The Lion in Winter: Leo Lowenthal and the Integrity of the Intellectual

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My friendship with Leo Lowenthal began relatively late in his life and relatively early in mine. We met in Berkeley in 1981, thanks to our mutual friend Martin Jay. Leo had recently entered his ninth decade; I was still in my third. Our friendship would prosper for twelve years. At the time I was finishing a Ph. D. dissertation on Walter Benjamin. Leo was one of two people I have met who actually knew Benjamin, the other being his close friend Herbert Marcuse. Their paths had frequently crossed in Frankfurt during the late 1920s. Later, of course, they had professional dealings in Leo's capacity as managing editor of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*.

When we met, Leo had just been invited to give a lecture at an international conference in Frankfurt in honor of the long-awaited publication of Benjamin's Arcades Project. Hence, our mutual interest in Benjamin formed the basis of a natural alliance. During our first meeting in Leo's book-lined study, we spoke for hours about Benjamin's brilliant reviews for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* –many of which Leo had undoubtedly read upon their initial publication during the 1920s– as well as Benjamin's uncanny oscillation during the 1930s between messianic and Marxist leitmotifs.

There are a number of themes that arose during these initial conversations that left a deep impression on me. For, despite our considerable differences in age, background, and intellectual training –after all, Leo's mentors had been illustrious philosophers such as Paul Natorp and Heinrich Rickert– we discovered nevertheless a number of developmental similarities. Both of us had come of age in the aftermath of failed revolutionary situations – in Leo's case, the German Revolution of 1918; in mine, the student revolt of the 1960s. Unsurprisingly, we found that we were attracted to many of the same ideas and texts. In his autobiography Leo recounts how he (like many of his generation) was alienated from the reigning school-philosophy, neo-Kantianism, which seemed conformist and unimaginative. The tools of analytic reason seemed patently inadequate in order to counteract an increasingly irrational political situation. The realization of utopia demanded more robust intellectual methods.

Similar observations apply to my generation's rejection of the predominant academic methodologies, positivism and analytic philosophy. Our disillusionment with these approaches accounted for our intoxication with the utopian promise of German philosophy in general and the Frankfurt School in particular. German classical philosophy was predicated on a potentially subversive dialectic of "essence" and "appearance." It argued against an uncritical reverence for the current state of things, which it denigrated as "immediacy." It remained resolutely skeptical vis-à-vis empirical approaches to truth, approaches that took their bearings from what was historically given. It demanded that the present age be subjected to the rigors of dialectical reasoning. Instead of being revered, social reality stood in need of legitimation before the higher tribunal of the "concept" (*der Begriff*). Its metaphysical encumbrances notwithstanding, Hegel's

philosophy defended the idea of an emphatic concept of truth. Thus, it retained a capacity for strong normative evaluation that remained noticeably absent among the reigning empiricist schools. Suffice it to say that indigenous American intellectual traditions – e.g., endless permutations of pragmatism-scientism nexus – offered nothing comparable.

This Hegelian element remained a prominent component of the Frankfurt School's methodological approach, "interdisciplinary materialism." Simply put, this approach required that empirical enquiries be guided by general theoretical or normative insights. Particular segments of social life – the family, the individual, work, mass culture – needed to be viewed in light of broader historical or theoretical concerns: an orientation toward "totality." In the Frankfurt School's empirical and theoretical work, these insights came to fruition in the claim that Critical Theory was guided by an interest in human emancipation. For a generation like mine that was desperately seeking theoretical leverage to counteract the depredations of what Marcuse had labeled the "welfare and warfare state," these ideas found great resonance. In the Frankfurt School's negative dialectics, many of us felt we had discovered the meaning of the critical spirit.

Upon emigrating to America in the mid-1930s, Leo was struck by the reigning of intellectual provincialism. Many works by major French and German authors remained untranslated. American cultural life seemed unworldly and complacent. But that situation changed radically by the mid-1970s, at least in part owing to the intellectual ambitions of New Left scholars. In *An Unmastered Past*, Leo recounted these developments as follows:

> *A sense of disappointment, disillusion, and outrage over what had happened in America after the Second World War slowly spread among the more enlightened young people. . . Leftist intellectual circles reacted to this disappointment with a strong interest in political philosophy. And in this context the Frankfurt School was discovered. Most likely the new interest derived largely from the great popularity Herbert Marcuse enjoyed in this country . . .This is the context in which we find a fairly broad reception for many of the ideas of the Frankfurt School, as well as . . . a good number of French thinkers. Intellectual curiosity is great and nearly unquenchable (1988: 149).*

To the astonishment of many, the *Flaschenpost* or "message in a bottle" launched by Horkheimer et al. during the 1930s had washed up on American shores.

In the course of our conversations in the early 1980s, Leo singled out the two books that had had the greatest impact upon him as a youth: Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* and Bloch's *Spirit of Utopia*. Both works offered a panoply of speculative directives for transcending bourgeois society qua continuum of reification. Lukács's *Jugendschrift* ends with messianic appeal to Dostoevsky as the prophet of a utopian literary form heralding the abolition of the bourgeois era of "absolute sinfulness" (Fichte) and the restoration of the "integrated totality" of classical Greece. *Spirit of Utopia* was the work of a confirmed *unorthodox* Marxist. Bloch employed an expressionistic literary style, reconceived Marxism as variety of political messianism, and, in a play on Kant, praised Bolshevism as the "categorical imperative with revolver in hand." The turning point of my own youthful intellectual development had been joining a Lukács reading circle as an undergraduate in Portland, Oregon. In *History and Class Consciousness* – our bible – Lukács, writing in a neo-Hegelian idiom, had famously proclaimed the proletariat as the identical subject-object of history. My fellow undergraduates and I took him at his word.

Leo's Frankfurt Benjamin talk, "Walter Benjamin: The Integrity of the Intellectual," which I had the good fortune to attend, was a resounding success. For the qualities of intellectual integrity Leo generously attributed to Benjamin very much apply to him, too. After all, Leo and Benjamin were contemporaries. Both evinced a fascination with the conservative philosopher of religion Franz von Baader, on whom Leo wrote his dissertation in 1923. On a less

sanguine note, both Benjamin and Leo had their habilitation efforts blocked by the same University of Frankfurt philology professor, Franz Schultz, during the mid-1920s. Unlike Leo, Benjamin's itinerary seemed haunted by the mischievous upsets of the "little hunchback" (*buchliger Zwerg*) of German fairy tale lore who figured prominently in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Paradoxically, Benjamin's lack of worldly success during his lifetime stands in inverse proportion to the international renown he enjoys today.

By "integrity of the intellectual," Leo sought to highlight Benjamin's unshakeable faith in the power of ideas to change the world. However, unlike his Frankfurt School comrades, Benjamin set little store by Hegel. He believed Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" offered more possibilities for radical change than did the successful outcome of a dialectical syllogism. In this respect, his unorthodox Marxism bears comparison with that of his friend and *compagnon de route*, Ernst Bloch.

Benjamin's theoretical fecundity derived from sources that, according to the dogmas of orthodox Marxist canon, were strictly taboo. Hence, his manifest fascination with representatives of the Counter-Enlightenment tradition – figures such as Bachofen, Nietzsche, Ludwig Klages, C. G. Jung – whose ideas he sought to appropriate for the ends of the political left, to the dismay of his Marxist colleagues at the Institute for Social Research. As Benjamin remarked in a letter from the early 1920s: "A philosophy of experience that does not include the possibility of soothsaying from coffee grounds cannot be a true philosophy" (1966). Paradoxically, the only groups who shared the same concerns – who, like Benjamin, viewed cultural history as potential repository of *profane illuminations* – were the leading lights of the conservative revolution. From its earliest inception, Benjamin's program was to make such concerns serviceable for the left. As he explained in his 1929 surrealism essay, his goal was: "to win the energies of intoxication [*Rausch*] for the revolution" (1978: 189). As early as 1918, Benjamin forcefully rejected

the Newtonian-Kantian conception of experience, one that was predicated on the mechanical worldview of the natural sciences, in favor of a conception that was indebted to the tenets of animism, mysticism, and theology (1996:101-110). His experimentation with mescalin and hashish (following a time-honored literary tradition established by Thomas de Quincey and Baudelaire) must be understood along similar lines: these were attempts to decenter the Kantian "transcendental unity of apperception" in the direction of profane illuminations. When, in the Arcades Project, Benjamin remarks that, "My thinking is related to theology as blotting pad is related to ink. *It is saturated with it*", he was deadly serious (2000: 471).

Whereas orthodox Marxists spoke confidently of the laws of historical development and glorified science with Saint-Simonian zeal, Benjamin believed that to divorce revolution from theological concerns was a recipe for failure. It was tantamount to making peace with the profane continuum of history and, hence, to sell short revolution's redemptive potential. His conception of revolution bore greater affinities with the eschatological notion of the "Last Judgment" than it did with the traditional Marxist goal of socializing the means of production. In Convolute N of the Arcades Project ("On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory Progress"), he associates revolution with the concept of *apocatastasis*: a term from the Jewish apocalyptical tradition that designates the restoration of an original paradisiacal state catalyzed by the coming of the Messiah (2000: 459). As Scholem once observed concerning the redemptive dimension of Benjamin's theoretical program: "The goal of Benjamin's 'dialectics of cultural history' [was] the abolition of the prevailing context of expression in favor of the original context of Being."

This fascination with the redemptive promise of Jewish messianism also held its attractions for Leo. Following the twin debâcles of the Great War and the German Revolution, Leo, like Benjamin, concluded that there could be no going back to the compromises and half-measures of the bourgeois world. Hence, as a student in Heidelberg, he frequented left-wing Zionist circles. He

had a long and fruitful association with Judisches Leerhaus, a legendary center for Jewish learning founded by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. Prior to his work for the Institute in 1926, Leo, like Benjamin, was convinced that the idea of socialism could be enhanced by an infusion of a messianic dimension culled from the tradition of secular Judaism:

> *I believed that Jewish philosophy of religion . . . contains a progressive rationalism with strong secular tendencies, which, though garbed in religious symbolism, also connote the idea of a paradise on earth . . . I believed strongly in Judaism's messianic mission, its utopian political task (1988: 111-112, 114).*

It is significant that during his long association with the Institute, these themes remained muted.

In view of his pioneering work on the sociology of literature, much of it done in the 1930s, it would be inaccurate to refer to Leo as a late bloomer. But it would also be unfair to underestimate the roll he played as a champion of Critical Theory's claims later in life as the Frankfurt School's last surviving member. Here, too, Leo expressed something of the integrity of the intellectual: helping to keep the flame of Critical Theory alive at a point when politicians and scholars had accused it of the Socratic sins of leading youth astray and worshipping gods other than those sanctioned by the city.

During the German Autumn – the events surrounding the kidnapping and murder of the head of the German Employers Association, Hans-Martin Schleyer, by Red Army Faction terrorists in 1977 – CDU politicians Alfred Dregger and Hans Filbinger claimed that the Frankfurt School had been intellectually responsible for RAF terrorism. Conservative academics jumped on the bandwagon, arguing that Horkheimer, Adorno et al. practiced a form of "cultural terrorism" that destabilized the foundations of the Christian West (Wiggershaus,1986: 728 ; Kraushaar, 1998). They adopted the cynical position that critical thought, rather than strengthening the virtues of civic consciousness, undermined them.

Paradoxically, anti-democratic sentiments espoused by German conservatives during the waning years of the Weimar Republic suddenly gained a new lease on life. [Lübbe, memory management]

By making such arguments, Critical Theory's antagonists sought to rehabilitate a cornerstone of the Counter-Enlightenment worldview: the idea that unfettered employment of reason undermines credulity in inherited institutions. In *Reflections on the Revolution in France* Edmund Burke forcefully criticized the "fallible and feeble contrivances of [human] reason" which he claimed must be offset by the influences of habit, custom, and tradition (1961: 46). Burke's critique of "philosophy" found many admirers across the continent among apostles of counterrevolution. During the 1950s and 1960s German conservatives such as Hans Freyer and Arnold Gehlen embraced a pro-technocracy standpoint that derived from the "end of ideology" debate. They alleged that the idea of "popular sovereignty" were dangerous, Rousseauian atavisms, and that the imperatives of "social control" trumped normative concerns or considerations of "right." They viewed substantive justifications of democracy – as one finds, for example, in the tradition of modern natural law – as politically risky and epistemologically undemonstrable (Muller, 1987; van Laak, 1993; Adorno and Gehlen, 1974).

That Horkheimer and Adorno had been outspoken critics of APO (the German acronym for the extra-parliamentary left) excesses seemed to matter little amid the hysteria generated by Critical Theory's growing chorus of conservative detractors. Upon their return to Germany circa 1950, the Institute had championed two central components of the Enlightenment program: the Kantian of paradigm of "autonomy" (or *Mündigkeit*) and the Freudian concept of "working through the past".[2] In "Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" Kant had famously defined "autonomy" as humanity's emergence from "self-incurred tutelage." Autonomy was predicated on the unfettered employment of reason: a willingness to think without the guidance of experts or authorities. The autonomy

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See Adorno's programmatic essays, "Education Towards Autonomy" and "What Does it Mean to Work Through the Past?" in Adorno (1995).

and maturity of citizens would offset the need for dogmatic political authority – *unenlightened despotism*. This Kantian standpoint posed a direct challenge to conservative thinkers like Gehlen, Freyer, and Luhmann who used arguments about social complexity to proclaim the advent of *posthistoire*. By appealing to the "end of ideology," they reached an eminently ideological conclusion: the emancipatory project had ended. Questions of technical efficiency alone remained. "Man" was a dangerous and untrustworthy animal whose impulses must be closely monitored by institutional mechanisms of social control (Kant, 1964).

In the autumn of his years, Leo played an indispensable role in keeping the torch of Critical Theory alive in the face of the neo-conservative *Tendenzwende* (ideological shift) that swept across Europe and North America during the 1980s. In interviews he regularly commented on currents events and provided, in good Frankfurt School fashion, an ideology critical perspective on the reigning intellectual fashion, postmodernism. As an octogenarian, he turned into an eloquent memorialist, penning moving reminiscences of Frankfurt School comrades Benjamin and Adorno. Far from being exercises in nostalgia, these essays were models of political-philosophical concision. What alarmed Leo most was that neo-conservatives and postmodernists seemed to agree on the death of subjectivity and the end of history. He viewed such declarations as both premature and ideologically suspect.

From the Frankfurt School standpoint, the "death of the subject" was a politically sensitive topos. During the 1940s Horkheimer and Adorno feared that, given the realities of totalitarianism, this concept threatened to become an all-consuming reality. In "The End of Reason" (1941), Horkheimer described the elements of psychological regression that accompanied the emergence of "totally integrated societies." According to this optic, the distinctions between communism, fascism, and administered capitalism were differences in degree rather than in kind: the eclipse of the individual was characteristic of all three. Pollock's studies in political economy had

chronicled the transition from laissez-faire to state-managed capitalism. In its empirical work, the Institute had documented the transformation of bourgeois character structure from the rugged individuals of classical capitalism to the pliable and conformist "authoritarian personalities" of monopoly capitalism.

In "Triumph of the Mass Idols" (1943), Leo provided additional documentation for this momentous social psychological transformation. He undertook a content analysis of popular magazines such as *Colliers* and *Saturday Evening Post*, showing how over the course of a forty year period the biographical profiles had changed from a focus on successful entrepreneurs to "personalities" drawn from the sphere of consumption. Instead of Horatio Alger types – i.e., personifications of the bourgeois "achievement ethic" – the new "mass idols" were baseball players, boxers, radio crooners, and movie stars. The popular biographies Leo analyzed exhibited an unabashed, voyeuristic preoccupation with the idiosyncrasies of "leisure time," thereby suggesting a false intimacy between media stars and the person on the street, who purportedly shared the same after hours pursuits. In Leo's opinion, beneath the veneer of harmless "diversion" lay insidious mechanisms of domination and social control:

> *The distance between what an average individual may do and the forces and powers that determine his life and death has become so unbridgeable that identification with normalcy, even with Philistine boredom becomes a readily grasped empire of refuge and escape. It is some comfort for the little man who has become expelled from the Horation Alger dream, who despairs of penetrating the thicket of grand strategy in politics and business, to see his heroes as a lot of guys who like or dislike highballs, cigarettes, tomato juice, golf, and social gatherings – just like himself. He knows how to converse in the sphere of consumption and . . . he can experience the gratification of being confirmed in his own pleasures and discomforts by participating in the pleasures and discomforts of the great (1961: 135-136).*

In a witticism for which he has been justly celebrated, Leo once described mass culture as "psychoanalysis in reverse." Whereas Freud's goal had been to emancipate the subject from the grip of

unconscious instinctual influences for the sake of human autonomy, the culture industry mesmerized individuals with distractions and infantile blandishments. Hence, in keeping with Leo's metaphor, socialization via mass culture could be accurately described as an un-*Bildungsprozess* or a *Bildungsprozess* in reverse. Instead of abetting the development of critical consciousness – the capacity for refusal or *Verneinung* that the Critical Theorists prized – it facilitated a condition of *immaturity*, adapting individuals to the value-orientations and imagery of the reigning social totality.

It is at this juncture that the disagreement between the Frankfurt School and the champions of postmodernism emerges with unmistakable clarity. Whereas the Critical Theorists viewed the "death of the subject" as an manifestation of socio-psychological regression postmodernists, faithful to a Nietzschean ethos of self-overcoming, greeted it with unbridled enthusiasm. Yet, as critics have pointed out, there remain a number of affinities between postmodern thought and the Frankfurt School approach. Adorno's animus against the identitarian strivings of "first philosophy" in *Negative Dialectics*, in which he argues that the "original sin" of philosophy is its attempt to grasp the non-conceptual via conceptual means, bears marked similarities to Derrida's critique of logocentrism – the notion that the history of the West is distinguished by the "tyranny of reason": the priority of unity, sameness, and totality at the expense of particularity, otherness, and difference. Since Leo's final intellectual project was a critique of postmodern thought – he researched this problem while he was a guest at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin in 1985 (a partial record of his conclusions may be gleaned from his interview with Emilio Zugaro published under the title "Against Postmodernism") I would like dwell on this problem for a moment and review some of the reasons he felt compelled to address these concern.

One of the reasons that comparisons between the Frankfurt School and postmodern thought are overdrawn is that, throughout its various developmental phases, Critical Theory's focal point

remained *the link between reason and emancipation*. This is one of the reasons that attempts to view the Frankfurt School and postmodernism as kindred spirits ultimately break down. Were the link between insight and emancipation severed, Critical Theory's *raison d'être* would cease to exist. Conversely, one of the distinguishing features of postmodern thought has been a disavowal of the dialectic of Enlightenment qua discourse of liberation. Whether one peruses the texts of Derrida, Lyotard, or Foucault, one encounters the argument that reason, instead of being a tool of emancipation, represents little more than a reprehensible mechanism of social control. This conclusion follows from Derrida's critique of logocentrism as well as Foucault's contention that knowledge is irremediably enmeshed in the corruptions of power. In this regard, all three thinkers echo Heidegger's controversial and potentially self-defeating maxim that *"reason is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought"* (1977). In this respect, I think it is imperative to distinguish the self-criticism of reason – which is necessary and indispensable – from the debilities of a standpoint that bids farewell to reason in the name of a new series of transcendental signifieds: Being, *différance*, will to power, sovereignty, nomadic thinking.

Hence, despite the many interesting insights the aforementioned paradigms may have to offer, one can't help but wonder whether the radical critique of reason risks depriving us of the very means of our emancipation. After all, the social movements of the 1960s – many of which blossomed within earshot of this lecture hall – relied extensively on the eminently "logocentric" vocabulary of modern natural right to argue that the egalitarian promises of modern society had not been redeemed. To proclaim that the dialectic of emancipation is obsolete risks trivializing the democratic aspirations of peoples around the world who, in recent years, have employed the discourse of natural right and popular sovereignty to cast off the chains of authoritarian rule. (Here, I am thinking of the "velvet revolutions" in Eastern Europe, South Africa, and South America.) Thus, despite the fashionable allusions to *posthistoire* or the "end of history," I would claim that the democratic

revolutions we have witnessed over the course of the last two decades confirm an old-fashioned Hegelian insight: history is best understood as "progress in the consciousness of freedom." Thus, Lyotard's celebrated proclamation of the "end of metanarratives" may have been premature. Hence, if these suspicions are correct, then today's cant concerning the "death of the subject" might best understood as a sad profession of intellectual impotence. For if the subject is "dead," the idea of emancipation cannot be far behind. (Here one might even make the case that, late in life, Foucault became an advocate of human rights: he publicly championed the political liberalism of New Philosophers André Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Lévy, protested against the declaration of martial law in Poland, and successfully lobbied French minister of justice Robert Badinter for the elimination of the death penalty).[3]

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See the biographies of Foucault by Miller (1992) and Macey (1994).

Leo interpreted the postmodernist vogue as a consequence of the failure of the New Left's political hopes. As he observed in the aforementioned interview: "After the complete internal and external psychological collapse of [the New Left project], there arose a colossal need for the vacuum to be filled. Since other credible tools and ideologies were not available, a large part of the intelligentsia slowly sank into this irrational and mythological behavior, into this dangerous swamp" (1988: 265). Leo believed that integrity lay in refusing to follow the whims of academic fashion and a willingness to hazard strong judgments in the face of a rising tide of relativist vacillation. Thus, the Frankfurt School resisted the lures of "undecidability" and "power-knowledge" in favor of the legacy of immanent criticism. It was in this vein that thinkers like Horkheimer and Marcuse argued, following Marx, that the ideals of Western metaphysics should be "realized" rather than "deconstructed." They believed that idealism harbored a utopian potential which it was Critical Theory's duty to unlock. As Marcuse expresses this insight in "Philosophy and Critical Theory" (1937):

> *Reason is the fundamental category of philosophical thought, the only one by means of which it has bound itself to human destiny. Philosophy wanted to discover the ultimate and most general grounds of Being. Under the name of reason it conceived the idea of an authentic Being in which all significant antitheses (of subject and object, essence and appearance, thought and being) were reconciled. Connected with this idea was the conviction that what exists is not immediately and already rational but must rather be brought to reason. Reason represents the highest potentiality of man and of existence; the two belong together. For when reason is accorded the status of substance, this means that at its highest level, as authentic reality, the world no longer stands opposed to the rational thought of men as mere material objectivity. Rather, it is now comprehended by thought and defined as a concept . . . In this form philosophy is idealism; it subsumes being under thought. But through this first thesis that made philosophy into rationalism and idealism it became critical philosophy as well. As the given world was bound up with rational thought and, indeed, ontologically dependent on it, all that contradicted reason or was not rational was posited as something that had to be overcome (1968: 155).*

One of the ironies of the Frankfurt School's reception history was that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* came to be viewed as the *Urtext* of Critical Theory. It is "ironic" insofar as, in many respects, the book represented a major theoretical departure from the Frankfurt School's original research program of "interdisciplinary materialism." For example, if one peruses Horkheimer's programmatic essays from the 1930s – articles such as "Traditional and Critical Theory" or "Philosophy and Critical Theory" (co-written with Marcuse) – he repeatedly invokes the notion of a "rational organization of society" as a regulative idea. Reading these texts there can be no doubt that it is a dearth of reason, rather than a surfeit, that has become one of the major obstacles to progressive social change.

One of the mainstays of the Frankfurt School's intellectual legacy concerns its innovations in the domain of cultural theory. Traditionally, cultural criticism has been one of the weak points of Marxist thought. In this area, Leo's role was of course central. His contributions to the sociology of literature are achievements that rank with those of other pioneers in the field, such as Arnold Hauser and Lucien Goldmann. Challenging the predominant formalist and

textual approaches to the study of literature, Leo probed literary meaning as a repository of social knowledge. He believed that literature offered privileged insight into the dynamics of bourgeois intimacy: the crucible in which the modern self was forged.[4] For Leo, the bourgeois self could not be written off as a locus of heteronomy; it was not merely, as Foucault insisted, a site of domination operating at the behest of disciplinary society. The process of "subjectification" was not a total loss. Instead, Leo discerned a dialectical tension between the repressive and emancipatory aspects of bourgeois character structure. In this respect, he sought to do justice to the moment of autonomy that is an indispensable component of active citizenship. He thereby anticipated one of Habermas's key arguments in *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: in democratic societies, private and public autonomy are mutually complementary.

Another component of the Frankfurt School program that Leo refused to surrender was the normative distinction between art and mass culture. This opposition had been central to the pathbreaking essays in *Kulturkritik* that appeared in the *Zeitschrift* during the 1930s: Adorno's "Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening," Marcuse's "Affirmative Character of Culture," Horkheimer's "Art and Mass Culture," as well as Leo's own article on the "Sociology of Literature." All of these essays celebrated the utopian function of art: its capacity for "transcendence" vis-à-vis utilitarian constraints of workaday existence. Stendhal famously described beauty as a "promesse de bonheur." Autonomous art held out the prospect of a better life: one in which the deprivations and antagonisms of the current social order might be superseded. As Leo argued in, "The Sociology of Literature in Retrospect":

> *The most important thing to stress is that art and consumer goods must be held strictly apart. I cannot accept any of the current radical attempts . . . to do away with this distinction . . . To put it in even stronger terms: art teaches, and mass culture is learned; therefore, a sociological analysis of mass culture must be all-inclusive, for its products are nothing more than the phenomena and symptoms of the process of the individual's self-resignation in a wholly administered society (1961: 168).*

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"The specific treatment which a creative writer gives to nature or to love, to gestures and moods, to situations of gregariousness or solitude, the weight given to reflections, descriptions or conversations, are all phenomena which . . .are in fact genuinely primary sources for a study of the penetration of the most private and intimate spheres of individual life by the social climate on which . . . this life thrives" (Lowenthal, 1961: 143).

As these comments attest, a refusal to shy away from making strong evaluative judgments was one of Critical Theory's hallmarks.

In later years, as Critical Theory's hopes for concrete political change faded, its proponents accorded a central role to modernist works of art, which they claimed harbored a unique capacity to resist the enticements and seductions of the "totally administered world": the *Verblendungszusammenhang* or "context of total blindness" that Adorno criticized in *Negative Dialectics* and other works. (quote from Adorno, "Culture and Administration"). Art represented a negation of false consciousness. As Adorno once remarked: art's greatness lies "[letting] speak what ideology conceals"(quoted in Lowenthal, 1961: 168). Even Marcuse, who had been most sympathetic to the political cause of the international student revolt, fell back on autonomous art's capacities for negation during the 1970s as the New Left's political star began to wane and a new period of normalization began to take hold (here, I am thinking of *The Aesthetic Dimension*, his last published book).

In conclusion, I'd like to reassess the merits of the classical Frankfurt School position on "art versus mass culture" in light of two developments: (1) the apparent demise of autonomous art, or classical modernism, a process often associated with the advent of postmodern art; (2) the cultural left's infatuation with popular culture as a locus of "resistance" – thereby standing the original Frankfurt School position on its head.

In many ways, the traditional dichotomy between art and mass culture is unsustainable. During the 1960s the phoenix of "modernism" was consumed by flames and has yet to be reborn. Benjamin referred to art for art's sake the "secular religion of art." Thereby he sought to highlight art's status as a supramundane repository of value and meaning: a sphere that offsets the demands of theoretical and practical rationalism that predominate in everyday life. The redemptory mission of high art was forcefully challenged by the twentieth-century avant-garde – in particular, Surrealism – which contested modernism's trademark separation of art from life.

By mid-century modernism's inability to neutralize or deflect the realities of political evil – total war, genocide, and nuclear annihilation – disqualified it in the minds of many. The aesthetic sphere seemed tantamount to a realm of unconscionable self-indulgence: a form of high-brow recreation tailored to the interests and pocketbooks of cultural and political elites.

Postmodernism emerged to fill the void that was left with the demise of the modernist program, whose last gasp may have been Abstract Expressionism. In the visual arts postmodernism picked up where Dadaism and Surrealism left off. It apotheosized an element that, in the case of Surrealism, had represented merely a passing flirtation: the *anti-aesthetic moment*. In certain respects, it took the Surrealist program of fusing the domains of art and life praxis much more seriously than Surrealism itself.

By cultivating the relationship between art and non-art, postmodernism continued the legacy of aesthetic democratization that had been initiated by the twentieth-century avant-garde: no subject matter or theme was too trivial to qualify as "artistic." But the end result was far from unproblematic, and one confronted an insurmountable paradox: postmodernism was an approach to art that was profoundly uncomfortable with its own status as art. It would only be a slight exaggeration to say that it was a form of art that wanted to be anything but art: shock, provocation, manifesto, document, found object, political intervention. The postmodernist de-differentiation of art and life bore strong affinities with the Dadaist objet trouvé. The critic Harold Rosenberg coined the phrase the "de-definition" of art to describe this crisis of art's *raison d'être*.

In the 1820s Hegel had already coined the thesis of "the end of art." With the 1960s New York scene, this concept became a reality. Pop, op, minimalism, happenings, conceptual art, all aggressively favored the process Benjamin had described back in the 1930s as the "loss of the aura" (*Verlust des Auras*): the de-sacralization of autonomous art, art's fusion of purpose with the realm of everyday life. (It was in this spirit that one of the leading interpreters of postmodern art, Arthur Danto, could plausibly title a recent collection of essays on post-1960s art, *After the End of Art*.)

Of course, for its part, high modernism was hardly blameless in these developments. It had become increasingly self-referential and esoteric: in essence, art produced for and consumed by other artists. By turning inward and becoming increasingly formalistic, modernism had surrendered the communicative dimension that for centuries had been one of art's sine qua non. Moreover, by this mid-century, the works of modernism seemed to have lost their revolutionary edge. Instead, they had become "masterpieces" and "classics," canonical works. They had degenerated to the status of "seminar literature": objects of scholarly veneration and reverence that, consequently, had forfeited their critical thrust.

When Leo expressed his concerns about collapsing the distinction between "art and consumer goods," he had something very specific in mind. Towards the late 1970s, proponents of the academic left, basking in the afterglow 1960s populism, began to embrace the products of mass culture with unprecedented zeal. Under the influence of postmodernism, it became fashionable to decrypt "b" movies, comic strips, situation comedies, as well as all manner of Hollywood pap as repositories of utopian desire. As Fredric Jameson proclaimed circa 1980: there exists "utopian or transcendental potential [in] even the most degraded type of mass culture which remains implicitly, and no matter how faintly, negative and critical of the social order from which, as a product and a commodity, it springs" (1979: 140). Douglas Kellner, taking stock of innovations in network television programming during the late 1970s (issues-oriented situation comedies such as "All in the Family"; breakthrough historical mini-series like "Holocaust" and "Roots") declared that, "Whereas the culture industries were once instruments of ideological conformity and cultural homogenization, they are now increasingly theaters for social conflict and instruments of cultural diversity". In the *Cultural Studies Reader*, editor Simon During views the "Culture Industry" chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as a

negative totem: it epitomizes how not to do cultural studies. As During explains: "Adorno and Horkheimer neglect what was to become central to cultural studies: the ways in which the culture industry, while in the service of organized capital, also provides the opportunities for all kinds of individual and collective creativity " (1993: 30). A greater contrast with Adorno's celebrated maxim from *Minima Moralia* – "Whenever I go to the movies, I come out the stupider and the worse for it" (1974) – could hardly be imagined.[5]

Leo diagnosed this trend as an insalubrious instance of social sublimation: the once-robust political energies of the 1960s had been rechanneled along the more acceptable lines of academic *Kulturkritik*. It seemed that an entire generation had renounced the hazards of praxis for the less perilous pursuit of "textual strategies." The post-Frankfurt School approach was shored up by references to Gramsci (counter-hegemony) as well as the methodological innovations of reader response theory, which appropriately demonstrated that the way texts are read can be just as important as they way they are written.

The cultural studies approach blossomed during the 1980s. Under Foucault's growing influence as well as that of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School, popular culture was viewed as a site of "resistance" to power. As decoded by its recipients, MTV fare was perceived as a locus of struggle that facilitated individual "empowerment." It was in this vein that "Madonna studies" blossomed into an academic cottage industry. Innovative critics could find instances of "oppositional practice" and "subversion" in the most unsuspecting places: youth in video arcades, hanging out on the beach, loitering in malls, pornography, soap operas, outlet mall shopping, even male rampage films like the *Die Hard* series (Hebdige on *Subcultures*).

On the one hand, the idea of clinging to the traditional left-wing goal of "socialization" would have been foolish. The political spectrum has been irretrievably pluralized. Class society, on which so much of traditional Marxist thought depended, has been irreversibly stratified – a fact that Madison Avenue and cable television marketing strategies have duly: hence the new ethos of consumer sovereignty and the market niche. This new reality was expressed in the orientation of new social movements that are often more concerned with questions of cultural identity than with the traditional left-wing goals of workers' control, democratization, or expanding the social safety net of the welfare.

Yet, critics of "cultural studies" have bridled at the idea of defining resistance down. The cultural left, it seemed, was content to remain satisfied with "identity politics" and little more. Transgression and contestational practice have been virtualized; for the most part, they remained comfortably ensconced within the parameters of the dominant universe of discourse – within the confines of the affluent or consumer society. Transgression, too, has become a lifestyle niche. Marcuse's "great refusal" has shrunk to alternative strategies of consumption. After all: how meaningful was it to identify Madonna worshippers – so-called "wanna-bes" – as the new vanguard of cultural political struggle (as John Fiske claims)? Did they not instead display the virtues of a socially respectable hedonism – thereby, from the standpoint of Madison avenue, fulfilling the demands of an well-defined marketing niche? Even Kellner, in the same essay I cited from a few minutes ago, raises serious reservations about his own conclusions concerning the potential for contestation embodied in the mass media: "when television portrays social change or oppositional movements, it often blunts the radical edge of new social forces, values, or change and tries to absorb, coopt, and defuse any challenges to the existing power structure" (1995).

Moreover, during the unprecedented wave of corporate mergers during the 1990s, media giants such as Time-Warner, Fox, and Disney were featured prominently. The recent AOL-Time-Warner union was the largest corporate merger in history. Deregulation has allowed these corporate giants to monopolize entire media markets. Today they approach an Orwellian threshold

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For a good summary of developments in the field of cultural studies, see Kellner (1995: 31-49).

of global domination. In light of these developments, the rejection of political economy in favor of "culturalist" approaches would seem to demand another look (Bagdikian, 1983). In this regard, the Frankfurt School perspective, too, demands renewed attention.

The traditional left had always tried to build on the achievements of democratic society. It advanced by expanding the definition of natural right: from civil rights, to political rights, to social rights. With the cultural turn, however, it seems that traditional left-wing goals, as well as the sphere of mainstream politics in general, had been prematurely abandoned. By narrowing the focus of social change to the realm of "culture," the academic left has, to its own detriment, allowed the right to fill the political vacuum.

It has become a virtual commonplace to acknowledge the fact that, had it not been for Leo's efforts as managing director of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, the Frankfurt School as we now know it would probably not exist. Leafing through its pages today, it reads like a who's who of the international scholarly intelligentsia. For, in no small measure owing to Leo's diligence, the Institute secured the collaboration of the likes of: Alexander Koyré, Maurice Halbwachs, Raymond Aron, Georges Friedmann, T. H. Marshall, Charles Beard, Margaret Mead, and Harold Laswell. Moreover, we now know what a crucial role the review section of the journal, for which Leo was in the main responsible, played in funneling financial support to a generation of near-penniless German intellectual émigrés.

In the Festschrift commemorating Leo's eightieth birthday, Habermas, paid tribute to his approach by observing: "While Marcuse relegated reason's historically darkened claim below the threshold of culture by a theory of instincts, Adorno set his empty hope on the solitary exercise of a self-negating philosophy. Lowenthal, who was overshadowed by the two others, represented a third possibility: one can object to the accusatory thesis of the end of reason without having to choose between metaphysics on the one hand and one of the fashionable or scientifically promoted forms of the liquidation of reason on the other" (Habermas, 1980: 121). Leo's contributions were selfless and made in an admirable spirit of intellectual fraternity. Unlike Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, he occupied a position that was always a step removed from the limelight. It is all the more appropriate that today we attempt, albeit belatedly, to do justice to his legacy.

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Öteki Mekanda Olmak: Post-Kolonyal Dünyada Göçmenlik ve Turizm

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Özet

Bu çalışma Batı'daki metropolleri ve Üçüncü Dünya'daki turistk mekanları post-kolonyal durumun görüngüleri olarak ele alarak hegemonik Batılı özne ile Üçüncü Dünyalı turistin bu iki farklı mekanda karsılaşmalarını ve bu iki grubun kimliklerinin bu karşılaşma içinde nasıl farklı olarak yaşandığını ve konumlandığını inceliyor. Zygmund Bauman'ın "yabancı" kavramı ile Julia Kristeva'nın "iğrenç" nosyonunu biraraya getirerek, göçmen kültürünün ortaya çıkarttığı sınır figürlerin, hegemonik öznenin varsaydığı bütünselliğini nasıl yerinden oynattığını göstermeye çalışıyor. Göçmenlerin Batılı metropolitan mekanda nasıl bir yer işgal ettiklerini Batılı turistlerin Üçüncü Dünya'daki turistik mekanları işgal ediş biçimleriyle karşılaştırarak Öteki'nin kendi mekanındayken nasıl bir arzu nesnesi haline geldiğini inceleyerek bu arzu ile Batılı öznenin yerlinin mekanında kontrol ve iktidarı elinde tutması arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermeye çalışıyor. Turizmin otantiklik söylemini inceleyerek bu söylemin nasıl bir nostalji üzerine kurulduğunu gösteriyor ve turistik mekanın yerlinin kimliği ve gövdesi üzerinde yarattığı dönüşümlere dikkat çekiyor.

Öteki Mekanda Olmak: Post-Kolonyal Dünyada Göçmenlik ve Turizm

Abstract

Taking Western metropolis and touristic spaces in the Third World as instances of postcoloniality, this essay examines the nature of the encounter between the hegemonic First World subject and Third World migrants and points to the different ways in the which their identities are lived and positioned in this encounter. By bringing together Zygmunt Bauman's notion of the "stranger" with Julia Kristeva's notion of the "abject" together, the essay examines how the borderline identifications generated by the migrant culture destabilizes the presumed unified sense of the hegemonic subject. Contrasting the way migrants occupy the Western metropolitan space with the ways in which Western tourists occupy the touristic spaces in the Third world, I examine how and why the same Other when he/she is in his/her own space becomes an object of desire and what this desire tells us about the Western subject's ability to maintain control and power in the space of the native. By making a detour through the discourse of tourism, particularly by focusing on its obsession with authenticity and the kind of nostalgia it is based upon, I examine the bodily and subjective transformation the unique space of tourism entail for the native identity.