser evil, a necessary consequence of capitalism; in the morality of American capitalism, income inequality is seen as the force for the greater good, the power polarity that makes the world's greatest economy possible.

Issues of gender need to be addressed here, as well. Michaels argues, and quite dangerously, that faculty diversity affirmative action programs for women target only the upper middle class, that they exist in order to ensure that upper middle class women have the same privileges as the upper middle class men, and that they do nothing to redistribute wealth. He mentions, ironically, diversity programs in banking and law firms that are interested in "making sure that men who make $1.5 million a year learn how to treat women who make $1.3 million a year in a manner that guarantees them too the opportunity to earn $1.5 million. It's like a workplace version of the dancing class I went to as a kid" (Michaels 2006, p. 115). And here, he is very close to the problem. The dancing class initiates children into the customs of symbolic communication in polite society: how to behave and communicate inoffensively. In this sense, the discourse of affirmative action and diversity is precisely that: discursive. One must utter no prejudice on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. This is due to the power of identity politics, which insists that the right to individual identity is inviolable.

Michaels sees the efforts at places like Walmart to close the gender gap in the miniscule hourly wage (that neither a man nor a woman can live on) as such: "Laws against discrimination by gender are what you go for when you've given up on—or turned against—the idea of a strong labor movement" (117). The *aversion* to a strong labor movement creates the *diversion* of metonymies, displacements along the syntagmatic chain of associations of economic injustice. These get hooked on an attribute of economic injustice, and then the attribute gets raised to the whole set: "We fail to see that the problem of domestic violence is importantly a function of the problem of economic inequality; we fail to see that in a society of less poverty there would be less domestic violence. In other words, we take a problem that significantly involves people's economic status and pretend instead that it's a problem about the relations between the sexes" (119).

The last sentence could apply to things greater than domestic violence. It can be used to situate upper middle class gender issues in general. It argues that issues of sexism mask issues of economic inequality. In the USA, the gender pay gap has not changed in the past decade, with women earning around 78% of men. This is considerably lower than in many industrialized democracies (In Italy, the ratio hovers around 95%). One of the reasons for this is that the USA has failed to pass a constitutional amendment mandating equal pay by gender. As pointed out earlier, of all of the member states of the UN, only seven have failed to pass a bill of rights for women. The USA is among those seven nations (Ravitz 2015).

The avoidance of the implementation of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, along with the resistance to social programs to aid the poor, creates a detour that shifts the focus to language, which has become fetishized as the locus of equality. Just as the fetish functions as a supercharged locus of sensitivity that displaces the fundamental desire, so does the language of diversity function. It displaces the field of the problem to a symbolic zone where only simulacra of change can be performed. Since symbols and simulacra cannot solve the problem, it rebounds again and again, only to be redetoured. This sets up a cycle of repetition.

The joke that Michaels makes about the dance class also invokes the traditional cult of politeness toward "ladies," which perhaps achieved its zenith in the customs surrounding "southern belles." Among the reactions against the feminist movement of the postwar period, one often found justifications from southern states saying that ladies were respected, honored, and treated with the utmost deference in the home. This cloaked, of course, the persistent inequality of the sexes. One might say, perhaps cynically, that one has exchanged one form of politeness for another. One recalls Schrecker's observation on how anticommunism scared issues of class and labor out of the postwar women's movement, and one arrived at a "single-minded focus on the problems of relatively privileged, middle-class white suburban housewives," which she sees as "a legacy of the McCarthy era" (Schrecker 1998, p. 389).

Now one reason for the resistance to a constitutional equal rights amendment is the anomalous attitude the USA has toward its constitution, which functions as a sacred text of patriarchal authority inspired by the wisdom of "the founding fathers." Worldwide, the life expectancy of a constitution is 19 years on the average. This makes perfect sense; as times change, so should constitutions. The USA suffers from a mystified notion of its constitution, from a belief that it contains an essential spirit that generates all manner of individual freedoms, and that the strictest of rituals must be implemented in order to modify it. It is not viewed as it really is, as a contingent document dependent upon the historical material conditions surrounding it. It has continued from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, not because of the transcendent spirit of democracy that informs it, but because it served the material interests of the class in power in the eighteenth century and serves the material interests of the class in power today.

Michaels makes a good point throughout the book that the discourse of American popular culture focuses on the stress experienced by the middle and upper middle classes, thus ignoring the poor who really have stress. And this is well taken. American popular journalism is replete with lifestyle articles about the terrible stress experienced by upper middle class suburban families. And television prefers those upper bourgeois anxieties, often shown comically, to those of the working class poor.

Michaels' analysis is exceptional among the works published on identity politics, which largely tend to perform the ideology instead of critiquing it. A good example of reasoning within the system of identity politics is found in the recent anthology *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, edited by Linda Alcoff. In the introduction, Alcoff and Mohanty present several debates in the issues surrounding identity politics. One of these is a conflict between individual freedom and collectivity: "Identity-based liberation movements…have come under sustained attack by people on both the Left and the Right of the political spectrum." They claim that the left and the right agree that "identity-based social struggles are politically limited and misguided…for those on the Right, these movements appear to be threatening individual freedom, while for those on the Left, they are seen as threatening the progressive coalition and wallowing in victimization" (Alcoff and Mohanty 2006, pp. 1–2).

Another debate concerns whether or not identities have value. The authors believe that they do and are "interrogating the postmodernist view that identities are purely arbitrary, and hence politically unreliable" (4). Displacing the issue to a debate over whether or not identities exist leaves aside the problem of what happens when people believe that identities exist and act out the consequences of those beliefs. A comparison can be made with the issue of race. Anthropology and biology stopped talking about current races of humans long ago, for there are no longer separate species of humans. Modern humans are the only surviving species of *homo*, and no other species have existed since the disappearance of *homo neanderthalensis.* "Race," as applied to humans, has only prehistoric validity. But what happens when people think it exists now? Is there no such thing as racism because there is no such thing as race? What about the effects of the belief that races exist?

A recurrent theme in these debates is the universalism question, i.e., do we need a collective national identity, or just national identities, and do we need a world identity? In discussing "minoritized peoples" (4), the authors perform another displacement of the issue and frame it as such: "Is a focus on identity-based struggles compatible with moral universalism?" (5). They conclude that "Cultural pluralism and moral universalism can be complimentary notions" (5). There is no attempt to abstract from this discussion to a metatheoretical level or, if the reader could excuse the expression, a pragmatic metatheoretical approach that would illuminate how this debate on constructions of identity delays the engagement with economic class differences. Yes, identities are continually constructed and reconstructed, threatened, reorganized, subject to all manner of projection and transference, countertransference, etc. That is all very interesting, but identity *politics* must be above all practically engaged in the politics of economic inequality instead of performing the ideologies that maintain that inequality.

The authors assert that identities are constructed and not essential, but they nonetheless have political relevance. They can "be the lenses through which we learn to view our world accurately" (6). A view solely through the medium of identity, however, may not see the forces that create that medium, just as an aquatic organism may not perceive the water in which it swims, nor be aware of the forces that maintain that water. The anthology investigates "the epistemic status of identities" (8), the conditions of their possibility. This can be a marvelous diversion. To kick the question over into the realm of epistemology is to send it out into the boonies, into orbit around another planet, as relevant to socioeconomic concerns as the photographing of Pluto. These epistemological operations are marvelously executed, but they remind one of the jokes that the operation was successful but the patient died.

The debate on whether identities are "coherent categories" is a distraction. Identity is indeed an important issue. The construction and attribution of an identity to another person can be in itself an act of prejudice. All should be educated to reflect upon the perception of, attribution to, and interpretation of identity in another person in all instances and to be aware of the sociopathic potential involved in seeing identity in the first place. Is noticing an identity in another person the same as noticing eye color, which is arguably just a neutral description? Or is one motivated to see identity? These are indispensable questions.

Perhaps one should worry about whether another person has enough to eat before worrying about what their identity is. Or perhaps one should worry about both at the same time, being respectful of the person's identity while tending to their vital needs. To worry about the person's identity instead of their vital needs would be absurd, but this is, in effect, what American identity politics largely does. The obsessive preoccupation with identities and their continual renaming functions as a diversion from the fundamental issues of economic inequality, an inequality that maintains a hierarchical system otherwise unknown in the industrialized west. It was Bertolt Brecht who said that eating comes before morality: *Erst kommt das Fressen, dann die Moral.*

In Alcoff's anthology, Rosaura Sánchez offers the chapter "On a Critical Realist Theory of Identity." Sanchez notes that advocates of identity politics are seen by some as having given up on the struggle against capitalism. Since capitalism has become ubiquitous, they tend to naturalize it and turn their attention to the performance of identity. This is another example of throwing out the baby with the bath water and saying, in effect, since capitalism is everywhere we might as well accept the American version. It also blocks the view that the particular instantiation of identity politics in the USA is a creation of the American version of capitalism. Sanchez does make a most interesting statement on the separation of concerns of identity from their political and economic context, however: "the tendency to focus on cultural differences as practices or performances delinked from those social relations and contradictions that are the causal grounding of these differences is fetishistic" (Sánchez 2006, p. 32). This is a wonderful assertion, but it is not explained or continued.

She asserts, "A critical realist politics of identity, I would offer, rejects all types of idealisms and provides a materialist account of identity formation that meets explanatory adequacy by examining identity in direct relation to social structures, noting how social structures configure, condition, limit, and constrain agency and never forgetting that agency has the potential to transform social structures" (32). This sounds fine in the abstract. A true "materialist account of identity formation" reveals, however, that identity politics materialized in order to eclipse and avoid materialist economic accounts of sociopolitical behavior in the USA, the country that finds it difficult enough even to offer economic explanations for poverty.

Identity politics can be seen as an economy of symbolic commodity fetishism that conceals the drastic class inequalities of American hyper-capitalism and the connection between poverty and (upper) bourgeois prosperity. The identity image is generated as a diversion of psychopolitical energy. Value is then projected upon that identity image, but the mechanism of projection is repressed, and the identity image is seen as the autonomous source of value. This is a form of substitute gratification for the class experiencing alienation and a form of gratification for the class in power. The differences between commodified identity images are seen as real, but are in effect only superficially different from one another. As Horkheimer and Adorno stated, acts of consumption conceal class differences because the difference between commodities is artificial.

And as Pietz has shown, the fetish "evokes an intensely personal response from individuals" (Pietz 1985, p. 12). Fetishes "exist in the world as material objects that 'naturally' embody socially significant values that touch one or more individuals in an intensely personal way: a flag, monument, or landmark; a talisman, medicine-bundle, or sacramental object…" (14). And the constructed identities are passionately adhered to and protected. As Godelier said in *Horizon, trajets marxistes en anthropologie*: "commodity fetishism constitutes the hearth for a universe of mythical representations that nourish irrational beliefs in the magic power of things, or that lead people to magical behavior in order to obtain the occult powers of these things" (Godelier 1973, p. 311).

Fetishes are doubled and redoubled because of an underlying lack. Thus Foster holds that the idealizing gaze "might include a reminder of the very loss that haunts the subject" (Foster 1993, p. 264). In the collection of fetishes, "a ghost of a lack hangs over its very abundance" (264). The worship of diversity, especially on college campuses, creates a diversification of identity images. Gay, trans, first gen, etc. New ones are continually popping up. And it is influencing pedagogy, where individualized teaching methods are being applied to the client-centered classroom. Nowhere is the anxiety over diversity more pronounced than on college campuses. A perusal of titles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the nation's flagship Higher Ed Journal, reveals a plethora of articles on problems of diversity. The responsibility for a progressive democratic politics falls heavily on the academic conscience. Where else does one read the leftist theory discussed in this study, but on the college campus? The voices of democracy nag like gadflies, and one compensates through symbolic defense mechanisms that commodify diversity. The degree of diversification anxiety is directly proportional to the degree of guilt over inequality.

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CHAPTER 12

Conclusion

The industrialized democracies have come to share similar economies based on the capitalist welfare state, which allows for free competition, but which also regulates the distribution of wealth in order to ameliorate the conditions of poverty. These economies provide free or nearly free health care and education (through the postgraduate level), family subsidies, livable minimum wages, low-income tax relief, low-income housing, and a host of other social programs. This is a model that reaches an equilibrium between very strong communist, socialist, and labor parties on the left and pro-free-market parties on the right. The USA has been resisting this model for decades. Consequently, it has anomalous and shameful conditions of poverty that would be unacceptable in any industrialized democracy. The defense mechanisms that deny, suppress, and rationalize these conditions in the national psyche require intricate psychoanalytic investigation.

American ideology seeks to separate economics and racism. It is certainly true that one reads newspaper articles describing the income gap between blacks and whites, but this tends to be framed as the product of racial prejudice and much less as the product of an economic system that preserves poverty. Racism has become configured as a behavioral and attitudinal problem. With this definition in place, one can engage defense mechanisms of projection and say, for instance, "The French are racist too," focusing on behavioral prejudice while suppressing awareness of the health, family, and educational benefits in the European Union that guard against massive income inequality, benefits that would not allow, for instance, the black infant mortality rate to be three times higher than the

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white infant mortality rate, as it is in the US. This mechanism of denial and projection protects the American hierarchical system.

American problems are not due to capitalism, but to the abnormal form of hypercapitalism that characterizes the political economy of the country. The solution is not to do away with capitalism—for that would be like proposing to eradicate staphylococcus by exterminating all bacteria—but to bridle it. The capitalist system, the logic of mediation, of the middleman, of the merchant who is responsible for surplus value, of redirected labor—these are all here to stay for the foreseeable future. But public regulatory mechanisms are imperative for a redistribution of wealth.

Marx focuses a large part of his brilliant critique of capitalism upon the phenomenon of fetishized commodities. His analysis, however, does not provide a clear distinction between the commodity and the fetish. He tends to confuse the two in his account of the mystical and enigmatic properties of the commodity. There is nothing enigmatic in the nature of the commodity itself: it is simply the product mediated by the merchant, the locus of redirected labor. It gains its oneiric function when it becomes the *dreamwork locus of displacements and condensations*. It is then that it becomes a fetish.

The fetish does not arise only in the act of economic exchange. It is the product of a non-economic process joined to the economic. In psychoanalysis, all objects can have symbolic value and all can be subject to displacement and condensation (metaphor and metonymy). And this is not created by an exchange economy; if it were, then human evolution would have been quite different. The tendency to mystify becomes exploited by the market, but not created by it. Fetishes are part of human ontology; commodities are not. Fetishes would be present in any practicable political economy, even in a fully egalitarian communism.

The fetish operates symbolically as a diversion via the mechanisms of displacement and condensation. As a product of desire and incommensurability, it responds to a lack, and its domain is not in the order of production, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, but in the representational and symbolic. As Baudrillard held, exchange value colonizes use value, becomes self-referential, and turns into a simulacrum, a copy without an original.

Capitalism capitalizes on desire, but in a less restricted way in the USA. Neoliberal capitalism creates a need with a minimal social safety net and suppresses alternatives in order to market desire. The analysis of the Gradiva relief, where the fetish, the feet of the bas-relief, functions as a simultaneous instantiation of and diversion from the sexual, is an excellent example of the fetishizing process. Sexual fetish objects (feet, leather, etc.), for instance, are all loci for the displacement of sexual energy, not because they preserve the moment before the horror of castration, as is held in the arch-Freudian view, but because they both perform and resist the suppression of sexuality.

And as Pietz has shown, the fetish "evokes an intensely personal response from individuals" (Pietz 1985, p. 12). Fetishes "exist in the world as material objects that 'naturally' embody socially significant values that touch one or more individuals in an intensely personal way: a flag, monument, or landmark; a talisman, medicine-bundle, or sacramental object…" (14). And the constructed identities are passionately adhered to and protected. As Godelier said in *Horizon, trajetsmarxistesenanthropologie*: "commodity fetishism constitutes the hearth for a universe of mythical representations that nourish irrational beliefs in the magic power of things, or that lead people to magical behavior in order to obtain the occult powers of these things" (Godelier 1973, p. 311).

The fetish responds to a lack and navigates by avoidance. Emily Apter has made some important observations in this regard: "the household fetishes of cars, TVs, and swimming pools are shown to be sites of displaced lack, dream surrogates for better values. Fetishism in avant-garde culture, one might say, is impregnated with the self-consciousness of absent value" (Apter 1993, p. 2). And as loci of displaced lack, fetishes are doubled and redoubled. Thus Foster observes that, in the collection of fetishes, "a ghost of a lack hangs over its very abundance" (Foster 1993, p. 264).

The exceptionalist American political economy possesses a truly amazing homeland security device, a defense mechanism that neutralizes oppositionalities by commodifying and marketing them. The oppositionalities become transferred to the symbolic, as one sees in the commodification of environmentalism into symbolic objects, in which the actual environmental political alternatives become neutralized *in an act of evasion*. The resultant fetish holds the process in the symbolic, in the ineffective. A far greater commodification occurred with the counterculture movement of the 1960s. The opposition to domestic and foreign policy quickly became sublimated into fetish symbols of pop culture and identity politics, finally yielding a decade later to the election of Ronald Reagan. The fetishized symbols became the locus of diverted political energy, absorbing and diffusing that energy.

Marx observed that the class in control of the material forces of a society also controls its intellectual forces; the class that has the means of material production also has the means of intellectual production: "The production of ideas, of imaginations, of consciousness is immediately entwined in the material activity and the material intercourse of humans…as the direct outflow of their material behavior. The same is true of intellectual production, as it presents itself in the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc." (Marx 1969, p. 26). Marx saw these as sublimates of material processes and thus grasped the phenomenon of sublimation: "Even the foggy illusions in the human brain are the necessary sublimates of material and empirically verifiable conditions of life, which are bound to material preconditions" (26). Marx did not invent the symptom, as Zizek claims that Lacan said of Marx. The symptom has been in our interpretive apparatus since antiquity. Marx invented the sublimate, a fundamentally psychopolitical phenomenon in his lexicon.

The key term here is *language*: The class in power controls the *language of politics*. The anomalous American political economy has produced linguistic habits that make it difficult to speak and reason outside of that system. Terms such as liberal, conservative, exceptionalism, left, right, red, ethnic, social, English, and even the innocuously appearing "tipping" have undergone semantic shifts that maintain system-specific discourse and thought. A new cognitive idiom arose, where reds are conservatives, liberals are leftists, and everyone is middle class. Similarly, the discourses of class and labor became progressively muted in the American voice.

The anticommunist propaganda of the postwar era was extremely effective in removing the left wing from the political theater. As a form of operant conditioning, it continually programmed into the population a fear of Soviet infiltration and nuclear attack. The resultant paranoia became associated with the image of the American communist, socialist, and labor movements. The conditioning underwent interminable repetition, and the point was quickly reached where the stimulus of the USSR yielded to the image of leftism alone, which by itself elicited the paranoid response. Anticommunist ideology removed leftism from the women's movement and the civil rights movement and converted those movements into identity politics discourses of individuality. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the conditioned response to leftism continued autonomously, propelled by decades of propagandistic conditioning.

An ideology of individualism arose in opposition to a misperceived maternal dependency upon a supportive "nanny state." "Get the government out of the way" became a new anthem. The ambivalence toward authority resulted in a doubling into images of totalitarian government and the liberating father figure—Ronald Reagan. This can be seen as an oedipal victory, a wish fulfillment fairy tale where all can have their cake and eat it too, where parental authority is loved and hated at the same time. The evil empire became destroyed by individual rebellion.

In "The Cold War and the University," Noam Chomsky discusses the triumph of behaviorism and the narrowing of research in American psychology in the postwar period: "Here, the American way entered in, through behaviorism. That was the heyday of the 'behavioral sciences,' and that was supposed to be an American innovation, not mystical like what the Europeans did. We are serious scientists, we study behavior, and are hard-headed and operationalist—Skinner had shown this, the behavioral sciences have shown that, and so on. That was very much the mood of the 1950s—thinking of itself as innovative, very arrogant, ahistorical—part and parcel of the general sense of America taking over the world" (Chomsky 1997, p. 175). By the 1950s, social science had become more methodologically rigorous and ostensibly neutral. It embraced survey research and quantitative analysis. Controversial questions about class structure or the allocation of economic resources retreated to the outskirts of scholarship. Similarly, analytic philosophy rose to dominance. Logical positivism was a safe haven for avoiding the unscientific and subjective. It contrasted itself with "continental philosophy," a term that rose sharply beginning in the 1960s. It is an odd term that seems to blanket European philosophy with one generalization as a speculative enterprise. The history of philosophy became studied less and less, as was the case with the history of psychology. Literary scholarship became focused on the language of discrete and autonomous texts, but it was oddly language without languages.

In "the American century," there arose an environment of opposition to foreign languages and cultures and a radical movement to replace them with the language and culture of American English. The foreigner, a threat to American language and government, was to become Americanized, and the culture was to remain homogeneous. The "foreign language" was seen as a threat to the American political economy. In order to "meet the national defense needs of the United States" (United States 1964), the NDEA insisted on training in "modern foreign languages" and configured these as reconnaissance devices for gathering information to be translated into English. The USA emerged from WWII dominant in the field of the natural sciences and became the source of a monopolistic lingua franca. It also became progressively more monolingual.

The marginalization of “foreign languages” helps to maintain American exceptionalism. They are sidelined as skills, while English remains the medium of cognition. Languages (English is not a language) represent a threat: namely, the complex of language and thought of another culture. Anglophone hegemony has caused English to undergo a radical semantic extension and elevation and to signify all literature. The flip side of this is that literature has undergone a semantic reduction and elevation; it signifies aesthetic writings in the English language, regardless of the country of their origin. “Languages” are not literature, but English is. They have been reduced to a set of mechanical skills. The USA is among the very few countries in which the majority of college graduates cannot function in another language, despite the “language requirement.”

College curricula of recent decades have come to include studies in neocolonialism, postcolonialism, diversity, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and a host of other neoliberal themes. But faculty continue to vote overwhelmingly within the Republicrat paradigm, and within that, they vote overwhelmingly Democrat. In the era of the resource wars, which constitutes the longest period of war in US history, and which is accompanied by the most inegalitarian distribution of wealth since the 1920s, colleges have come to embrace the symbolic responses of identity politics.

The worship of diversity, especially on college campuses, creates a diversification of fetishized identity images as psychodynamic acts of avoidance and denial. The university is *the locus* for the study of morality and ethics. It is there that leftist theory is read. But where is it engaged and performed? Where are the advocates of the left? The labor, communist, and socialist parties? Even the Green Party has a feeble presence on campus. We know that we must do something about massive economic inequality, and we know that voting within the Republicrat paradigm will do nothing to alleviate poverty. But we vote Republicrat anyway, feel guilty, and compensate through symbolic defense mechanisms that commodify and fetishize diversity.

The entry-level qualification for a middle-class job in 1950 was a high school diploma. Sixty years later, it had become a college diploma. *The high school diploma is free.* The higher education loan debt of the average college graduate now approaches 30 k. This situation evokes guilt, which is compensated for by awarding scholarships and recruiting for diversity. But we know that this is not a solution, only a symbolic response. A recent survey reported that 3% of the students in the 146 colleges that count as selective come from the lowest socioeconomic quarter; 74% come from the highest. Thus the system, in order to preserve class stratification, raised the price of admission to the privileged class. In 1950, the system automatically triaged based on gender, race, and class, a triage that privileged white males. Now it tends more to triage based on class alone. As Marx said, "the class that is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force." It cannot be overemphasized that this is a semi-conscious or unconscious conspiracy, reflexive in the system itself, camouflaged with all manner of displacements, denials, inversions, etc. As Piketty pointed out, there is no mechanism in capitalism for the equal distribution of wealth. Without centralized government social programs, e.g., free education, health care, parental leave, etc., wealth and comfort will accumulate in the class in power. That class can easily pay for their own private educational and healthcare systems, and perhaps even buy them outright.

The American oligarchic system has successfully conditioned antigovernment reflexes into American psychology. Voters are led to believe that the solution to their problems lies outside of government programs, not seeing that the lack of those programs is the cause of the economic problems of those below the upper middle class. How does the system then continue to pretend to offer solutions? By employing the same contradictory primary processes that deregulated the economy in the first place: by foregrounding the "outsider" who is going to shake things up. This is how the system represented Sarah Palin—as the outsider from the Alaskan frontier. Newsweek magazine even published a special edition: *The Outsider: The Best of Newsweek's Up-Close Coverage of Sarah Palin*, with her picture on the cover (Newsweek 2008). This is also how the system represented Ronald Reagan, as the outsider from the Hollywood frontier. But the apparent outsider is ideologically a hypercapitalist insider opposed to big government. And its newest radical outsider is Donald Trump, from the same mold. This is a remarkable defense mechanism built into the system. It ushers in the figure of the brash outsider who passes as a reformer *based on personality* and not political economy, for the political economy is identical. And the "political" debates become reduced to conversations about personality differences that pass as real choices. This is an example of the process of doubling and repetition that arises within a fixation.

The American political economy preserves class inequalities and avoids discussion of them. The avoidance and denial mechanisms displace the dynamics of class into the symbolic, where a proxy binary is set up of

Democrat and Republican. The dynamics of narcissism (especially the narcissism of minor differences) and projection complete the fetishizing of these differences, and the fetishes are clung to in desperation. For they must be in order to camouflage the class struggle. And class is eclipsed from vision, for the system does not want to expose itself. The major fetishes are:

- the proxy opposition of Democrat/Republican, which diverts attention from the true class struggle of labor/poor versus bourgeoisie
- the personalities of the political candidates, which suppress the imperative issues of political economy
- the image of a black president as curative of racial stratification
- the image of a female presidential candidate as curative of the disenfranchisement of women
- the image of the brash outsider (Reagan, Palin, and now Trump) who will "shake things up"
- the identities of identity politics, especially as these are doubled and repeated in the student population, and as these substitute for systemic economic solutions
- the proxy debate of affirmative action vs. liberalization, as a polarity of bureaucratized quotas versus liberal deregulation, which itself acts to maintain stratification
- the image of the great middle class, especially in its generalized version, which effects an *embourgeoisement* of political discourse and thus suppresses awareness of the working and poor classes. This acts to transform the racist infrastructural dynamic into the wish fulfillment fable of an accessible universal middle class via allusions to suburban whiteness
- the gun as a condensation of violence, sexuality, and independence.

A further word needs to be said here about violence and the fetish of the gun. Antigovernmental and individualist ideologies have created a fixation on individual liberty and autonomy, as well as a massive insecurity over losing that autonomy. Consequently, the American cultural narrative repeats ad absurdum the story of the individual who succeeds on *his* own will and strength, very often resorting to violence to do so. The violence is represented as a quick fix, a powerful shortcut around all that bureaucracy with the judicial system. The catchphrase "Go ahead, make my day" was uttered by Dirty Harry Callahan (Clint Eastwood) in the 1983 film *Sudden*

Impact (Eastwood 1983). He said it to a thief who was holding a gun to the head of a hostage. Callahan pointed his 0.44 magnum squarely at the thief, inviting him to try to kill the hostage so that he, Callahan, could have the pleasure of killing him first. When speaking out against taxes at the 1985 American Business Conference, Ronald Reagan said, "I have my veto pen drawn and ready for any tax increase that Congress might even think of sending up. And I have only one thing to say to the tax increasers. Go ahead—make my day" (Reagan 1985).

The gun is fetishized as a symbol of individual independence and of the individual right to aggression. It is symbolic, as it cannot guarantee the security that it appears to. As all fetishes, it is created in an act of avoidance, here, the avoidance of government regulation and of the associated image of centralized government, taxes, and a socialized economy. And as all fetishes, it is a condensation, and here, a particularly powerful one. It condenses themes of individual liberty, antigovernmentalism, and violence into one central metaphor. And clearly, one may also include male sexuality in that condensation, as the gun is a familiar phallic symbol. It symbolizes quick penetration.

In the HBO series *The Sopranos*, the gangster Tony Soprano is a recent hero in that regard. His use of violence is justified through images of upper bourgeois white suburban family values. He has a splendid home in New Jersey, his daughter goes to Columbia, and university development has approached his wife for fund raising. He seeks membership in the country club, etc., etc. Individual aggression becomes rationalized by displacement into a narrative of family devotion. The theme song of the series, which played at the opening of every episode, begins: "Woke up this morning, got yourself a gun" and ends: "got yourself a gun, got yourself a gun, got yourself a gun" (Black and Spragg 1997). Violence, symbolic and otherwise, is a part of the American hypercapitalist narrative. The ideology of the right to bear arms supplies the gun as fetish, a symbolic promise of an individual autonomy and power that can, however, only be realized by the class in power.

12.1 The Politics of Entertainment

The absence of leftist parties from the political spectrum in the USA is partially maintained by a lack of attention on the part of the media. No major newspaper covers the conventions or other deliberations of the socialist and communist parties. There is also very little coverage of the

Green Party. For the period June 2015 to June 2016, *The New York Times* published no articles devoted to the Green Party of America. Of the 74 articles that mention a Green Party somewhere, only 18 mention that party in the USA. This stands in sharp contrast to the industrialized democracies. Even in Switzerland, which safeguards a lot of the world's capital, the evening news covers the annual convention of the communist Swiss Party of Labor. Not so in the USA, where the media prefers to devote its coverage of the "third parties" to the ultraconservative Tea Party and the Libertarians, who shift the center of gravity even more to the right so that Republicans seem to be center and Democrats left. It must be emphasized that the public knows about the Tea and Libertarian Parties *because the media decided to inform them*, which they refuse to do with the left wing. This is a vast conspiracy, reflexive and unconscious, to maintain "the two party system." Since there is no media space for serious opposition, oppositional voices find themselves in one of the most innocuous spheres: TV news satire.

The major recent TV news satire programs are: *The Colbert Report, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver,* and *Real Time with Bill Maher*. There is also *The Rachel Maddow Show*, which is a bit more serious but still quite satiric and ironic. And there is the suggestively titled *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, the only one to thematize sexuality in its title.

Humor and satire are very effective methods of relieving tension and sublimating hostile urges. They are, in effect, vehicles for the neutralization of those hostilities. They are not forums for serious political organization. Despite their outrageous carnivalesque satires, they ultimately serve to dissipate opposition, keep it in a disorganized state, and maintain the status quo. The first major account of comedy was offered by Aristotle in *The Poetics* (ca. -335) (Aristotle 1996). Aristotle held that the function of comedy is to illuminate our foibles and follies, but it does not alienate the spectators or cause them discomfort. It represents undignified behavior in laughable figures and elicits comic disapproval in the spectators. The ridiculous characters—or better, the characters made to look ridiculous—are never banned, but instead remain in inferior status in the social fold. Comedy is pleasurable and helps relieve us from our diurnal stress and obligations.

The rhetoric of tragedy, on the other hand, is one of alienation and shock. The spectators are brought to identify with the tragic hero, whose tragic fault leads to a downfall. They are taught a lesson, and in doing so they are encouraged to reflect upon similar faults in their own character and purge themselves of these flaws. The death or expulsion of the protagonist is the moment of purgation, the catharsis. Tragedy is thus didactic and confrontational. The German dramatist Bertolt Brecht held that, in order to educate, tragedy must shock the spectator into self-reflection; it must have an alienating effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*).

Comedy is ultimately unifying and affirming. An excellent example can be found in the American political satire group The Capitol Steps, formed in 1981, which performs song parodies of political figures of "the two parties." Everyone is equally lambasted, everyone laughs and goes home happy, and the system never changes. These are parodies *in song*, a consummate medium for in-group bonding that also brings a relief from the tension involved in political conflict. Another good example—less harmonious but just as celebratory—is found in the celebrity roast, in which a guest of honor is mocked and insulted by other celebrities. The effect of the mass comic insults is anything but ostracizing—it is an honorific elevation of the "roasted" celebrity. As in the workings of the narcissism of minor differences, the roast offers a productive sublimation of hostilities into an affirmation of the system. So it is as well for political comedy. In the Republican–Democrat internecine congressional debates, one often hears the expression "the gentleman across the aisle." All act as in-laws in one large extended family.

Americans seem to prefer political comedy to alternative political action. It is reassuring and affirming, while at the same time appearing to be critical. Consequently, it has received wide acclaim and is considered in some circles to be a superior news source, as is evidenced by a recent title from *The Huffington Post*: "We're Learning More from Stephen Colbert Than the Actual News, Study Says" (Fung 2014). This followed a similar article in the journal *Mass Communication and Society*: "Stephen Colbert's civics lesson: How Colbert Super PAC taught viewers about campaign finance" (Hardy et al. 2014).

This phenomenon can be illuminated by applying techniques from the psychoanalysis of humor. Freud's study of wit and humor published in 1905 continues the theme of the presence of dreamwork and primary processes in quotidian life that had been initiated in his study of dreams (1900) and everyday psychopathology (1901). The witty remark is seen as using the same techniques of displacement and condensation in order to express a repressed sentiment and evade censorship. Freud begins the section on the technique of wit with an example from a short story by the nineteenth-century German author Heinrich Heine. It concerns a professional corn extractor (the kind on your feet) who recounts his meeting with Baron Salomon Rothschild, one of the patriarchs of the fabulously wealthy Rothschild family. The modest man said, "I sat next to Salomon Rothschild, and he treated me very much as one of his equals, very *famillionairely*" (Freud 1905a, p. 14). The German pun is *famillionär*, which combines *familiär* (familiar) with *millionär* (millionaire).

Heine was a socialist and acquainted with Marx in Paris. This joke is a clever displacement of class tensions. The gracious but gently condescending manners of the baron, who instantiates his status while behaving familiarly, i.e., in an informal and casual manner, recall the comments of Bourdieu on "strategies of condescension, those strategies by which agents who occupy a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space symbolically deny the social distance between themselves and others, a distance which does not thereby cease to exist" (Bourdieu 1989, p. 16). This is cleverly brought together in the laconic condensation "famillionairely," which implies that the baron was informal but would not let you forget that he was a millionaire. The aggression found in the class critique, which could elicit tension and conflict if directly expressed, is also cleverly displaced and detensified into the pleasurable joke. The inequities of class are also expressed indirectly via the comic metaphor of the corn extractor: caring for the feet rings of subaltern humiliation. This is a tendentious joke, one with an agenda.

Freud notes that the purpose of the tendentious joke is to enlist the audience into the cause of the humorist over and against an adversary. It seeks to recruit the audience into becoming "colleagues in the act of hating and despising and give the adversary an army of opponents where there had only been one earlier" (Freud 1905a, p. 149). The joke becomes an effective means to do so without formal debate. It "topples critical judgment that otherwise would have analyzed the point of contention…in the service of a cynical and skeptical agenda it shatters the respect for institutions and truths that the audience had believed in…where argumentation appeals to the audience's critical judgment, the joke is determined to shove that critical judgment aside. There is no doubt that the joke has chosen the psychologically more effective path" (149–150).

Thus the tendentious joke is characterized by the avoidance of rational analysis: "The thought disguises itself as a joke because as such it attracts our attention and can appear more meaningful and important, but mostly because the disguise bribes and confuses our critical faculties. We have a tendency to attribute to the thought what pleased us in the form, and we are no longer disposed to find fault in something that has pleased us and relinquish the source of pleasure. Moreover, when a joke has made us laugh, an attitude arises in us that is most disadvantageous for critical judgment" (148). The successful joke can be much more effective than the reasoned response in making the opponent look silly. It is a very good unifier, uniting the ensemble in laughter, and it can even elicit a smile in the opponent.

We seek to evade reason and preserve the pleasurable playfulness found in the joking process. Thus there is an infantile element to the joke, a conservative impulse that wants to preserve an earlier emotional state. (The boyish "dirty joke" serves as a good example.) And it will defend that ground against assault by reason. The pleasurable fixation repeats the process over and over again, continually circumventing reflective analysis. Freud clarifies: "This play is terminated by the strengthening of an impetus that could be called reason or judgment. Play is now rejected as senseless or absurd" (144); "When the strengthening of reason condemns the play with words as senseless and the play with thoughts as absurd, it changes to a jest in order to preserve the sources of pleasure and gain new ones through the liberation of nonsense…Reason, critical judgment, repression, these are the forces that it combats in succession" (154).

The recent "liberal" TV political satire programs are labeled as "left wing," when they are actually nothing of the sort. They spend their time in raucous humor and parody directed against the absurd and outrageous antics of such figures as Donald Trump. They respond in absurd and outrageous counterattack, remaining in the theater of farce. They *do not want* to see that Trump is the logical continuation of an ideological shift to the right that has been operating for decades, infused with entertainment politics, antigovernment individualism, and a fixation on personality and identity. They *do not want* to see that this has arisen in place of a political economy with a pluralism of political parties. Trump is but a product of this system, unimaginable in any industrialized democracy.

To step back and reflect upon the forces that construct exceptionalist American capitalism would be destabilizing and threatening. One prefers to remain within the matrix of the narcissism of minor differences, repeat those differences, resist distanced reflection, and make jokes about the constructed other. The suppression of leftist parties in the USA has diverted constructive political forces into the ineffectual realm of farce. Of the 16 non-advertising cartoons in the April 25, 2016, issue of *The New*

Yorker, all but one made fun of Donald Trump. Political humor can serve as a very effective enhancement and articulation of a solid political platform, but not as a substitution for that platform. Where it exists alone, it is a product of a political pathology.

There are other phenomena that support oligarchic class inequalities. The apparent opposition between "the two parties" manifests itself as differences in personality and thus reinforces an ideology of individualism. This both reinforces a neoliberal program and deflects attention from the necessity of systemic politico-economic solutions. Also, the elevation of social subsets of racism to the entire set effects a metonymic displacement that escapes censorship and suppresses awareness of economic imperatives. This is accompanied by a detensification of racist anxieties via displacement into metonymic images of low psychic intensity and a cognitive repression of anxieties of, e.g., ghettoization, incarceration, infant mortality. These are diffused into silence or proxy discourses of avoidance. In addition, the remapping of the right wing onto the ultraconservative Libertarian and Tea Parties results in a recentering of discourse between two conservative poles. Other determinative factors include the suppression of multiparty information from capitalist welfare states, the suppression of the discourses of the subaltern, and the silencing of the American socialist parties.

If one takes Cluley and Dunne's position that one knows the sweatshop paying pennies an hour is producing the fashion item that we covet, but one must behave "as if" one was unaware, or if one takes Billig's perspective (1999) that there is an element of willful amnesia in this type of acquisition, then one could also posit that the resultant guilt must be negated, and that the culpable behavior must be justified. The justifications can manifest themselves in several ways; One can say that people are being employed who would not have jobs otherwise, or that they need to be encouraged to better themselves, or that they deserve their lot if for not being ambitious. In extreme cases, the guilt can be redirected onto the subaltern subjects, who are then blamed for their situation and punished accordingly. The recent film *12 Years a Slave* (Pitt et al. 2013) does an excellent job of showing the self-hatred present in American slave owners that gets expressed in violent hostility toward the slaves themselves. The slave states were surrounded by condemnations of slavery, both national and international, the USA being one of the very last nations in the western hemisphere to end servitude. Massive reprobation must have elicited massive guilt feelings that could only be expressed outwardly and transferred to the victim. This is, in essence, the phenomenon of blaming the victim.

A good example of writing within the ideology of the system is found in Jill Lepore's "Long Division. Measuring the Polarization of American Politics" (2013), published in *The New Yorker*. Lepore teaches American history at Harvard and is the author of a book on Benjamin Franklin's sister. The title alone says a lot, implying that there is a "long division" between Democrats and Republicans. This is a performance of tunnel vision that restricts its focus to right-wing parties. This is not to say that there is not a large polarization in the American political spectrum. There is one, and it is perhaps the largest in the world, for there are communist and socialist parties in the USA, just as there are in the industrialized democracies, but in the USA, these exist microscopically on the left end of the spectrum and are not visible to the naked eye. On the other hand, the Tea Party and the Libertarians, the likes of which are unknown in the industrialized democracies, are quite visible on the right-wing fringe. Thus the polarization in the USA is immense, but the left pole is feeble and invisible.

Lepore begins, "The study of government, like the government itself, is in a tight spot" (Lepore 2013, p. 75). If only she knew. She concludes "that voters and legislators alike are more polarized today than they have been at any time since the Confederacy seceded" (75). One wonders what on earth could have motivated such a grotesque overstatement. Overblown generalizations like this are usually reserved for cable news sensationalism. Lepore divides the American electorate into "two groups: political élites, who are exceptionally well informed…and the mass public, whose specific knowledge of politics tends to be scant" (76). She cites surveys showing that less than 20% of voters could adequately explain "the liberal-conservative distinction," more than 1/3 "could supply no meaning" for it at all, and the rest demonstrated varying degrees of understanding (76). This is not at all surprising, in view of the confusion of political concepts and vocabulary in the USA, which has condensed a chaotic mess of ideas into the word "liberal." She claims that, in the past 50 years, "the Republican Party has moved to the right and, to a much lesser degree, the Democratic Party has moved to the left" (76), a statement that she contradicts by noting that today's Democrats are ideologically to the right of those of the New Deal and Great Society.

For Lepore, the culprit is not the lack of political parties. Instead, she blames television, saying that when there were only three channels, people were forced to listen to the news, but now with hundreds of channels, they choose entertainment instead, and "stopped voting" (77). The news has become "more partisan" (77), which makes the voters more partisan. Of course, she does not discuss the fact that when there were only three television channels, all of them, along with "the two parties," were busy trying to chase communists off the continent.

The voting is almost 50/50 because of a lack of *political parties*, because the lack of essential difference makes no difference between "the two parties." Voting is close because voters are confused, not polarized. She calls the problem "gridlock" (78), which is a more apt metaphor than she realizes. Gridlock on the LA freeway does not imply polarization; the cars are usually going in the same direction. She claims that the percentage of yard signs and bumper stickers in the last two elections was higher than ever and actually suggests that this indicates the polarity.

"No one seriously questions that members of Congress are more polarized than they used to be" (77), she insists, and adds that "congressional polarization began to decline in the early twentieth century—chiefly because Republicans became more moderate—until the nineteen-seventies, when a surge began, chiefly because Republicans became more conservative. The migration of Southern Democrats to the G.O.P. explains only about a third of this shift" (77). Now what is the use of analyzing minute shifts in the discourse of a party so far to the right that nothing resembling it exists outside of the US? The answer is simple: It gives the illusion of difference while excluding any possibility of change. It would resemble a "debate" on capital punishment restricted to discussing the differences between lethal injection and electrocution.

She claims to have "tracked polarization" by having studied "partisan speech" phrases in Google Books (78). "Protect American industry" was the most frequently used Republican phrase from 1893 to 1895 and "men, women, and children" the most frequent Democratic phrase from 1929 to 1933 (78). It is not clear what this all means. She neglects, however, to trace the usage of the phrase "trade union," which grew steadily between 1890 and 1980 (when Reagan was elected) and has continued to nosedive ever since.

Lepore's construction of a polarization in current American politics is an example of the narcissism of minor differences, a defense mechanism that loses itself in details in order to venerate the status quo, a form of minutiae in the service of patriotism. So it is with the fabrication and enlarging of minor differences between Democrats and Republicans in the United States. It also provides a convenient way to vent aggression by allowing it to intensify to the point where it magnifies the differences into gargantuan ones and creates a desperate need to vote within the paradigm, as if a matter of life or death. It can generate an obsessive fixation on the constructed other as well as an obsessive compulsion to rid the political spectrum of that other. People would vote for left-wing third parties if they really wanted to.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, there seemed to be no greater construction of difference than that between Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump.

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CHAPTER 13

Afterword: Sanders, Clinton, and Trump

The campaigns for the 2016 presidential elections presented something unprecedented since the days of FDR and the New Deal: a program resembling the capitalist welfare state, the form of government shared by all the industrialized democracies. This is found in the platform of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. The campaigns also presented the personality and populism of Donald Trump.

Sanders' platform was basic European capitalist welfare state politics. With the exception of his views on immigration, his policies reflect those of the major political parties in the industrialized democracies. These include his views on publicly financed campaign funding, income and wealth inequality, inexpensive college tuition, a livable minimum wage, affordable housing, universal health care, affordable prescription drug prices, paid family and medical leave, banking regulations, the gender pay gap, estate taxes, and gun control.

But America likes to call him a socialist. Some more responsible newspapers have attempted to qualify this, saying that he is a social democrat, not a socialist, but even this puts him farther on the international left than he is. Nonetheless, relative to the USA, his views seem outlandish. The conservative journal *National Review*, founded by William F. Buckley, actually called him a "national socialist" and his program "national socialism" (Williamson 2015). This would get them heavily fined in Israel, where it is illegal to call someone a Nazi unless they really are one. Also, during one of the democratic primary debates, a journalist asked him what the difference was between his socialism and Fidel Castro's.

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In May 2016, *The New York Times* published the article “A Single-Payer Plan from Bernie Sanders Would Probably Still Be Expensive.” One of the reasons given was the high cost of doctors’ salaries. The article neglected to connect Sanders’ health plan with his plan to make all public universities free. If it no longer cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in tuition to become a doctor, would this not act to lower doctors’ salaries in the long run? The vision here is myopic, resisting the long-term view, one that would be necessary for a socialization of the economy, a transformation that would align the USA with the rest of the industrialized world (Sanger-Katz 2016).

Since Americans have been conditioned to view taxes as an imposition on individual liberty, the idea of raising them is basically off the radar. Thus the repetitive question: “How would Sanders’ programs be paid for?” In Europe, gasoline costs about four dollars a gallon more than in the United States, and taxes make up the difference. Americans buy about 136 billion gallons of gasoline per year. A similar gas tax would yield over a half a trillion dollars, which is about one-eighth of the national budget. It is also more than the entire national expenditure on higher education. But the cognitive habits conditioned by antigovernmental ideologies have a hard time imagining such possibilities. At one of the democratic primary debates, Sanders was asked how the government could clean up the water in Flint, Michigan, when the government caused the pollution there in the first place. Sanders replied that perhaps we should ask Wall Street to clean it up.

But enough of that. The important aspect of this study concerns how the American hypercapitalist system deals with the emergence of the possibility of a basic capitalist welfare state economy. The defense mechanisms that suppress such an economy are certainly nothing new. American identity politics have set up a force field around systemic solutions to poverty, a sort of cloaking device around imperative social programs to aid the victims of economic discrimination, and it has replaced these with symbolic and fetishistic responses—not solutions. The responses consist in images. And Americans vote for these images. This is a reaction by primary process association, instead of thoughtful response via political and economic reasoning. Americans cannot be blamed for this; these are the devices that remain after decades of antileftist propaganda, an insufficient number of political parties, and entertainment politics.

The worst victims of economic discrimination—minorities and women—can be aided by the social programs of welfare capitalism, not by identities. But Clinton received more support from minorities and women than did Sanders. This is because Clinton is identified with blacks and women. With blacks, this is due to her position in the Obama cabinet, as well as her association with Bill Clinton. In 1998, Toni Morrison said of Bill Clinton, "white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime" (Morrison 1998). Southern blacks also supported her, and this was due to her husband's governorship of Arkansas. By virtue of her identity, Clinton also received the support of women, despite the fact that the clearest social programs benefitting families and women were offered by Sanders.

Sanders took 71% of the under-30 primary vote, winning by a good margin among women under 30. Clinton, however, won decisively among older women. One explanation given by older women is that these kids have not been around long enough to see real discrimination. This does not hold up to even the simplest reflection. Women between 18 and 30 are either in college or not. If they are not in college, then they are generally working at lower entry-level jobs; this is especially true if they have no college education at all. At the bottom of the totem pole, they cannot *but* experience gender discrimination. If they are in college, then they know *to a woman* that one in five female students is the victim of sexual assault. Enough said.

Younger voters have grown up in the information age with easy access to data from the industrialized democracies. They can click on any major newspaper from the capitalist welfare states, and many of these have English language versions. They know that those democracies have free health care and little or no college tuition. They also have grown up after the cold war and have not been subjected to decades of antisocialist propaganda. They know that something is rotten in the USA, not in Denmark. By contrast, when young people voted overwhelmingly for Reagan in the 1980s, they were subject to cold war ideology and restricted political information. There was no commercial World Wide Web at that time, and foreign newspapers were scarcely available. All major American newspapers got their foreign information from the State Department, with one exception—*The Christian Science Monitor*, which had its own foreign sources.

Another reason why younger voters opted for Sanders involves their attitudes toward identity politics. The progressive members of that generation are clearly sensitive to issues of inequality as these concern gender, race, and class. But on the other hand, many of them are skeptical that equality can be achieved simply through the discourses of identity politics and political correctness, and to a certain extent, many of them see the limitations of the policing of speech and "being PC." The older generation, on the other hand, has been conditioned by years of identity politics to see the fetishes as iconic of the democracy that they symbolize, and they cling to these fetishes in an act of combative desperation.

Voters have recently been exposed to a counterexample to the ideology of identity politics. This has occurred in the Republican primary race in the figure of Ben Carson, a black candidate for the nomination, who is the current Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. His appearance confronted Americans with what they had done in the previous two elections; instead of voting for the anti-poverty platforms of, for instance, the Green Party, they voted *symbolically* for the image of a black president. (Poverty actually increased during the Obama administration.) It was as if the Republicans were pulling a bait-and-switch, saying, "look, we have a black candidate, too!" This nearly approached an unintentional parody. The recipe, however, was optimal. Raised in Detroit, the son of a car factory worker and a domestic servant, Carson went to Yale and became a neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins. He thus bore the very image of the self-made American man. But it did not work. Perhaps the ruse was too obvious, or Trump was too powerful, or the wish-fulfillment fantasy of a post-racial society had exhausted itself in the image of Barack Obama. Or perhaps it was a combination of all of these factors.

It is interesting that the welfare capitalist platform of Bernie Sanders emerged in 2016 in the context of what may be the strongest example yet of the confluence of the politics of identity, personality, and entertainment, heralded by the phenomenon of Donald Trump.

Once the capitalist welfare state program of Sanders was effectively sidelined, the debate then focused on personalities instead of political platforms, in order to fabricate difference within Republicrat politics. For this reason, it is important to compare the platforms of Clinton and Trump. The organization procon.org offers such a comparison. Astonishingly, it summarizes points of agreement, disagreement, or ambiguity for *five* candidates: Clinton, Sanders, Trump, Johnson, and Stein, those being the two Democratic candidates, and the Republican, Libertarian, and Green, respectively.

During the campaign debates, Clinton and Trump agreed on the following issues: They both supported the death penalty, fracking, an increase in the federal minimum wage, ground troops to fight ISIS, and affirmative action in colleges. And they both agreed that China is an economic or military threat to the USA. They both oppose oil company subsidies, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Trade Agreement, and the Cuba embargo. And both were unclear on the question of lowering the corporate income tax rate to create jobs. They disagreed, however, on increasing federal taxes, tuition-free public colleges, abortion, The Affordable Care Act, global warming, and the Iraq invasion in 2002–2003 (which Trump claims to have opposed).

There were many points of ambiguity between the two candidates, mostly from the side of Trump, and largely due to his unstable, shifting discourse, but overall, one hardly sees a radical polarization. But this is a different story in the popular media, where Trump has assumed monstrous proportions. The TV talk show host Bill Maher has deemed him "irrational, pouty, vain, thin-skinned, hysterical and just not that bright, a whiny little bitch" (Moran 2016) and juxtaposed his picture with that of an orangutan. These insults are relatively mild for Maher; some of his others are vulgar, sexual, and scatological. These ad hominem attacks are also found at the highest level; Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has commented: "I can't imagine what this place would be—I can't imagine what the country would be—with Donald Trump as our president," she said. "He is a faker," she added, "He has no consistency about him. He says whatever comes into his head at the moment. He really has an ego.… How has he gotten away with not turning over his tax returns? The press seems to be very gentle with him on that." She also added that she would move to New Zealand if he became president (Liptak 2016). Since the 2016 election, the media attacks have been relentless and focus largely on his behavior.

The *behavioral* differences between the candidates "of both parties" became easily assigned to one side or the other of the binaries: polite/impolite, civilized/uncivilized, prudent/reckless, feminist/misogynist and even sane/insane. But the *political and economic* differences are much more mobile. Yet many Americans believed that they were confronted with a most desperate choice. An article in *The New York Times* quoted information from a survey indicating that "all signs point to 2016 turning out the most polarized electorate in memory" (Rappeport 2016). And on the very same day, *The New Yorker* published "The Choice: Has a Presidential Election Ever Suggested More Vividly Divergent Candidates than Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump?" With the discourse of the most astute and nuanced political theory, the author, David Remnick, described Trump as "a demagogue who is willing to trespass every boundary of decency to win power." He added: "gaudy real-estate brander, reality-show star, educational huckster…with his puckered scowl and his preposterous narcissism, he clinched the Republican nomination with ease, serially vanquishing sixteen rivals rendered hapless by a campaign that made improvisation its organizing principle and fueled itself on an unending stream of personal insult, racist woofing, and misogynist bile. Has a national election ever suggested a more vividly divergent choice?" If Trump wins, "power will be in the hands of a malevolent fraud. And then what? A disaster beyond the imagining of any screenwriter" (Remnick 2016).

Is it necessarily clear that Trump would be a more harmful president than Bush was, seeing that Trump denies having supported the invasion of Iraq? Is it evident that he could have a more reactionary effect on the political economy than Ronald Reagan did? In the film *The Godfather*, Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando) asks, after an extended mafia war, "How did things ever get so far?" He was referring to conflicts within the same economy (Ruddy and Coppola 1972).

Walter Benn Michaels' observations on the way "liberals" construct conservatives, quoted earlier in this study, are applicable here: "what American liberals want is for our conservatives to be racists. We want a fictional George Bush who doesn't care about black people rather than the George Bush we've actually got, one who doesn't care about poor people" (Michaels 2006, p. 11). The kernel of what Michaels says here concerns *the avoidance of the discourse of poverty and class.* In the elections of 2008 and 2012, this avoidance was highly facilitated by the foregrounding of the image of a black president. In the 2016 campaign, it disappeared, along with most of the other imperative concerns of political economy, in the smoke produced by the fiercest of ad hominem attacks. Just as earlier "liberals" wanted a George Bush who is a racist, current ones want a Donald Trump who is an idiot, so as to suppress awareness and analysis of the political economy that created him.

In the weeks leading into the election, imperative issues of political economy became shouted into the shadows by accusations of sexism and groping directed against Trump, which quickly occupied the political center stage. The defenses of Trump's actions attempted to downplay his behavior via images of "locker room talk" and "a guy thing," rationalizations that repeated an ethos of male sexual dominance. The boyish predator became quickly chastised by the maternal admonitions of Mrs. Clinton, the proper and scolding mother. Avuncular male voices then "weighed in" on the side of Mrs. Clinton: the Vice President expressed his desire to take Trump behind the gym and punch him out. The voting public thus became entertained by retrograde schoolyard politics that evoked juvenile images of the older brother calling out the schoolboy who bothered his sister. Male aggression was thus responded to by male aggression. Neoliberal ideology, continually scanning, as does a lighthouse, the spectrum of behavior for opportunities to create narratives in its support, fixed its focus on Trump's clearly reprehensible conduct. Here was an opportunity par excellence to construct a sensational polarity between disrespect of and respect for women. But the *economic* victimization of the single mother, the 38% poverty rate for black families headed by a mother alone—where were these issues audible or visible?

Another good example of the avoidance of the discourse of poverty and the displacement of that avoidance into a fabrication of difference can be found in the recent conversations on handgun violence. The country reacted profoundly to the murder of white policemen in apparent protest over the police shootings of blacks. The most serious of these occurred on July 8, 2016, in Dallas, when 11 police officers were shot, and five fatally so. The July 8 issue of *The New York Times* carried the story: "Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Strike Different Tones After Dallas Shooting." The newspaper reported that "Mr. Trump called the episode 'an attack on our country,' and Mrs. Clinton used it as evidence of the need for 'more love and kindness'" (Chozik 2016). Both distract from the economic causes of the inordinately high crime rate among blacks. A Princeton university study from 2010 points out that nationwide, one in four adult blacks is a felon (Shannon et al. 2011). Trump diverts this to an issue of national security and patriotism. Clinton diverts it to behavior. Neither related it to economy.

One of the major blind spots in the theater of cognitive repression involves the avoidance of the correlation between poverty and crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics lists the following data for the period 2008–2012: "Persons in poor households at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (39.8 per 1,000) had more than double the rate of violent victimization as persons in high-income households (16.9 per 1,000). Persons in poor households had a higher rate of violence involving a firearm (3.5 per 1,000) compared to persons above the FPL (0.8–2.5 per 1,000)" (Harrell et al. 2014, p. 1). The real agenda here is inequality, not symbolic, but economic. Poverty is an economic problem with social and behavioral consequences, and social and behavioral symptoms, *some of them violent*. American ideology tends to suppress economic solutions to economic problems.

A fundamental truth of Marxism: the poor will rise in protest, and the dominant class will seek to neutralize the opposition. If the poor have no political parties through which to organize, no communist, labor, or socialist parties, then the protest will be disorganized, as it was in the

Occupy Wall Street Movement, and little will change. The massive peaceful protests enacted by the black community against police violence are clearly justified. But one must ask what is at the bottom of the anger; it is clearly the continuation of a system of shameful inequality that falls hardest on the most disenfranchised: the poor, especially the minority poor. These are the anterior voices crying to be heard, voices that have been denied a political medium through which to organize.

A fundamental truth of psychoanalytic Marxism: the class in power will neutralize the opposition with all manner of discursive defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, inversion, projection, transference, and so on. The language of American politics, articulated by the class in power, takes the issue of poverty and violence out of the economic theater a priori and diverts it into discourses of dissimulation, usually into an issue of morality or ethics, in which poverty and violence are blamed, for instance, on a lack of "family values." In the presidential debates, it was diverted into a discourse of national security and patriotism (Trump) or behavior (Clinton). The language of American politics has now displaced itself radically into the arena of personality. In doing so, it has eclipsed the discourse of political economy. It has become profoundly apolitical, and, as one well knows, the apolitical stance only facilitates the status quo.

As said earlier, the antigovernment reflexes conditioned into American psychology have foregrounded the "outsider" who is going to shake things up, and one may point to Reagan's election as the onset. The current heir to this tradition is Donald Trump, the apparent outsider who is ideologically an insider, not from inside the Republican party, but born of the neoliberal political economy itself. Trump represents the logical consequence of the political psychopathology that began with Ronald Reagan. He taps into the general dissatisfaction and anger felt by working class whites and harnesses regressive oedipal urges into a symbolic rebellion, a diffuse antiauthoritarianism, while at the same time embodying hegemonic male authority himself. Such contradictions are common to precognitive primary processes. These are also engaged in his demagogic mediation of regressive fantasies of a simple, quick, violent, and irreproachable conflict resolution. The brashness he wields is no ploy; it is ingenuous. It taps into and harnesses violent urges and engages these in circumvention of organized political opposition.

Among the current voting population, all who voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984 are now over 50. And the 28 years since he left office have let some things fade from collective memory, such as: "Go ahead, make my day"! 31

years later, Trump appeared to raise the possibility that advocates of the right to bear arms could fire away if Clinton came to be president (Corasaniti and Haberman 2016). The phrase "let Reagan be Reagan" was a common response to some of the president's unpolitic statements, especially those of geopolitical naiveté. And Trump has certainly been accused of not policing his speech. But episodic amnesia seems to have occluded the perception of continuity here. Trump can be seen as an ungentlemanly avatar of Reagan, which evokes an important question. What will be the effect of Trump's ungovernable behavior upon the selection of the Republican candidate in 2020? Will the system generate a kinder gentler, still neoliberal version, who will then appear to be moderate in comparison? This could act to keep the political spectrum on the far right wing, thus securing the victory of the politics of personality over an engagement with political economy.

The popularity of Trump is only to be expected from a system that suppresses political parties and platforms that could organize the needs of the disenfranchised: the working class, the poor, minorities, and women, and that substitutes for them a proxy discourse of identity, personality, and entertainment. It is also to be expected from an individualist and masculinist culture that celebrates violence. In a system that worships wealth and economic power, Trump is the arch-capitalist who has triumphed alone, a lone ranger. He represents the ideology of an individual who can lead, not a program of political economy that can lead. The fixation on the accumulation of wealth within a privileged class has generated an anxiety over losing that wealth and power and a resultant compulsion to repeat stories of individualist triumph, a narrative of doubling and repetition. The fabrication of immense difference between Clinton and Trump may achieve one thing: the perpetuation of neoliberalism, and a desperate and myopic short-term response to problems that require real solutions and long-term planning. This system has been operating for decades, and Trump is its logical conclusion. But many Americans are acting as if he came out of nowhere. The vulgar ad hominem attacks are the mode of concealment of how the system has generated Donald Trump. He is seen as an anomaly, blamed on the Republicans, and blamed on himself.

During the Democratic primaries, it was extraordinary that the word socialism surfaced in association with one of the major contenders of "the two parties" and was not immediately condemned. The popularity of Bernie Sanders and the idea of a political economy of the capitalist welfare state are truly remarkable in the current reign of neoliberalism. Sanders' support even caused Clinton to adopt some of his policies as a political strategy, especially the idea of tuition-free public higher education and a livable minimum wage. This was not, however, carried through and implemented in the platform of the Democratic Party. It was neutralized by the antibodies of the hypercapitalist system. The ideology of identity politics has further silenced the discourse of the capitalist welfare state. Should Sanders have allied himself with one of the socialist parties? Or with the Green Party? Had he done that, he would have surely been accused of doing what Ralph Nader did when he ran as the Green Party candidate: taking votes away from one neoliberal candidate and giving them over to the other one.

This study has used Marxist analysis to illuminate how agents can be unaware of their anterior *economic* motivations, and psychoanalysis to illuminate how agents are unaware of their anterior *psychological* motivations. The reactions to the presidential election of 2016 have demonstrated this on a massive scale. Democrats have not been asking themselves why working class Americans voted against their own interests, nor why most women also voted Republican. The avoidance of discourses of labor and poverty during the campaign has yielded multiple projections, inversions, and displacements since the election, along with some of the most curious ideas. Russia is a culprit in the election of Trump. Russia is spying on Americans. (The ghost of communism reappears.) Mexico is the cause of domestic labor problems. Illegal immigration is the cause of (fill in the blank). Global warming denial is presented as a convenient alternative to global warming complacency. Protectionism and tariffs take the place of strengthening labor unions and labor laws. And here, oppositional voices invoke the international interdependence of economies as an argument against tariffs instead of discussing domestic labor rights.

The neoliberal American body politic senses the pathogenic threat to its integrity and produces antibodies to neutralize the pathogen and digest it into the system. It then transforms the pathogen into a politics of identity and behavior in order to protect its inegalitarian economy from further threat. The welfare state capitalism of Bernie Sanders caused a feverish overreaction, an overkill with extreme prejudice that annihilated the intrusion, illustrating Marx's observation that economic systems will *reflexively* conspire to protect themselves. And they will engage in all manner of justifications and diversions in doing so.

For both Marx and Freud, resistance to oppression is intrinsic to human culture; for Marx, it is the resistance to political and economic oppression;

for Freud, it is the resistance to patriarchal authority. American capitalism is continually threatened by democratic ingressions, forces for equality. Their current resurgence elicited a counterreaction, a second grand desublimation—the first was provoked by Ronald Reagan—that discharges repressed sadistic urges. And the disputes have become nightmarish.

The first major work on psychoanalysis was about dreams. Dreams are generated by anxieties that ideate in myriad contradictory images, condensed into a central metaphor. The contradictions in American capitalism have created dreamwork caricatures of a leader, a condensation into one person of the anxieties and nervous disorders of twenty-first-century America, articulated in a radically decentered aphasia. And the aphasic pronouncements act to prolong the schizophrenia of the system.

One would rather hope that the dissatisfaction with exceptionalist American capitalism that Sanders helped to *organize politically* could inspire reorganization around leftist third parties. This would provide the protest movements with *a political structure* instead of subjecting them to the avoidance strategies of entertainment and identity politics. It would also be more viable than expecting a neoliberal party to shift to the left. There is every reason to believe that a multiparty spectrum of true left, right, and center would yield the political economy of the capitalist welfare state *in the long run*. But this would make little sense in the short term gain mentality of the American system.

Lacan said that the center of the dream is unknowable, because the ego does not want to recognize impulses that threaten its integrity. What is at the center of the nightmare here? Is it a sadistic desire for inequality, submerged by cognitive repression? A fear that wealth might be distributed *too equally*? Will the shock of the 2016 election make voters cling even more strongly to the Democratic Party, horrified by the *behavior* of the president? Or blinded by the illusion that the Democratic Party really wants to reverse the turn to the right that it took long ago and return to the progressivism of the New Deal? Or will voters be shocked out of their cognitive repression, see clearly their complicity in the conservatism of "both parties," and begin to support authentic leftist and environmental alternatives? Workers' parties that could logically explain the truth to the working class and the working poor?

If one does not exit the paradigm that has created the current government, one will be left "tolling for tongues with no place to bring their thoughts" (Dylan 1964), wondering:

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Washington to be born?

(From "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats (Yeats 1956, pp. 184–185), text slightly modified.)

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