Postmodernism and the Digital Era

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POSTMODERNISM AND THE DIGITAL ERA

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Dedicated to Germán Wettstein
and Raquel Morador de Wettstein

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Introduction

This book tries to collect some of the aspects that characterize Postmodernism and present them in some compact chronological way. I am conscious of the difficulty of such a enterprise and therefore this book shall be seen as an introduction. However, in spite of its limitations, we think that the book offers an overviewable perspective of the complexity of the process that lead Modern Western societies into a Postmodern era.

Our perspective on Postmodernism is primary historical and therefore goes beyond the presentation of the philosophical ideas of Lyotard and Vattimo, ideas that usually are the matter of every book about Postmodernism. Our understandings of this movement included almost everything that constitutes culture after the Second World War. As we will try to show in the following pages, this War and its consequences ended the ideas of the Industrial Era and opened for a new way of thinking and especially, for a new way of *feeling*. Some of those new feelings appeared strongly after 1945 in USA and Western Europe and manifested in the rise of popular culture, human rights movements, pacifism, feminism, ideas of social justice and democracy. Some other of those consequences was manifested in the Third World as anti-colonialism and social revolution. Postmodernism‘s movements started with the triumph of the allied troops in Germany, but consolidates with the triumph of the Vietcong in Vietnam. We think that Postmodernism is more than pure “neo–liberalism” and less than a “new human condition”. Postmodernism is a true reaction to the excesses of Modernism and the anti-human steams of its philosophical ideals, the excesses of Utilitarianism, Positivism and Taylorism. On the other hand, Postmodernism is not the same as irrationalism, nor agnosticism or scepticism. The process which conform the Postmodern identity goes through many stages and some of them were extreme anti-modernistic and difficult to comprehend and apply. Therefore,

Postmodern thought have become more precise as they have become less ambitious and less radical.

We have included the Digital Era as momentum of the Postmodern Era because this period and their manifestations comprise scientific, a technological and social aspects which never could be developed in Modernity. The Digital Era has grown at the shoulders of technological *amateurs* as Bill Gates and other regular consumers of communication's services outside industry. Postmodern thought brought not only popular culture but also popular science and popular technology. It brought also, the viewer of television and the consumer of mass media, creating the conditions for the rise of *virtuality* against Modernism's *realism*. In Postmodernity, intentionality and information combines in every media, making *knowledge* and *purpose* the inseparable parts of every action. The structures that could make computer development and computer programming possible, were well established when Postmodernity came into the fields of logic and mathematics. That happened when the notion of "self-referring a set", became an instrument of logical analysis capable of revealing the limits of a thought free of contradictions. This cognitive process began with the work of Bertrand Russell and achieved its maturity approximately at the time of the Second World War, with Kurt Gödel (1906-1978) and Edgar Allan Turing (1912-1954). This book is divided in eight sections which are: *The impact of Modernity in Society, Art and Politics; Second World War and the capitulation of Modernity; After Auschwitz; The World of Media; Postmodernism as Philosophy; the Digital Era; Postmodern Life Studies* and *Globalization.*

THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY IN SOCIETY, ART AND POLITICS

§ 1 The Modern and the Postmodern condition

Two domains of ideas about Modernism and Postmodernism

There are many domains of ideas about Postmodernism and all of them understand Postmodernism as a development from Modernism. Let us see first two of these:

A *social-economic* as well as historical way of understanding Postmodernism , which understand Postmodernism as an ideology belonging to the last phase of the development of capitalism. In this case, the "Modern era" compares with the "Post–modern era" as two social–economic models.

§ In this case, *Modernity* confronts with *Postmodernity* . We are talking about periods of History.

An *aesthetic-art critical* ideological domain which understand Postmodernism as a qualitative aesthetical change inside Modernism. In this case, "Modernism" compares to "Postmodernism" as two aesthetical ideologies.

§ In this case, *Modernism* confronts with *Postmodernism.* We are talking about philosophical domain of ideas in the understanding of the world.

The social-economic definition

In current literature usually distinguishes three of capitalism's phases, each with its own cultural expressions:

The first phase is *colonialism, which* coincide with the economic expansion of the West during the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution and the development of the steam motor and the aesthetical realism in Europe belongs to this period.

That would be called: “earlier Modernism”.

The second phase begins with the end of the 19th century and lasts until the middle of the 20th century. This phase associates to the creation of the Modern market with the rise of both the working class and the middle class. It is the time of the electrical motor and the development of the car industry. Modern industry influences in art and culture creating “mature” Modernism.

The third phase coincides with the multinational capitalism with emphasis in consumption rather than production of commodities. This phase associates to atomic energy, electronics, space explorations and aesthetically, to Postmodernism .

Historically, Modernity has roots as far back in time as to the discovery of America and the scientific revolution of the 16th century. From the point of view of the history of ideas, the term “Modernity” means “order”, “control,” and “effective administration”. Modernity identifies with colonialism, European culture, and later with “representative democracy”. Colonialism is certainly connected to the development of a Modern society and of Modern science and technology.

Among the goals of Modern colonialism, we can count that of the expansion of Christianity first and the expansion of liberalism and capitalism later. In this sense, there exists a connection between the Postmodern movement and Post-colonialism and Post-marxism. The Postmodern movement is a child of the 20th century, a century characterized by the anti-colonial movement and the rising of many old but also new nationalities. Among all the wars of liberation, Vietnam and Algeria were especially important for the intellectual environment in France, the place in which the grounders of postmodernists were working. Other important warfronts were the struggles against apartheid in USA and South Africa, the wars of liberation in Africa and the struggles of the Latin-American left for social and economical justice. One of the strongest Postmodernist’s groups was the feministic movement, reborn with Simone de Beauvoir’s philosophy after Second World War II.

The aesthetic- Art Critical point of view

As an aesthetic-art critical definition, the aesthetical features of Postmodernism emphasize the subjective understanding of that which is experienced and the translation of this to the artwork; further, the breaking with monotony in narrative, introducing the plurality of perspectives.

Other important aspects of this understanding is the vague limits between genres, for example poetry became narrative and vice versa; the fragmentation of forms and discontinue narratives. Also the recourse of *bricolage* (something made or put together using whatever materials happened to be available); the understanding of the artwork as self-reflecting and self-analysing. Other features are the spontaneity and chance and rejection of the theoretical analysis, the rejection of any differences between ”high” and ”low” culture and the valorisation of popular culture in every front, production, distribution, and consumption.

An aesthetical way to approach to a definition of Modernism and Postmodernism can be found in Matei Calinescu. Calinescu wrote in *Five faces of Modernity* that we can talk about two Modernities. At some point during the first half of the 19th century an irreversible split occurred between Modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization, and Modernity as an aesthetic concept. First of these is the bourgeois idea of Modernity , which is a pragmatic Modernity , a consequence of the measurement of social time done by the rules of capitalism. (”Time” is understood as a commodity which is offered at the market.). This understanding of Modernity coincides with the social-economic definition introduced above.

At the other side, there is a personal, subjective, *durée*, a private time, created by self-reflection, whose start point coincided with the Romantic movement of the 19th-century. This identification between the “I” and time, the rise of a subjective time, constitute according to Calinescu, the ground of the Modern man and the ground for an aesthetical idea of Modernity .

The aesthetical idea of Modernity coincided with

radical antibourgeois attitudes, and that would bring the *avant-gardes*. The *avant-gardes* disapprove the everyday Modern capitalist life, which was understood as cruel and banal.

Those "two Modernities" – as a stage of history and as an aesthetic concept– would according to Calinescu, sometimes cooperate and sometimes oppose each other and become rivals.

Calinescu recognise five stages in the development of Modernism: Modernism as it arose at the end of the 19th century, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch and Postmodernism.

The Avant-gardes

When the Modern man became conscious about the double nature of Modernity, he achieved consciousness that influenced his aesthetical ideals. We can understand the differences as follow:

Modernity stands for perishable, corruptible and transient instead of the classical view of history development as unchangeable and eternal. The Avant-garde implied an acceleration of the rhythm of events and the searching of the newest. Changing itself became the goal of art. There are significant differences between Modernism and avant-garde, being avant-garde more radical than Modernity, less flexible and less tolerant of nuances, more dogmatic, it exaggerates elements of Modernism . The ideal of an "Avant-garde" has their roots in the romantic utopianism.[1]

Decadence

The radical antibourgeois attitudes that disapprove the cruelty and banality of everyday Modern life, lead to the idea of the decadence of the Modern society and in their turn to the rise of Postmodernism. The Modern idea of decadence has its roots in Old Christianity and the idea of *sin*, the approach of a "final day of doom" announced in the Bible, but also in Modern secularised revolutionary and utopian doctrines. The opposition between Modern as development, and Modern as decadence, coincide with the ideal of capitalism as "civilisation" and capitalism as "barbaric".[2] Decadence associates with decline,

twilight, autumn, exhaustion and with natural cycles and biological metaphors. Nietzsche (1844-1900) saw in Modernity the face of decadence, and opened for the Post Modern Age.

Kitsch

The term *kitsch*, describes the art that is considered an inferior copy of an existing style. The term is also used more loosely in referring to any art that is pretentious to the point of being bad.[3] Therefore, "kitsch" often also means "tasteless". Kitsch is also the arts when they are seen as a product of consumption and subordinates to the laws of the market. Modern industrial society reflects in kitsch art as the pragmatic and commercial incursion of capitalist entrepreneurship in the space of art. [4]

Postmodernism according to Calinescu

According to Calinescu, the term "Post–modern" refers to a very complex ideological movement that completely affected the cognitive field, from music to architecture, from film to philosophy, from technology to sociology. As an academic subject or as an object of studies, it is born in the middle of the eighties but as historic process, its origins can be found already in Nietzsche. The differences between Modernism and Postmodernism[5] are grounded in the way people act and in the principles behind these acts. While Modernism understands the new emerging society tragically, as a fragmented society, Postmodernism sees this positively, grasping many new possibilities, and employing the fragmentation of society to produce new consequences. While modernists were depressed about the challenges of a new era which they considered meaningless, the postmodernists were enthusiastic about the possibilities of any irrational development in society and art.[6]

§ 2 German Modernism, between revolution and conservatism

Two "modernisms"

Calinescu wrote, as mentioned before, that we can talk about two Modernities. He says that at some point during the first half of the 19th century an irreversible split occurred between Modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization, and Modernity as an aesthetic concept. We shall add to his words that this process happened especially in France and in those intellectual spheres that were influenced by French culture. In Germany for instance, the same process, showed another form of *fracture*. As in every other country, in Germany, the bourgeois pragmatic idea of Modernity, was also present. On the other hand, the Romantic heritage from the 19th-century was not individualistic as in France, but *collectivistic* and *nationalistic*. This French identification between the "I" and time, the rise of a subjective time, constitute according to Calinescu, the ground of the Modern man and the ground for an aesthetical idea of Modernity, was manifested also in Germany, but accompanied principally by an identification with the German myth, the German history and the German "race".

German Modernism has often been influenced by conservatism and is the very expression of powerful contradictions A society which opposed political imperialism and conservatism with communist revolution. The year 1919 is a crucial year in the history of Modernism in Germany. Soon after the end of World War I, the communists of the *Spartacist League* attempted to take control of Berlin, but that was brutally repressed. In the same year the Weimar Constitution were proclaimed and the Bauhaus school was founded. At that time, German aesthetics turned from Expressionism toward rational, functional, sometimes standardized building. Exactly this spirit

was the spirit of Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus. Paradoxically, the country in which Modernity came late and in which the changes were produced hastiest, was the place of the aesthetic revolution of functionalism. Those contradictions, conduced, some years later, to the estrange combination of Modernism and myth in the ideology of the Nazis.

Reactionary Modernism in Germany

Modern ideas are a product of the Enlightenment, the eighteenth-century ideological movement that advocated Reason as the primary basis of authority[7], and to the practical thinking and technological goals born with the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution[8]. It means that Modernity as a *period* and *Modernism* as an ideology are an indissoluble combination of Reason and technological thinking.

However, these two aspects of Modernity have not been accepted everywhere without problems. In fact, the goals of the Industrial Revolution and their technical implications to society, were easier to accept than Enlightenment's philosophical principles, which were connected to the ideology of capitalism, to secularisation and to democracy. Therefore, it is an historic fact that the technological implications of Modernity spread easier and further than the philosophical.

In Germany, during the last years of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, the ideals of the Industrial Revolution were combined with Romantic national ideals and with racism. This particular combination has been given the name "reactionary Modernism ". Thomas Mann wrote: "the really characteristic and dangerous aspect of National Socialism was its mixture of robust Modernity and affirmative stance towards progress combined with dreams of the past and a highly technological romanticism."[9]

The actual question, to which the Second World War in some aspect was an answer, is to know if Modern technology can be combined with ideologies other than capitalists. This problem is of a high interest to the developing countries which find it easier to develop technological means than to produce changes in the behaviour of people.

Modernity in technological terms means *creation of standards* because this makes industrial production possible. Industrial production developed because of the mechanization and rationalization of the procedures of labour, especially during the 19th century in Britain. The division of labour "is the specialisation of cooperative labour in specific, circumscribed tasks and roles, intended to increase efficiency of output. Historically the growth of a more and more complex division of labour is closely associated with the growth of trade, the rise of capitalism, and of the complexity of industrialisation processes."[10]

Standardization saved time and money and in its turn, because standardization is a consequence of capitalist production, standardization reproduced capitalism. Standardization makes globalisation possible and through standardization, capitalism spreads over the world. Further, more globalisation produces more standardization and more capitalism. Therefore, neither globalisation nor standardisation is possible without a global embracing capitalistic ideology.

Consequently, to try, as in the Nazi German's case, to reproduce standardization in industrial production without the underlying ideals of the Enlightenment, was the same as to produce a historic "contradiction" or paradox that was condemned to fail:

> It is not paradoxical to reject technology as well Enlightenment reason or to embrace technology while celebrating reason: These pairings are the customary outcomes of choosing between scientism and pastoralism. But is paradoxical to reject the Enlightenment and embrace technology at the same time, as did the reactionary modernists in Germany.[11]

The same should be said about the economical development of the communistic society of the Soviets. The development of two economical spheres that competed with each other during the Cold War could only end with the collapse of the weaker of the two in respect to just those properties of standardization and globalisation. On the contrary, in the actual case of Communist China, the situation may be

different, because China has managed to integrate its communist economy to the globalized capitalist world.

Oswald Spengler and the *Decline of the West*

Oswald Spengler 1880–1936, a German historian and philosopher wrote in 1918 *The Decline of the West* in which he presents a cyclical theory of the rise and decline of civilizations.

Spengler tied race and culture together, following the main stream of the ideas of Germany at those days. Those ideas were a strong source of inspiration for the National Socialists who recognized in Spengler's ideas a source of inspiration. This was done against Spengler's will, who took distance from the Nazis in *The Hour of Decision*, a book from 1934.

> After *Decline* was published in 1918, Spengler produced his *Prussianism and Socialism* in 1920, in which he argued for an organic version of socialism and authoritarianism. He wrote extensively throughout World War I and the interwar period, and supported German hegemony in Europe. Spengler voted for the National Socialists in 1932 and hung a swastika flag outside his Munich home, and the National Socialists held Spengler as an intellectual precursor. But Spengler's pessimism about Germany and Europe's future, his refusal to support Nazi ideas of racial superiority, and his work the *Hour of Decision*, which is critical of the Nazis, gained him ostracism after 1933.[12]

Spengler's theory of history, which distinguishes between civilization and culture, supposes a pessimist view of history and of social development. His philosophy of history characterises by a Romantic view of the primitive together with recognition of the necessity of development.

> For every Culture has its own Civilization. In this work, for the first time the two words, hitherto used to express in an indefinite, more or less ethical, distinction, are used ina periodic sense, to express a strict and necessary organic succession. The Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture, and in this principle we obtain the

> viewpoint from which the deepest and gravest problems of historical morphology become capable of solution. Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built, petrifying world-city following mother-earth and the spiritual childhood of Doric and Gothic. They are an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity reached again and again.[13]

It is possible to find remaining ideas of the Nietzschean cosmology in Spengler's ideas. The Nietzschean eternal return is one of those, which suppose the non-existence of the free will in history, a property of history that does not coincide with the ideological bases of Modernity.

Revolutionary Modernism in Weimar 1919-33

If Spengler and others with him, were the expression of a reactionary Modernism, Bauhaus was the opposite. However, as generally for German Modernism, the concrete practical, the functionalistic in Bauhaus ideals were combined with the ambition of aesthetics ideals. While Modernism in USA and England was a pragmatic movement with industrial connotations without some aesthetical ambitions and in France, Modernism in Art and literature dominated the whole process, in Germany, Modernism was a hybrid between USA and France. The industrial ideals of the engineers in England and USA had to be "refined" with "higher" values to be implemented.

"The school was founded by Walter Gropius at the conservative city of Weimar in 1919 as a merger of the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts and the Weimar Academy of Fine Arts."[14] Some of those ideals can be read in Gropius Bauhaus' manifesto:

> *Manifesto*[15]
>
> The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! The decoration of buildings was once the no-

blest function of fine arts, and fine arts were indispensable to great architecture. Today they exist in complacent isolation, and can only be rescued by the conscious co-operation and collaboration of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts. Then their work will be filled with that true architectonic spirit which, as "salon art", it has lost. The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built. If the young person who rejoices in creative activity now begins his career as in the older days by learning a craft, then the unproductive "artist" will no longer be condemned to inadequate artistry, for his skills will be preserved for the crafts in which he can achieve great things.

Architects, painters, sculptors, we must all return to crafts! For there is no such thing as "professional art". There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman. By the grace of Heaven and in rare moments of inspiration which transcend the will, art may unconsciously blossom from the labour of his hand, but a base in handicrafts is essential to every artist. It is there that the original source of creativity lies.

Let us therefore create a new guild of craftsmen without the class-distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsmen and artists! Let us desire, conceive, and create the new building of the future together. It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith. (Walter Gropius).

We notice at first, that architecture is proclaimed the highest ideal of art: “The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building!” The search for the unity of art and craft is presented as the main goal: “Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built.”

The school –which during the years moved from Weimar to Dessau and then to Berlin - unified a large an important number of artists and artisans as Walter Gropius himself, some other names were: Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) a Russian painter, printmaker and art theorist. Kandinsky was one of the most famous 20th-century artists as Paul Klee (1879-1940) also was, a Swiss painter which was influenced by many different art styles in his work, including expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. Another important teacher was Gunta Stölzl (1897-1983) who was a German born textile artist who played a fundamental role in the development of the Bauhaus school’s weaving workshop.[16]

Walter Gropius (1883 – 1969)

The need to combine practical means with aesthetical ideals was a common ideology for both conservatives and leftists. This common ideological background would lead Modernism to collapse when National Socialism took over in Germany. In connection with this, the Bauhaus school was closed in 1933 and their teachers persecuted. The Bauhaus aesthetical tradition had a major impact on art and architecture trends in the United States and Sweden, an impact which was increased by the fact that many of the artists involved fled, or were exiled, by the Nazi regime. The UN has included the Israeli state of Tel Aviv in the list of world heritage sites, due to its abundance of Bauhaus architecture.[17]

§ 3 Modernity in Sweden 1930-1960

The Swedish society that we wish to discuss reaches its highest degree of originality in the decades of 1930 to 1960. At the time Sweden stood out in its international context as an ultramodern society, distinguishing itself from its Scandinavian surroundings as well. It is this Sweden that David Jenkins calls "The Progress Machine"[18] and that Enrico Altavilla refers to as "Hell and Paradise"[19].

With the metaphor "social skyscrapers", we will try to describe the radical Modernity of this society, without entering judgments about its value as a social experiment. As any other Modern city – of which New York is the best example – the Modern society shows more or less desirable, practical and therefore also more or less lasting characteristics.

Ideas blooming in Sweden during the highlighted years, had been cultivated at the beginning of the century and were now expanding and strengthening their positions from the 1930's. To be able to grasp the extension of the social revolution that took place in Sweden during these years, it is necessary to classify the different levels of changes. Let us therefore distinguish macro processes from micro processes of change. The first category is the realm of abstract ideas and the second the field of mentalities and their influence on daily life in society. These two levels are evidently related to each other, reinforcing themselves in their particular consequences.

Macro processes that characterize the evolution of contemporary thought in Sweden

Some of the ideological macro processes that we are interested in characterising are:

The nihilistic philosophy of values

The nihilistic philosophy of Hägerström that has an

impact on the whole social structure and in particular on the Philosophy of Law that will dominate in Sweden and on the political economy applied by Gunnar Myrdal and his project, "Social Engineering".

Architectonic functionalism:

The architectonic functionalism of the Stockholm Fair in 1930 which has as an ideal simplicity and economy, creating the cultural base that will make it possible to offer accommodation to the whole population.

The social pact

The "Social Pact" that leads to a certain type of national *Corporativism* making strikes a rare phenomenon in Swedish social life.

National Workers Organization and the "collective affiliation" to the Social-Democratic Party

The first union organization in Sweden was formed in 1846 but its effectiveness was not noticeable until the 1880's. At that time it had 7000 members.[20] On the first congress in the year 1898, the National Organization decided that the obligatory association of its unions was the Social Democratic Party. According to this decision each new union counted with a three year time limit to regularize its situation with the Party. The requirement of collective affiliation was eliminated by the regulation of the National Organization in 1909 and was replaced by the "possibility" of such an affiliation, a possibility that was recommended and that was turned into praxis at the same time that the individual right to ask for disaffiliation was recognized. This mechanism is known as "collective affiliation" (kollektivanslutning). It was removed as system in the years 1990-91 and replaced by the possibility for every local section of unions to associate their local sections to the Social Democratic Party. Towards the year 2001 the National Workers Organization was organized in 19 districts and 258 local sections. It consisted of 1, 96 million members and had approximately 4000 officials employed.

The "Home of the People":

The political desire of the Social Democratic Party to make profound changes. It is in this sense that the term "the Home of the People" (folkhemmet) was first used. The term was used for the first time by the Social Democratic leader Per Albin Hansson in a speech given in January 1928. At this discourse he, amongst other things, launched the Party program that would characterize the Sweden we are discussing. Per Albin Hansson said: "The society that we want to construct will be obtained by a demolition of all social and economic barriers that divides citizens in groups of privileged and forgotten, dominant and dominated, rich and poor, wealthy and deprived, robbers and robbed."[21]

Political neutrality:

The political neutrality and the pacifistic politics of Alva Myrdal and the succeeding Swedish governments that reaches its climax with the character of Olof Palme.

Some of the most significant facts of more recent Swedish Modernity

Along with the ideological macro processes, the micro processes should be added, which impacts are less evident but just as important. These processes are clearly pointed towards two objectives: the standardization and homogenisation of society via the rationalization of social processes and an increase of equality between social classes and the sexes. These are typical micro processes of "late Modernity " and anticipators of a Postmodernity that has yet to appear. To succeed with these objectives, Swedish society eliminates formal barriers on many levels.

"Dropping the titles"

In 1967 Doctor Bror Rexed, then distinguished Director of the National Social Service Office, imposes the widespread habit of dropping the titles amongst all individuals in the public sector, irrespective of their functions and positions.

Bror Rexed (1914-2002) professor of medicine at Uppsala (1953-1967)

The "reform of dropping the titles" is rapidly spread to the rest of society causing all titles to be dropped in a few years, including academic titles and those in daily communication. To this new and informal communicative relation one ought to add the growing usage of informal clothing, the abandonment of suits, shirts and ties by men and skirts by women and the increased usage of "jeans". This process is not unique to Sweden but in this country it acquires a special quality given "the informal" frame that the entire society obtains. During the 1960's, fashion goes on to acquire an increasing degree of unisexual style and in addition makes it more difficult to tell a persons profession or social class by their clothing.

From nursery schools to national policies of accommodation

In an interview from 1935 Alva Myrdal emphasises the need to create what she calls "big children's nursery homes" (storbarnkammare), today known as "nursery schools". A Law is established in 1975 guaranteeing a "day care home" (daghem) for children. Alva Myrdal introduces her ideas in 1934 in a book co-authored with Gunnar Myrdal, called "The Population Issue in Crisis" (Kris i befolkningsfrågan) in which they demand reforms of the traditional domestic policies. The first Swedish "children's nursery home" is established in 1854 and from this moment, different models destined to receive orphaned and very poor children appear, but none of these are spread to the whole society. As from the year 1950, the administrative responsibility of nursery homes is passed on to the municipal administration.[22] The Union of Constructive Workers

creates a cooperative of accommodations called Riksbyggen in 1940. The objective is to construct and administrate accommodations on a national scale. Some 40% of this cooperative's capital is bestowed by the Worker's Central (LO). This cooperative is barely a part of the Swedish national plan of accommodations, but this particular case is useful in illustrating the massive character of the accommodation policies in Sweden during the time. Until 1997, Riksbyggen administrated 190 000 apartments of which 15 000 were their own. At this date the organisation owned 700 cooperatives of accommodations associated with and in collaboration with the bank and administrated 30 000 savings accounts for accommodation. As of this year, its capital ascended to 2,4 thousand million Swedish kronor.[23]

Organizing the spaces of the city

Another interesting example is the early concern with traffic accidents, leading the way for pioneering urban policies. For example, on September 3, 1967 there is a change from left-hand traffic to right-hand traffic.

This measure put an end to an increasing row of accidents and cut the number of accidents in half within one year.

Monopoly of radio and television

Another very important aspect to consider when evaluating the process off change in Sweden at this time is the role played by radio and television. It is sufficient to bear in mind that in the period of 1957-78 the Swedish state-owned radio and television (SR –Svensk Radio) controlled all radio

and television productions in Sweden. These productions were financed through users' collective subscriptions instead of private advertising. The privileged treatment of state-owned communication media continues in our days though more and more threatened by the development of new technology that permit transmissions from abroad at very low prices.

Monopoly of the commercialisation of alcohol

The use of alcohol and its social consequences has played a major role in the Swedish social conscience ever since the beginnings of the 20th century. The motive is the massive consummation of alcohol that characterizes the Nordic world during the 19th century. The states monopoly position in sales of alcohol is still one of the most important subjects in the political agenda of the different political parties. The rationalization of alcohol consuming as a system is imposed in Sweden as early as 1914. The idea comes from Doctor Ivan Bratt who imposes the use of a rationalization card to regulate the use of alcohol in society. It is also demanded of restaurants to serve food in parity to the alcohol consumed. The system of the rationalization card discriminates women and unemployed men. In 1922 a plebiscite is finally called to decide whether to prohibit alcohol altogether. The negative vote is imposed by a mear 35 000 votes. The rationalization card was substituted in 1955 by the principle of "responsible liberty", declaring that consumers should be at least 21 years old. The consequences were immediate, the consummation of alcohol increased with 25% within a year. In 1965 the selling of a beer containing less alcohol (mellanölet) begins, a beverage that sets the tone of popular parties in the 1960's.

The right to free access of nature

A heritage from the past is converted into one of the most "communist" characteristics of Swedish contemporary society. Every Man's Right (allemansrätt) makes it possible for every citizen to enjoy nature in the countryside and limits the implications of private property. In Sweden, the "Every Man's

Right" applies even when nature lies within the borders of private property. This right, that without doubt has its roots in the Middle Ages, settles in the consciences of citizens during the 19th century, and ultimately becomes an Act in 1964.

According to this Act it is possible to enter private territory in search of flowers, wild fruits and mushrooms. The only constraint is that one must not cause the owner or nature damage of any kind and that one must keep a considerable distance from the owner's home. The owner of a land that consists of oceans and floods must not construct habitations closer than 100 metres off the coast. The right to enjoy nature that limits private property in favour of the public affirms the collectivistic character of the Swedish society during the 1960's.

Axel Hägerström and the nihilism of values

The 19th century in Sweden, is the century of idealism. The most important of all Swedish idealists is Christopher Jacob Boström (1797-1866) who will define his philosophy as "rational idealism". The parting point of all philosophy, according to Boström, should be the world as it is experienced. Exposing this reality to logical analysis makes it possible to understand what really lies in this reality. Idealism in Sweden was fundamentally an academic phenomenon and did not reflect the ideological battle fought on the economic and social fields. On the other hand one should keep in mind that the industrial revolution is not noticed in Swedish society until the decade of 1870. Up until then the urban centres only include ten percent of the country's population and approximately 70% are farmers. Around the past century and following the difficulties of European philosophy, neo–Kantianism arrives in Sweden. The force of social changes taking place in Europe and Sweden at the end of the past century and the beginnings of the following century destroy the idealistic school and introduces a new generation of philosophers to the academic arena, in general Social Democratic with neo–Kantian orientation. This new generation presents in Uppsala the thought of Axel Hägerström (1868-1939), creator of the most original and interesting

philosophy in the history of the Country. Axel Hägerström becomes part of the faculty of Practical Philosophy in 1914. The Uppsala school defines itself early on the theoretic field as anti-idealistic and anti-metaphysical. Opposing to Boströmianism and in clear contrast to it, the theoretic work of the Uppsala school gives increasing room to scientific subjects. It is sufficient to look at a series of productions by Hägerström, meant to critically discuss Einstein's relativistic conception that he accuses of having metaphysical vices.

Hägerström's critique of idealism focuses on denying absolute knowledge as conscience or as subject. Absolute knowledge is instead identified as a consistent logical system, identical to the natural events in space and time. A parallelism is made between logical necessity and causality in the natural world.

The materialistic, anti-metaphysical and logic character of Hägerström's philosophy permits a parallel between his philosophy and the thought of Moore and Russell in Cambridge.

However, the central problematization in the philosophy of Hägerström has its place in neo–Kantianism and the school of Marburg, especially in the work of Herman Cohen. As a curious fact, it may be told that the neo–Kantian Ernst Cassirer arrives in Sweden as a fugitive escaping from the Nazi regime. During his stay in Sweden (1935-1941) he works at the faculty of philosophy of Gothenburg. There he makes a study of Hägerström that Axel Hägerström named *Eine Studie zur Schwedischen Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1939).

Nevertheless, it is on the field of theory of values that the Uppsala school shows its creative side clearly. Hägerström's philosophy of values is nihilistic. Our judgements about values, he tells us, are expressions of the feelings and thus neither true nor false. There is no room then for practical knowledge. If these feelings are projected on reality as "values" (moral, aesthetic, juridical, etc.) one falls into fetishism.

This theory had a tremendous impact on society in general and especially on the Social Democratic political means. For a foreigner it is not difficult to notice – even as of today - the double character of moral philosophy and Swedish

law, the double effort in “believing” in the same values that are really only believed to be expressions of feelings and completely disconnected from an objective reality.

Hägerström’s philosophy of Law supposes an implacable critique of the natural right, which he sees as the consequence of a relation between fetishist forces, lacking all other value than the one coming from compromised feelings. Hägerström’s student Vilhelm Lundstedt developed this critique.

Axel Hägerström (1868-1939)

Hägerström and Lundstedt considers it an impossibility, for example, that “human rights” can be conceived separately from a “juridical machinery” that gives them room in collective opinions and in social structures. Any other position is considered to be purely “metaphysical”, a term that these authors criticize, in the sense of “anti-scientific” philosophy.

The nihilism of values has significant consequences on the structuring of Swedish law, especially on the subject of “punishment”. In a clear opposition against all politics that sees punishment as a “vengeance”, political opinions that are based on benevolence assume the relative character of the crime. Because of this, the Swedish system of punishment ought to be one of the most generous in the world.

Hägerström’s philosophy of value finds its most determined critics amongst the Jewish and German immigrants who escape to Sweden during the Second World War. These critics see in the Hägerströmian nihilism of values one of the most negative symptoms of a European moral decadency that they accuse for the Nazi barbarism.

Hägerström is the first Swedish philosopher to mani-

fest socialistic views, who reads and comments Marx of which he criticizes for his *teleologsim* (that is for subordinating theory to political actions).

His philosophy of religion is based on accepting the feeling of faith, denying its objective truth (that is to say its epistemological value). This permits the surging of a theological school internationally known as the Lund school. According to this school it is not possible to present the problem of the existence of God, but possible to present the problem of the existence of God as a problem for human nature. The task of theology is to investigate "what God is", what we understand as God (the ideas we have about God).

If it is possible at an early stage to associate the ideological background of the Hägerströmian philosophy to the conquests of the workers movement, this character is quickly transformed into an instrument for a new social group: the technocrats and specialists, typical of the Swedish contemporary cultural atmosphere. Hägerström's philosophy of values leads to one of the most distinctive features of Swedish thought: the formalization of individual and social communication, its faith in legislation as a mean of change, the everlasting development of practical structures for a social action on any level.

Gunnar Myrdal, Alva Myrdal and "social engineering"

Gunnar Myrdal, Swedish economist, obtained the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974, for his pioneering work on monetary theory and economic fluctuations and for his analysis on the interdependence between economic, social, and institutional events. His wife, Alva Myrdal (1902-1986) also received the Nobel Prize, in her case it was the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1982. Alva was an active pacifist and occupied diverse diplomatic and governmental posts until she became the Minister of Disarmament. Alva's traditional pacifism and the concern of the Myrdal couple for developing countries anticipated the politics that Olof Palme developed from the 1960's which had the Vietnam War as its highest priority.

Gunnar Myrdal was appointed Professor of Political Economy and International Economics at the Stockholm

University. Being a socialist, he was senator of the Swedish Parliament in various legislatures and Minister of Commerce and Industry. He also served as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Myrdal has insisted that a positive economy is impossible, that is to say that it can not be normative since any economic proposition implies, implicitly or explicitly, moral judgments.

Gunnar and Alva Myrdal

These moral judgments are – in clear reference to the conception of Hägerström – different depending on the place, time and the people who apply it. He was sceptic to the possibility of applying conventional economic analysis on Third World nations. According to Myrdal, in these societies, economic analysis cannot be isolated from political and social analysis. According to Myrdal, the underdevelopment can only be resolved by equalling opportunities and building a more profound democracy. He proposes the creation of a "Providential Global State" that through global planning and redistribution avoids the increasing gap between rich and poor countries.

In Sweden, the name Gunnar Myrdal is associated with "social engineering". This term refers to a political wish of "social design", a modernistic project of rationalization that aims at eliminating social injustices. According to Gunnar Myrdal social injustice has its roots in the core of inherited social theory which is not conscious of the compromised character of moral judgments that are unique for their time and

social interests. Parting from Myrdal, the political and economic sciences in Sweden, acquire a "technological" character that intends to be "objective" in an attempt to avoid founding reasoning on any moral judgment whatsoever.

The "social pact" and "Corporativism the Swedish way"

Per Albin Hansson (1885- 1946), Prime Minister for 14 years (1932-46), became the "nation's father" by enforcing reforms that favoured the lower classes without discriminating other social classes.

Per Albin Hansson (1885- 1946)

During his youth he followed the social ideas of Karl Kautsky who believed that the social revolution could be made little by little, in a gradual changing process.

On December 20th, 1938, the pact known as the "Saltsjöbadsavtal" was signed according to which the corporation of worker's unions and the corporation of employers pledged to abide by a series of directives, ordered in some fundamental categories: a) The creation of a principal organ of collaboration called the "Employment Board" (Arbetsmarknadsnämnden); b) Directives for negotiation processes c) Directives on the dismissal of workers d) Directives on economic punishment in case of a conflict. The corporative pact from 1938 was temporarily abandoned in the 1970's to return with modifications in the beginnings of the 1980's still applying today. Swedish corporativism has been called "Liberal Corporativism" distinguishing it from the corporativism that characterized communism and fascism at the same period.

The “people’s home” and the “racial hygiene”

A home for the Swedish people required a Modern society that assured people’s health, by means of hygiene, discipline and exercise. These ideas arouse partly from Germany, a country that Sweden developed important connections with on the fields of hygiene, health, and sports. However, not all aspects of this political ideology were constructive. Behind these politics that were open to the masses hid racist ideologies masked in academic activities.

This is without doubt the darkest part of Swedish modernist politics in the 1930’s, which is something that has been brought to light by recent researchers such as Gunnar Broberg, Professor of History of Ideas at Lund University. The “people’s home” was after all not open to all citizens. There existed first and second class citizens in the Sweden of the 1930’s. The mentally ill and other handicapped individuals suffered discrimination and even sterilization with eugenic ends.

The dream of a fairer society was combined with the dream of a “saner” one, extending the concept of “sanity” to include “racial hygiene”. This program was proposed in a ruling from 1921, which proposed the foundation of a State Institute for Racial Hygiene. The Act was supported by all political parties from right to left. Among the promoters was the leader of the Conservative Party, Arvid Lidman and the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Hjalmar Branting.[24]

The Public Institute for Racial Hygiene (Statens institut för rashygien) was created in Uppsala in 1922. Its first director, Herman Lundborg, confessed himself openly to Anti-Semitism and later to Nazism. The research at the institute was mostly focused on the study of the form and measure of the human cranium. Around 1930 the activities of the institute abandoned their purely racist position and began to study “negative genetic heredities”. After 1935 a sterilization campaign was initiated that permitted sterilization even in cases were the subject was unwilling to. The sterilization law suffered many modifications and was applied until 1975. 63 000 people were sterilized in Sweden during the period 1935-1975. After

1935, Swedish eugenics applied on “diseases” and other mental and physical “deviations” rather than on “races” and thus survived Nazism.

Architectonic functionalism and the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930

Functionalism was an architectonic current that assumed its definitive forms around 1925. Its roots were older and coincided with the development of the industrial society during the 19th century. The technical evolution of industry provided simple lines, basic forms without decors and exactitude in the dimensions. Furthermore, the construction of machines and of lodging for the industrial production called for the exact calculation of production costs. The change in the concept of habitat started as soon as 1900 with the modification of train and passenger-boat cabins particularly in Germany. Around 1920 the work of Le Corbusier arose as one of the most important advertisements for new architectonic ideas. Now people started talking about accommodation and articles of domestic use as “anonymous servants”, created to reduce the personnel of domestic service. Accommodation was called a “machine”. The term “functionalism” was introduced by the German art critic Adolf Behne in the book “Der moderne Zweckbau” (“The Modern functional building”) from 1926. It was in Germany that functionalism was linked with a particular kind of aesthetics, the Bauhaus school.

Functionalism acquired its most definite form after the year 1930 in direct relation to the Stockholm Exhibition, directed by Gregor Paulsson.

New houses for the people, by Uno Åhrén, Stockholm 1930.

As a consequence of the ascending Nazism in Germany, the core of functionalism was relocated to Sweden where it found its place in the Social Democratic project known as “the People’s Home” (folkhemmet). The project defined Swedish accommodation policies bringing together Social Democratic ideals and models of aesthetic functionalism.

House in Oslo by Arne Korsmo, 1937

The hotel Sokos Vaakuna in Helsinki, 1952

SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE CAPITULATION OF MODERNISM

§ 4 Auschwitz and the end of Modernism

History has been written in Auschwitz, no doubt about this. No doubt exists either about the incommensurable magnitude of the crime perpetrated inside these walls. Nevertheless, just the incommensurability of the crimes, make Auschwitz a paradox of civilization.

In Auschwitz, the principles of Modernism came in *total contradiction* with the principles which conduced to Modernity, principles which were in fact the same of the liberal ideas of capitalism with the enforcement of the ideals of reason and civilization which characterized the Enlightenment. (About this, see again “Reactionary Modernism in Germany”, p. 26)

In fact, Auschwitz contradicts the grounds of Modernity in every sense of the term. We have seen earlier (see the section about the Reactionary Modernism) that in Germany, the bourgeois pragmatic idea of Modernity, was combined with the Romantic ideals of ethnocentrism and nationalism. Johann Gottfried von Herder who in 1784 argued that geography formed the natural economy of a people, and that their customs and society would develop along the lines, which their basic environment favoured. Romantic nationalism has relied on historical ethnic culture in which folklore developed as a romantic nationalist concept, was fundamental.

The very essence of the inner contradiction in Nazi-economic production was at first, their use of *slave work* in their factories and secondly, their implementation of a Ford-inspired method of production to exterminate Jews, Gypsies and other minorities. In a few words, the Nazi-economic system was in contradiction with history in using forced work - a survival of the Colonial Era - and in using factories as ritual mechanisms of death.

"Fordism" was coined about 1910 to describe Henry

Ford's production method in the automobile industry. “In 1903 Ford introduced methods for large-scale manufacturing of cars and large-scale management of an industrial workforce, especially elaborately engineered manufacturing sequences typified by moving assembly lines.”[25] This process, which belongs to the logic of capitalism, employs people as workers, which then should be car-buyers. Fordism conceives line-production as a method to increase the quantity of produced cars and then make the cheapest possible costs per unity. Fordism is the production of large amounts of *standardized* products and standardization is essence of Modernity. Ford mass production became in Germany, the Nazi’s method to achieve mass murdering.

Obviously, Modernism could not survive this. Theodore Adorno wrote:

> To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.[26]

German Modernism during the Nazi-period was the standardization of massacre and in some sense showed better that in every other situation, that the method can easily be converted in pure Mechanicism.

The most efficient system to exterminate people

Auschwitz’s complex consisted of three main camps in Poland, 50 kilometres from Krakow: Auschwitz I, the administrative centre; Auschwitz II (Birkenau), an extermination camp and Auschwitz III (Monowitz), a work camp.

> According to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in 1990, 1.1–1.6 million people were killed there, about 90 percent of them Jews from almost every country in Europe. Most of the dead were killed in gas chambers using Zyklon-B; other deaths were caused by systematic starvation, forced labor, lack of disease control, individual executions, and so-called medical experiments.[27]

The main entrance, or "death gate," today.

Entrance, or so-called "death gate," to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, "Selection" on the *Judenrampe*, May/June 1944. To be sent to the right meant assignment to a work detail; to the left, the gas chambers. This image shows the arrival of Hungarian Jews from Carpatho-Ruthenia, many of them from the Berehov ghetto; the image was taken by Ernst Hofmann or Bernhard Walter of the SS. The main entrance, or "death gate," is visible in the background.

It would be difficult to imagine how could the fanatic propaganda of the Nazis predispose and conquer the rational minds of engineers and entrepreneurs in Germany, if we do not consider that technology was understood as a property of the German culture and not as a historic process consequence of secularisation, materialism, and capitalism.

> The cultural dilemma of Germany's engineers was the following: How could technology be integrated into a national culture that lacked strong liberal traditions and that fostered intense romantic and anti industrial sentiments? Technology would have to be legitimated without succumbing to Enlightenment rationality. Just like the literati, the engineers wanted to demonstrate that technological advance was compatible with German nationalism's revolt against positivism. They also laboured to separate technology from the web of liberal rationalism with which it had been associated in Great Britain, France, and the United States. The cultural politics of the engineers created a set of symbols, key words, and emotionally laden metaphors that provided bridge between the trade union consciousness of the engineers and the more all-inclusive surge of German nationalism. [28]

A central figure, which may help us to understand this situation, was Albert Speer, the architect and Minister for Armaments of Hitler.[29] Speer, which spent 20 years in prison after the war because of his participation in the Nazi-government, wrote that his mistake and that of many other architects, engineers, artists and artisans, was to remain *uninterested in politics*. That means also that these technologists were naive enough to disconnect political technology from *ethics*. Nevertheless, many of the ideals of Modernity, as the ideal of creating condition for a better life for everybody in the nation was also present in the Nazi propaganda. Modernity in the Nazi-world would be achieved with ambitious programs granting a better access and distribution of the material conditions for the "nation" and capitalism should be avoided through Corporativism.

Modern bureaucracy, social engineering and the Holocaust

In studying the role of bureaucracy in the Holocaust, Zygmunt Bauman wrote that the Holocaust depends more in the efficacy of bureaucracies than in other ideological imperatives. The extermination process is throughout an achievement of efficiency and technical creativity. The task of racism in Germany was perfectly adapted to the ideal of technical administration:

1) The formulation of a precise definition of the object;

2) Then registering those who fitted the definition and opening a file for each;

3) It proceeded to segregate those in the files from the rest of the population, to which the received brief did not apply;

4) Finally, it moved to evicting the segregated category from the land of the Aryans which was to be cleansed - by nudging it to emigrate first, and deporting it to non-German territories once such territories found themselves under German control.[30]

The Nazi revolution was an exercise in social engineering on a grandiose scale," wrote Bauman[31]. This would be achieved through the propagation of healthy accumulation by systematic selection and by elimination of the unhealthy elements from the German population. The brutal Mechanicism, which such task implies, is hard to understand if we do not realise that behind Modern man there is a primitive creature.

Zygmunt Bauman (1925) a Polish-born sociologist , Professor of sociology at the University of Leeds , Bauman has become best known for his analyses of the links between modernity and the Holocaust and of postmodern consumerism. (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007)

The Holocaust was possible because Modern mechanisms were combined with *archaic* inheritances of fear and hate to the *other* and different, to the "non–human" and "barbaric" *alien*. There is nothing new in the holocaust that has not happened before in respect to these feeling of fear and hate.

That which was new, was the mechanisms of Modernity, the power of rationality and technology working together to massacre humans efficiently.

AFTER AUSCHWITZ

§ 5 The Vietnam War

If the final stage of Modernity began with Auschwitz, the ideological damage that the Holocaust meant for Modernism in Europe, did not reach the people's mentality in the USA until later. The Second World War left the USA in a unique dominant situation and in position to receive a large amount of very high qualified emigrants from all over Europe which converted the country into the most advanced scientific and technological country in the world. The hegemonic roll of the USA after the Second World War renewed during the 50s and 60s some of the dreams of Modernism until these were definitely crossed in the Vietnam War.

During the mid-1800s, the French Empire colonized Vietnam. France controlled Vietnam until the Second World War, when the Japanese in 1941 invaded Indochina. A nationalist insurgency emerged under the leadership of the communist party and Ho Chi Minh. When the defeat of the Japanese Empire under Second World War opened a possibility of being free from colonialism, Vietnamese nationalist and communist were forced to fought the newly restored French colonial administration. In 1954 the Colonial period ended and according to the Geneva Agreements two countries divided at the 17th parallel North Vietnam and South Vietnam following the early model of Korea were created. In this way, the history of Vietnam entered the Cold War era.

Carrying a guitar and a M16 rifle, a Marine waits at a landing strip for a flight out of Khe Sanh, February 25th, 1968.

In 1959, USA began to send troops to Vietnam and the involvement of USA in Vietnam would continue until 1975 when the USA army was defeated and force to leave Vietnam. During these 25-years between 2,5 and 5 million Vietnamese were killed. The Vietnam War was a part of the Cold War and involved the Soviet Union, its allies, and the People's Republic of China.

National Chief of Police Nguyen Ngoc Loan, executes openly a guerrilla man in Saigon.
This picture shocked the world. (Wikipedia)

One of the most controversial aspects of the of the USA military was the use of chemical weapons with long-term ecological consequences. During the period between 1961 and 1971 the USA use herbicides to defoliate large parts of the countryside. “These chemicals continue to change the landscape, cause diseases and birth defects, and poison the food chain.”[32]

> In 1961–1962, the Kennedy administration authorized the use of chemicals to destroy rice crops. Between 1961 and 1967, the U.S. Air Force sprayed 20 million U.S. gallons (75 700 000 L) of concentrated herbicides over 6 million acres (24 000 km²) of crops and trees, affecting an estimated 13 percent of South Vietnam's land. In 1997, an article published by The Wall Street Journal reported that up to half a million children were born with dioxin-related deformities, and that the birth defects in southern Vietnam were fourfold those in the north.[33]

The Vietnam War introduced Postmodernism into the heart of the USA's military forces ending the era of Modern Colonialism. In 1969, a Defence Department study showed that 20 percent of US soldiers in Vietnam were using marijuana either occasionally or frequently. [34]

If symbols mirrored one's convictions, this infantry division trooper might be termed a contradiction (Most soldiers do want peace). He wears a peace symbol juxtaposed with a bandoleer, in addition to some religious medals. He's attached to a mechanized unit posted just below the DMZ, January 29th, 1968.
http://www.vietnampix.com/hippie2a.htm (2007-07-15).

§ 6 The Revolting Youth and the Sexual Revolution of the 60's

A century in the History of Ideas of Sexuality

The social progress is gradual, but its development pace is not always homogeneous. Every now and then, so-called 'revolutions' take place, events that can be described as extraordinary moments of acceleration in the development pace.

The word 'revolution' brings to mind a process in progress, an idea which concords with the vision of history as a development towards higher forms, a change that implicates improvements of some kind.

It may be in order to point out that these moments of acceleration are not necessarily regarded as progressive, at least not by all agents in a given social or cultural situation. But if we hold on to the positive meaning of the term 'revolution', we will see that 'revolutions' have always motivated 'involutions', and what's more, that the same aspects that some of society's agents consider revolutionizing, are understood by others as actions that slow down the development.

From what was just said, we may conclude that the 'Sexual Revolution' was considered a reversing process by a lot of people. That which was considered a progressing moment of acceleration, by above all young people, was for many others, above all older people, an involution to a more primitive stage of Human history.

The Sexual Revolution mainly took place in the 60's, but we can see signs of this process in the 50's as well. The phenomenon only appeared in 'Western Societies' though, and only occasionally and partially on other places. The revolution was a consequence of various cultural and social factors with roots further back in history. We could see it as a revolution that occurs in the name of liberalism with the Youth Movements as

its natural social base.

The revolution was possible because of the changes in society and the fact that young people took over many of the important meeting places in society, among these the Educational System and Mass media. In relation to this takeover, young people became the Target market for many new, specialized products.

The history behind youth movements is to be found in the Student's organisations and in their various attempts to influence society towards the interests of young people. In this sense, the Sexual Revolution is gender neutral. It was interesting to women as well as men, but as we will see, the Sexual Revolution seen from a female perspective was not a matter of course.

The takeover by young people of various social forums was not the only source to a revolutionary view on sexuality; the other main path towards this social upheaval was the feminist movements and their impact on family politics. The political influence on the sexual norms had its starting point at the end of the 19th century, especially through the social movements that discussed sexuality and worked for improved conditions in the family situations of proletarian women. Family politics were behind the first attempts to politicize the sexual life with the intention of forming Modern society.

Even though the Student movements as well as the Women's movements aimed for a more liberal view of society, these have not always agreed on the purpose of liberation. The Youth movements have always wanted to move faster and have always meant that women's sexuality has parity with men's sexuality. Many feminist activists have seen this as yet another way to objectify women, using them in the service of men.

Is sexuality a biological given or a social construction?

This is the starting point of Angus Maclaren's *Twentieth-century Sexuality*: The basic premise of this book is that sexuality – commonly taken to be a biological given – is socially constructed. "Sex", as one researcher has rightly noted, "is not a natural act". Sexuality has been remade by each

generation and an understanding of transformations like these, necessarily requires placing the discussion in its social and cultural context.

The past years' debates about sexuality have been – especially after Foucault's *History of Sexuality* –dominated by Postmodern positions. Here we should understand the term 'Post-modern' as 'non-positivistic' or else, as the discourse that aims to undermine all attempts towards a 'scientific' discourse or that makes any claims on being true. (One may say that such discourses should be taken 'seriously', without being taken to be 'true').

In this Postmodern spirit, the relation between the biological and the social sphere has disappeared, leaving room for a purer cultural or social sphere, that more or less acts independently and hence is incompatible with all biologistic positions.

The *biologistic* perspective becomes inconvenient to studies of social and cultural spheres when it is formed according to a *reductionistic* epistemology. The thought that by controlling the biological body, one controls social life in detail, is the core of the inconveniency of the biologistic reductionism.

Otherwise one can always consider the biological background to any social process. It is possible to conclude that the regulation of sexual life is essential to all forms of society in all times, and that the regulation of sexual contacts is the most evident in archaic societies with strict rules of marriage.

For natural reasons, sexuality has always been connected with reproduction, pregnancy, giving birth, abortion and miscarriage, menstruation and the natural circle of life. The control of sexuality in archaic societies brought the prohibition of incest and with that the development of the first social structure was made possible.

Postmodern, radical positions against the connection biology-sexuality find their historical motivation in the catastrophic consequences of previous Social Darwinist theories. From Social Darwinism to the racism of the 20th century, the biologistic perspective finds itself in a cul-de-sac of misanthropy and acts of cruelty.

In spite of all radical definitions that try to exclude the

biologistic perspective, this is just as present through people's quiet assumptions, by moral considerations and discriminating decision-makings.

In our time, the biologistic perspective on sexuality exists through various medical advances, such as antibiotics for venereal diseases or substantial improvements in the treatment of pregnant women, as well as through technical means, such as birth-control pills.

From a Swedish perspective – with some relation to international processes – we can identify four important periods in the history of sexuality. These are the 1880's: Sensible sex as a base for social hygiene; The 1930's: Planned sex as a base for family politics; The 1960's: Free sex as an expression of freedom for young people; The 1990's: Homosexuality and the new, non-traditional family. These periods also have connections to other, socially revolutionizing factors. If we take a look at the technical inventions that have changed human communication over the last years, we see that the telegraph and the telephone enter the every-day life in the 19th century. Morse sent the first telegraphic message in the year 1838 and the first telephonic message was from Bell in 1876. The radio was developed during the first years of the 20th century, but had its period of greatness as from the 1930's, while the influence of television was notable as from the 1960's. The cellular phone, the Internet and virtual communication characterize the 1990's. What we learn from this coincidence is that social communication turns global at the same time as sexual liaisons are liberalised.

The first period: Striving for social hygiene

The first period started in the 19th century and is characterized by a striving for 'social hygiene', i.e. the struggle for sexual continence and the innovation of contraceptives. The process had two social starting points: the Women's Movement and the Student's Movement. These two social movements had direct connections to various other social movements such as the Abstinences Movement, the Democratic Movement that worked for the rights of women, and the social activities that

strived for a general cultural education. In other respects, this movement had connections with political liberalism and socialism. The engaged hygienist worked against the problems that rose with the new problems of industrialisation.

In the year 1889, the student Knut Wicksell gave a lecture in which he said that sexual continence turned young people into alcoholics.

Penniless, male students, who did not have the means to get married, were doomed to continence or the visiting of prostitutes.

This problem could be solved with more marriages, but this would only be mock solution. An increase of marriages would imply an increase of born children and hence also an increase in poverty. Here Wicksell followed the Malthusian (1766-1834) view on population growth according to which population grows faster than aliments.

The originator of the so-called 'Neo-Malthusianism' was George Drysdale with his book *The Elements of Social Science* from 1854. Neo-Malthusianism had a great influence on the sexual debate up until the 1930's when Psychoanalysis as well as Marxism became more relevant to social scientists. According to the Neo-Malthusians, sexual continence could lead to nervous problems as well as depressions, for both women and men.

Cultural Radicalism

In the year 1882, Wicksell and Hjalmar Örvall founded the Student's Association *Verdandi* in Uppsala. The association became a centre for new and more radical ideas in the name of liberalism. Later, the ideology of the association was known under the name Cultural Radicalism. Cultural Radicalism was founded in the 1880's in Scandinavia and is related to the Modern break-through.[35] The ideology was characterized by a strong belief in the ability of the individual to make his own choices, according to reasonable principles.

In the 1920's, Cultural Radicalism inspired a group of intellectuals who founded an autonomous socialistic organisation called Clarté. The Clarté-group then dominated the sexual

debate during the interwar period.

The second period: Modern Social Engineering

The second period started just before the 1930's with the strong modernistic social reform implemented by the Social democrats under the name 'The people's home" (the Welfare State). This revolutionary process had its theoretical climax with the Myrdal spouses and was characterized by an engineer-like study of the social consequences of sexuality.

Unlike previous attempts, the social movements were no longer alone in trying to pursue family politics, considering the whole state was now playing an intervening, controlling role. The control was exercised ideologically, through 'scientific' role models, and with an economy from a utility point of view.

Elsie Ottesen-Jensen and the founding of RFSU

Elsie was born in Norway in the year 1886. In 1910 she started working as a journalist for a radical newspaper in Trondheim. She became socially engaged and made some attempts to organize housemaids and female textile workers. Ottesen-Jensen initiated her course as a sexual-politician in 1914 when she suggested that sexual criminals should be isolated on an island where they could plant their own food. She married the Swedish syndicalist Albert Jensen. Jensen was a radical activist who was exiled from both Norway and Denmark, and finally ended up in a prison in Malmoe.

As from 1922, Elsie Ottesen-Jensen began editing Women's pages in numerous newspapers. In the year 1925 she issued a monthly periodical called "Us Women". At the same time, she wrote various books with the suggestive names; "Unwanted children", "A word to Women" from 1926, "Sex is the victim of the law", "Interiors from the world of the sick and convicted" from 1928, "The victim of sexual darkness" from 1932. Thanks to the social engagement and the active writing, Elsie Ottesen-Jensen became famous under the shorter name "Ottar" – a popular figure.

For years, Elsie Ottesen-Jensen built an international network that amongst others included “World League for Sexual Reform” which held a congress in Copenhagen in 1928. Ottesen-Jensen propagated for the use of contraceptives and for the period of her lectures she tested diaphragms on women. According to Lena Lennerhed, 1800 women got diaphragms by Elsie Ottesen-Jensen during a five-year period. As most people in this time, Elsie Ottesen-Jensen accepted the ideology of Racial hygiene. She propagated against “race elements of less worth”. She saw Syphilis and Gonorrhoea as reasons for the “setback of the German race”. In the year 1933 the National Association for Sexual Enlightenment (RFSU) was founded with Elsie Ottesen-Jensen as its first president.

The Myrdal spouses and the construction of the Modern society

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal contributed to the sexual politics debate through the book *Crisis in the population question* from 1934. Through this book, the authors wanted to make a profound reform of the social networks in society with the intention of increasing the birth rate, which they thought was too low. According to the writers, Neo-Malthusian ideas were outdated and a new and strong approach was needed to ensure the development of society. They suggested sexual education in schools and the annulment of the laws demanding contraceptives.

At the same time, various new economic reforms were to be implemented for the promotion of the birth-rate. The projects of the Myrdal spouses played an essential part in the social democratic Swedish Welfare system.

Per Albin Hansson (1885-1946), Minister of State for 14 years (1932-46) became father of his people through various reforms that profited the underprivileged groups in society.

The third period: The Revolting Youth and free sex

The third period is the ‘sexual revolution’, which is characterized by the definitive entrance of the youth movement

into the social life as a new and independent factor of power. Sexuality was used as both a goal and a mean for changing the social norms that were considered outdated and repressive.

This era was dominated by a new, revolutionizing invention: the birth-control pill. Let us keep in mind that AIDS had not yet been identified at this time and that antibiotics had been used for reducing the risks of most venereal diseases since the 1950's.

Alfred Kinsey on the sexual behaviour of men and women

In 1948, Alfred Kinsey published the book *Sexual behaviour in the Human Male*. The book, which became a sensation and had the form of a scientific report, collected statistics on the sexual behaviour of thousands of men in the United States. Kinsey was a Zoology professor and became involved in the thematic of sexuality by coincidence. In the year 1938, Kinsey became the coordinator of a course on marriage, requested by the students. Kinsey discovered that there was not enough foundation for such a course, and thus started to make investigations of his own.

In Kinsey's report no subject is taboo, all thinkable aspects of sexuality are present and observed with a statistical distance. This was something radically new since even scientific studies avoided these subjects or saw them as complicated. Amongst other things, Kinsey defused the issue of homosexual behaviour, something that came to have great consequences for the future conception of 'normal' sexuality. Kinsey was critical of Freud and Psychoanalysis, which he saw as misleading since it was build on a few interviews with deviant individuals. Instead, a sexual science should be built on statistical studies of the ordinary man. Nevertheless, some critics say that Kinsey confuses 'ordinary' with 'real'. Basically, it is the same confrontation as we find in other psychological areas, on one hand the continental tradition with profound studies and interviews and on the other hand American behaviourism with its statistical studies of human behaviour. The 'objectivity' of Kinsey's studies often compare human behaviour with that of other 'mammals'.

In the year 1953, the other great study by Kinsey was published, this time on the sexual behaviour of women. The report had the title *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* and was built on interviews with 5940 white American women. The conclusion of the report was that the sexual behaviour of women was not different from that of men. However, sexuality was here treated completely apart from reproduction and therefore we lack studies on menstruation and pregnancy. In spite of the fact that the Swedish sexual politics were very influenced by Freud and Psychoanalysis, the works of Kinsey were welcomed by almost everyone. The exception may have been the Women's Movement. Within the Women's Movement Kinsey's reports were not considered to be matters of importance, at least not according to their periodicals. The periodical *Herta*, published by the *Fredericka Bremer Association*, mentions Kinsey's report about women once in a short paragraph. The author writes that it could lead to less prejudice, but that is all. In the periodical edited by the organization of Social Democratic women called *Morgonbris* and in the periodical *Vi kvinnor* by 'Svenska kvinnors vänsterförbund' Kinsey is not mentioned at all.[36] This chilly reaction can possibly be explained by Kinsey's ideology that undoubtedly was liberal and anticipated the kind of liberalism in sexual matters that later became characteristic for the Youth Movements. As we will see, an important part of the Women's Movement saw a threat against the integrity of young women in the sexual liberation, because of the risk she exposed herself in regard to unwanted pregnancies.

The sexual revolution of the 1960's

The easiest way to introduce this period is to refer to the breakthrough of youth culture in the Western world in general and especially the new popular music that found a common point of reference in Rock and Roll and Elvis Presley. This youth revolt had a part of its roots in the university culture and the new possibilities offered by the post-war society to a middle-class in constant growth. In the end of the 19th century there were already Student's associations in Sweden, actively

pleading for a more free sexuality, but the youth movement was weak and small back then and the middle class was still undeveloped. In post-war society, on the other hand, there were necessary conditions for the strive of young people to liberate themselves from the cultural and social interests of older generations. The youth revolt influenced all the important social institutions, from marriage and sexuality, to work and work reforms. The revolt created a new market, which produced merchandises intended for young people, and the Modern company became 'young', both in its way of acting and in its policy of recruitment. The society that honoured the elder and kept the power of the elder, began to transform into a society with young people in charge.

The Swedish sin

Sexual education was introduced in the Swedish schools as early as in the 1940's and became mandatory in the year 1955. This decision gave Sweden a unique position internationally and together with other social, political and economic reforms, the vision of an ultra-Modern country was created, a country that differed from traditional Christian values while following a radically secularised and rational path. The Swedish Modernity was described internationally as "sinful", "mechanical" and "inhuman". Sweden became a role model as well as a warning example. Various films were noticed during the 1960's and among these Ingmar Bergman's "The Silence" from 1936 and Vilgot Sjöman's "491" from the same year should be mentioned. Lena Lennerhed has described the "Swedish sin" with the following words:

> The Swedish sin was in other words not the sin of the brothels, the venereal diseases and the perversions. The Swedish sin was associated with the young, fresh, natural girl who without further considerations had sex with her boyfriend, owned contraceptives and had passed sexual education.[37]

It was not long until the vices of the Swedish model were emphasized, among these alcoholism and the high suicide

numbers. All this would be the other face of Swedish ultra-Modernity , that is, a society without a soul. The sexual debate of the 1960's started in the year 1962 with the book *Jungfrutro och dubbelmoral* by Kristina Ahlmark-Michanek and ended more or less in the year 1965. During these three years the sexual debate was continuous and intense. According to Lena Lennerhed, this debate took up older questions but radicalised them. The question about abortion became a question about *free* abortion; the question about tolerance regarding sexual deviance became a demand for *equality* of all sexual expressions and the demand for the rights of young people became the demand for the rights of *teenagers*.[38]

The sexual debate of the 1960's and the Women's Movement

An important source of inspiration for Kristina Ahlmark-Michanek was an essay by Eva Moberg called "Kvinnans villkorliga frigivning" from 1961, that for the first time took up and criticised the so called gender roles. Eva Moberg wanted women to be equal with men in the caring and raising of children as well. But Eva Moberg never spoke about the sexual equality of women and men. It was Kristina Ahlmark-Michanek who did this. In the book *Jungfrutro och dubbelmoral* the author criticises gender stereotypes in sexual contexts. To Kristina Ahlmark-Michanek, there are no essential differences between the sexuality of men and women and therefore she argued for an "erotic equality". But in her striving for sexual equality Kristina Ahlmark-Michanek was fairly unaccompanied.[39]

The sexual debate, which started in 1962 as a question concerning women, ended up as a question concerning men. The largest group of activists within the women's movement eventually assumed a careful attitude towards the extreme liberalism of the Sexual Revolution.

The reason for this conservative attitude can be found in the fear of unwanted pregnancies. The truth is that the so-called 'free love' had very few female advocates. Undoubtedly, most feminists saw that the sexual equality had a direct connec-

tion to the question of abortion. In the year 1965, 'Svenska Kvinnors Vänsterförbund' took a stand for a law on free abortion and 'Socialdemokratiska Kvinnoförbundet' did the same thing in 1970.

The fourth and last period: the new family reforms

One last period can be detected from the middle of the 1980's up until our days. During this period the gay movement had its breakthrough in relation to the discovery of AIDS. During the whole 1980's, famous people "came out of the closet", often because of the disease. Homosexuality was debated more than ever and the homosexual view on society was seen as a more Modern view.

The debate about the rights of homosexuals and their relations to family and family politics is dominating in our days as well. A debate in which the traditional and religious vision of the family is questioned more than ever. Homosexuality was not decriminalized in Sweden until the year 1944 and until then the punishment for homosexual relations consisted of two years in prison. The Swedish attitude towards homosexuality has varied over the years, but the opposition against a more open and tolerant view on homosexual relations has been great, not least amongst left-wing activists. Historically, it has mostly been male homosexuality that has been in the centre of discussion.

Amongst left-wing debaters there were many who identified male homosexual groups with a mystical 'homosexual freemasonry', with Nazi ideology that amongst other things engaged in the corruption of young boys. Vilhelm Moberg shared this critical view:

"The homosexual prostitute is often also a blackmailer, a felon. Imagine that these beasts stick there claws in some of these men, who represent the administration of justice in society, with the consequence that the victim, or victims, in pure self-defence have to put aside the principle of equality before the law".[40]

Even though society as a whole liberalised the view on sexual deviances, the revolutionising process influenced some groups in the opposite direction. Lena Lennerhed means

that Kinsey's report, in which he states that one out of three Americans has had homosexual experiences, also could have motivated a conservative reaction. During the 60's some tolerant voices came through, such as Lars Ullerstam's book *De erotiska minoriteterna* from 1964. In this book, Ullerstam – who was a young medical candidate – defended the utilitarian thesis that the sexual satisfaction of 'perverts' would increase the general happiness of society. The book became a sensation and was translated into nine languages.

§ 7 Aesthetics, from Baumgarten to Yoko Ono

Aesthetics has studied by tradition the essence of beauty in both nature and man–made things. So was it also for Plato and Aristotle. In the 18th century, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten redefined this traditional inquiry about beauty as the science of "emotional or sensitive knowledge" and adopted the Greek word for *perception* to denote this new discipline (from the Greek *αισθητική* meaning *a perceiver* or *sensitive*). Baumgarten wanted to describe the "criticism of taste" but it is also used as "that which appeals to the senses." After that, philosophical studies followed two paths, the study of *known* things –*noetic* entities –and the study of things *perceived* –*aesthetic* entities.

> Baumgarten then gathered the study of the arts under the aegis of aesthetics. The two were quickly identified and aesthetics became "the philosophy of art" in much the way "ethics" is the philosophy of morality.[41]

In our days, philosophers distinguish the philosophy or art from aesthetics and accept that if all in the world can be seen aesthetically, because all either embrace or lack some kind of beauty, art need to be beautiful –and therefore need not be object of an aesthetical inquiry. However, in one way or another, the study of aesthetics is related to the philosophy of art when beauty comes to be the centre of the analysis. Other aspects of the philosophy of art, that are often studied as "aesthetical", are the creativity of the author, the classification of arts and the critics of art. Aesthetic issues are the relationship between the beautiful and truth, between the beautiful and moral, between the beautiful and knowledge and between the beautiful and science. The study of fundamental ideas as the idea of the comic, the ideas of the tragic and the ideas of the sublime also belong to aesthetics.

The history of aesthetics is not as old as that of other

philosophical disciplines. Because aesthetics depends upon many other disciplines, the development of its analysis has to follow the development of many other sciences and crafts. For the aesthetical analysis may be important to know about the physical properties of light and sound, about the capacity of the human eye and ear, about linguistics and the physics of phonetics. It may be needed some knowledge about other philosophical disciplines as well, as for example psychology, anthropology and history. Many of those disciplines developed after the 18th Century in connection with Modern science and in dependence with the Modern society. Baumgarten's definition of a science of the beautiful as aesthetics or science of "emotional or sensitive knowledge", modify the character of the philosophical inquire from the rational and idealist ideas of the Greeks to an empiricist philosophy of the senses, a new approach which was more in consonance with the time of expansion and consolidation of Modern science.

The aesthetics of Kant

The study of the aesthetic judgement by Kant is only comparable by its importance to that of the Greeks. Kant followed Baumgarten in the adaptation of the issue to the needs of a new age, the age of empirical science. For Kant an aesthetic judgement is subjective but universally valid; it is subjective, because it cannot be grounded only in reason or only in empirical facts. Both rational *a priori* concepts together with empiric observation can create the subjective representation of *aesthetic qualities*. Kant wrote: "That which is purely subjective in the representation of an object, i.e., what constitutes its reference to the subject, not to the object, is its aesthetic quality".[42] The aesthetic experience is pure pleasure and it arises from the pure contemplation of an object's form:

> When the form of an object (as opposed to the matter of its representation, as sensation) is, in the mere act of reflecting upon it, without regard to any concept to be obtained from it, estimated as the ground of a pleasure in

> the representation of such an object, then this pleasure is also judged to be combined necessarily with the representation of it, and so not merely for the subject apprehending this form, but for all in general who pass judgement. The object is then called beautiful; and the faculty of judging by means of such a pleasure (and so also with universal validity) is called *taste*.[43]

The judgement of taste, can not be universal because its subjectivity. Nevertheless it presupposes universality because the social nature of mankind and the existence of a *common sense*.

> The judgement of taste exacts agreement from every one; and a person who describes something as beautiful insists that every one ought to give the object in question his approval and follow suit in describing it as beautiful. The *ought* in aesthetic judgements, therefore, despite an accordance with all the requisite data for passing judgement, is still only pronounced conditionally. […].The judgement of taste, therefore, depends on our presupposing the existence of a *common sense*. (But this is not to be taken to mean some external sense, but the effect arising from the free play of our powers of cognition.) Only under the presupposition, I repeat, of such a common sense, are we able to lay down a judgement of taste.[44]

In the aesthetical debate, we do not argue as our taste were a matter of freedom, but as if it were some *common sense* of how the beautiful shall be understood. With Kant's words "accordingly we introduce this fundamental feeling not as a private feeling, but as a public sense".

Kant distinguishes between the idea of the beautiful and the idea of the sublime, the first is grounded in some sensory representation, the second in the ideas of reason:

> The *beautiful* and the *sublime* agree on the point of pleasing on their own account. Further they agree in not presupposing either a judgement of sense or one logically determinant, but one of reflection […]. There are, however, also important and striking differences between the

> two. The *beautiful* in nature is a question of the *form of object*, and this consists in limitation, whereas the *sublime* is to be found in an *object even devoid of form*, as far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes a representation of limitlessness, yet with a superadded thought of its totality. […] For the *sublime*, in the strict sense of the word, cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but rather concerns ideas of reason, which, although no adequate presentation of them is possible, may be excited and called into the mind, by that very inadequacy itself which does admit of sensuous presentation.[45]

Kant understood art as both a human product but "without being based in concepts", that is "as it were a product of mere nature".

> A product of fine art must be recognized to be art and not nature. Nevertheless the finality in its form must appear just as free from the constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature. Upon this feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive faculties-which play has at the same time to be final rests that pleasure which alone is universally communicable without being based on concepts. Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature.[46]

Kant's idea of art sounds very old fashioned today and the same can be said about his idea of the artist:

> Genius is the talent (natural endowment) which gives the rule to art. Since talent, as an innate productive faculty of the artist, belongs itself to nature, we may put it this way: Genius is the innate mental aptitude (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art.

We can see that Kant's philosophy of art and aesthetics cannot explain the Modern development of both art and aesthetics. This is especially concerning art, in spite of this, the philosophy of Kant was the inspiration source of Clement

Greenberg's criticism against all what the factual development in art showed. The fascinating power of Kant's thought has even inspired other contemporary art critics. An example can be the work of Thierry de Duve *Kant after Duchamp*, written as late as in 1996.[47] In this work de Duve tries to construct a new aesthetic "after Duchamp", in some sense a development of Kant's influential ideas.

Aesthetics after Duchamp

After Duchamp it became obvious that art could no more be associated to Baumgarten's definition of aesthetics as the science of "emotional or sensitive knowledge". In Canada, Ian and Elaine Baxter (they work behind the common name *The N. E. Thing Company*) solved the problem dividing their practice in two categories, ACT-works (*Aesthetic Claimed things*) and ART-works (Aesthetics Rejected things).

Thierry de Duve used this nomenclature to analyse some of the artworks of the fifties and the sixties.[48] On the other hand, de Duve considered belonging to ACT the works of conceptual art or *Fluxus*. *Fluxus* ("to flow") was a movement characterized by intermediality, the amalgamation of different artistic disciplines, visual art, music, and literature. *Fluxus* was a typical art form of the hippie–culture of the sixties.

> Exemplary of this tendency are the so–called "command pieces" or "instruction pieces" which could be executed, but didn't necessarily have to be, by the artist or someone alse, in fact by anybody. For if the name "art" was to be removed from the piece, and then the name "artist" should also be removed from its author.[49]

To this group we can count the work of Yoko Ono and her pieces from 1960-1963 named *Tape Pieces*: "Listen to the sound of earth turning/ Take the sound of the stone aging".[50]

Yoko Ono (1933)

Popular art and the aesthetic of everyday life

An increasing number of practical objects that also are intentionally "beautiful" or with other words, are designed to be "attractive" to consumers, habits the world today. The proliferation of commodities during the 20th century and the need to win new customers erased the limits between artworks and commodities, both becoming aesthetic products. This process is been described as the "generalized aestheticization" of the world. The aesthetic values of commodities are today as precious as their practical values. With other words, the aesthetical values became a part of the social process of production of commodities and the social and economical utility of the objects of everyday life became enriched by aesthetical qualities. The start point of this new situation consolidates with Postmodernity and the rise of Pop Art. During the eighties and the nineties, the importance of the aesthetical point of view invaded politics and ethics, criticising any form of *essentialism* about the meaning of the good and beautiful in society.

The explosion of Pop Art during the sixties is naturally associated to the work of Andy Warhol, to whom art and everyday life infiltrate each other. The synapse of the world of fine arts and the world of everyday life, produce a series of paradoxes that Warhol exploited successfully –e.g. the "Brillo Box"– a kind of synapse in which the differences of the real object and the work of art is only of a dimensional character.

Andy Warhol, "Brillo Box", 1964

Another of Warhol's contributions to the study of the transcriptional discourse is the use of monotony in film, producing a very original synapse between film and photography, in which photography is the dominating media.

Postmodern aesthetics

Aesthetics in the Postmodern age remarked *figure* over the *discourse*. Is a consequence of the process in which the artefact as media of communication, dominates over its original meaning. Indirectly, the experienced art became more important than its interpretation. These tendencies have been important since Nietzsche and Heidegger, as the return to the primary, to the sources of art. The Postmodern aesthetical ideal is then in some sense irrational and grounded in pure "sensory" experience; this ideal supposed a turn against narration and discourse to favour the image.

Lyotard introduced the terms *figurative* and *discursive* to support the distinction between a Postmodern art of *impact, surface, and sensation* versus a modernist art of *meaning, depth, and interpretation*.

> Lyotard described the *figural* as the primary processes of the unconscious, similar to what Freud called the *id*, versus the discursive which he describes as the secondary process, or similar to what Freud called the ego. Thus, what Lyotard and other postmodernists want in art is the "decodification" and subsequent "decolonization" of the

> libidinal energies which language, text, and the intellect codify, censor and repress.[51]

Other very important characters of Postmodern aesthetics are the primacy of the "participatory experience, one in which the audience receives, and handles as they may, the flows of libidinal energies which the artist set free".

The traditional roll of art criticism disappears and is substituted by a critical discourse that renovates the work of art, adding to it the participation of another especial receiver. There is an idea of praxis that makes art a clear form of action. It is no longer important what art means but what art does.

Postmodern aesthetics does not handle with the *beautiful* but with the *sublime*. "Lyotard views the *sublime* as being a mixture of pleasure and pain, of pathos and grit, of sweetness and sin, of the cute and of the dirt."(CITAT). The limits between art and other social activities are broken. Art has no longer to do with external formal qualities but with human intern conflicts.

> The sublime –which was very important in the aesthetics of Kant— refer to an idea of the limits of harmony and of beauty, and reminds us of the *undefined*, that which make us anxious and make the mind alert.

The primacy of the sublime over the beautiful leads the Postmodern society to a politics of the sublime and therefore to a deconstruction of every so called *metanarrative,* the *grand narratives* of Modernism and positivism. The *sublimisation* of society, implies some philosophical nihilism which has been postmodernists weakest argument in a society which is increasingly technological.

The aesthetics of Susan Sontag

Postmodern aesthetics is marked by an emphasis of the figural over the discursive.[52] Postmodernism values more the *impact of art* over the *meaning of art* and the *sensation of art* over the *interpretation* of it. Such an emphasis on the impact of art relates well to Heidegger's wish to hear words as for the first time, to "let their elementary forces" rise through.

Such Postmodern preferences however, were first notably articulated in the middle of the sixties by an art-critic named Susan Sontag (1933-2004). Sontag claimed that Modernism is favouring the "intellect" in art "at the expense of energy and sensual capability".[53] Sontag believed that Postmodernism understands art as a "sensory" experience over and above an "intellectual experience", favouring the image over the narrative and the figural over the discursive. For example, "don't tell me about how happy you were, show me! Don't tell me how brutal it was, show me!"

The terms *figurative* and *discursive* help to theoretically support the distinction that Sontag makes between a Postmodern art of *impact, surface, and sensation* and a modernist art, of *meaning, depth, and interpretation*. Thus to the postmodernist, it is no longer important to know what art means, but what it *does*. Then, the sense of control that language has over art is definitively gone.[54] *To make art is to perform.*

The sublime

In his work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen) from 1764, Immanuel Kant studied what the beautiful and the sublime is. The "beautiful" is "occasion a pleasant sensation but one that is joyous and smiling." The "sublime" at the other hand, "arouses enjoyment but with horror."[55]

> The feeling of the sublime is, therefore, at once a feeling of displeasure, arising from the inadequacy of imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason, and a simultaneously awakened pleasure, arising from this very judgement of the inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense being in accord with ideas of reason, so far as the effort to attain to these is for us a law. [56]

The *sublime* for Kant is a feeling of wonder about the mighty powers of reason when it tries to understand that, which

is understandable. Confronted with nature, reason feels first inadequate and this produces the feeling of pain, but then, the feeling of pain and horror became a feeling of pleasure when the mind grasps the power of reason to trespass the limits of knowledge. The sublime for Kant is associated to the self-satisfying feeling of the Modern man, the man of the Enlightenment.

> Therefore the inner perception of the inadequacy of every standard of sense to serve for the rational estimation of magnitude is a coming into accord with reason's laws, and a displeasure that makes us alive to the feeling of the supersensible side of our being, according to which it is final, and consequently a pleasure, to find every standard of sensibility falling short of the ideas of reason. [57]

According to Kant, women have feelings for the beautiful while men have feelings for the sublime. Kant asserts that men's feelings have to do with principles of duty while noble and deep understanding is not suitable for women. Kant subdivided the feelings of the sublime in three groups: the terrifying sublime accompanied by melancholy, the noble sublime accompanied by wonder and the splendid sublime accompanied by the feeling of the beautiful. The beautiful belongs to comedy while the sublime to tragedy. The worst that can be said about a woman is that she is disgusting while the worst that can be said to a man is that he is ridiculous.

Jean- François Lyotard developed the thought of Kant about the sublime, associating it to the limits of sense, limits that cannot be transgressed.[58] To try to transgress those limits conduce to the creation of totalising systems that are delusions of the sublime. The feelings of the sublime are the marks of Modernity and of its limits. Modern man, the man of the Enlightenment, is then a man condemned producing *metatheories*, that is, false representations about the world. Postmodernism is then, the consciousness of the triviality of Modern knowledge and the establishing of a new reason of complexity. In this sense, the new information–age is also Postmodern.

However, according to Lyotard, art can in some sense,

transgress these limits because art does not explain the world but works with it. Because of that, Postmodern aesthetics is the aesthetics of action, and art became almost the same as performance. Critics of ideology then became an indissoluble part of knowledge, and knowing became a part of politics. At the end, the politics of Postmodernism are naturally associated to art and to an aesthetical point of view.

THE WORLD OF MEDIA

§ 8 Understanding Media

Everybody associates the world “media” to “mass media” and then, by extension to anything which works as “vehicle of communication”. The actual definition reproduces the below-analysed confusion between “media” (intentional mood, expression of beliefs) and “vehicle of communication” (informative mood)[59]. Following these conclusions, the term “mass–media” should be renamed (maybe to “mass–communication”) and in this way emphasize its informative character as vehicles of communication.

However, the term “mass–media” describing a cognitive act of communication means even more. It means vehicles of communication that communicates *new information.* Therefore, these vehicles of communication do not transport any kind of information but only the most up-to-date. People do not read old newspapers nor hear the radio news from the past week. The term “mass–media” then, links to the idea of “vehicle of communication” and to the idea of “recent–news”. The word “recent”, is here connected to the noun “news” which refers to “information about recent events, reported by newspapers, radio and television”. However, the term “mass–media” is today by extension, also used to refer to *every* vehicle of communication, even to them, which do were not created to communicate “recent–news”. Let us here record how the word “media” associates to a very different kind of vehicles. Wikipedia provide us with a definition and a list of communication-vehicles:

> Media (the plural of "medium") is a truncation of the term media of communication, referring to those organized means of dissemination of fact, opinion, entertainment, and other information, such as newspapers, magazines, banners and billboards, cinema films, radio, television, the World Wide Web, billboards, books, CDs, DVDs, videocassettes, computer games and other forms of publishing.[60]

As we see, this list of "media" includes the traditional list of vehicles of mass communication, those that are *intended* to communicate recent–news of any kind, which is the case of newspapers, radio, and TV. However, the list includes other vehicle–forms, which also work as "organized means of dissemination of fact, opinion, entertainment, and other information", e.g. films, books, videocassettes and computer games, vehicles which are not *intended* to communicate recent–news. Then, the term "mass–media", having its origin in the idea of "recent–news", is now used to mean "information–distribution" in general.

The rise of this informative idea of "media" followed the development of Modern society, from an industrial stadium at the end of the 19th century to the information–society of our time. Consequently, a book and a film or an opera are mass–media if they are understood as vehicles of communication, in spite of the fact that they were created to shape intentionality and not cognitive contents.

Regarding to the capability to transmit new information (up to date knowledge) it would be useful to distinguish between those vehicles of communication that are intended to be used as vehicles of new information, and those others that are used as such but *were not* intended to be used in such a manner. The newspaper belongs to the first group and books, paintings, and symphonies belong to the second group. This distinction introduces us to a categorization of the objects of the everyday world in two main groups; the group of the artefacts indented to work cognitively and those others which are intended to work intentionally.

Let us examine the fact that Modern vehicles of communication, adapts easily to a broad function. Why can movies, easily be used to communicate new–news than e.g. paintings or sculptures? A factor to have in consideration here is the ontology of the communication's process. With film, as with newspapers, radio and TV, the audience is massive. The inverted production time and the impact in society are maximal in correspondence to the time involved to produce and distribute the material that works as the vehicle of the communicated information.

The increased need of information may be attached to the complexity of Modern society and their organisational needs. In this respect, *intentionality surrenders cognition* converting every media in an information vehicle.

We can easily understand why the *informatizing* of communication shocked the development of Modern art, even transforming it to a special kind of vehicle for information. However, the opposite also happened and any mass–media vehicle became adequate to communicating artistic contents.

The revolutionary changes in Western societies, during the 19th and the 20th century, required a completely new artwork production. For first time in history, the cultural world of man–made things became at least as important as the world of natural phenomena. The new world of industry and its impact in everyday life with the introduction of machines as home–equipment became a new and strong source of inspiration of the imagination of the artist. The discovery of photography make the mimetically function of painting obsolete questioning the function of art as pure "entertaining", without some direct utility. The Modern artists, who took his/her work seriously, could no longer agree with Schopenhauer's understanding of art as "nothing for use or profit".[61]

With the rise of the industrial society, art's traditional roll as a *medium* develops into a new roll as vehicle of mass–information. This process can be followed in the debates and testimonies of Modern art schools.

One of the problems arising because of the informatization of society was to improve *art as intentionality different from art as information*. Clement Greenberg pointed this out in an article from 1960 *Modernist Painting:*

> The arts could save themselves from this levelling down only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained from any other kind of activity. Each art, it turned out, had to perform this demonstration on its own account. What had to be exhibited was not only that which was unique and irreducible in art in general, but also that which was unique and irreducible in each particular art.

> Each art had to determine, through its own operations and works, the effects exclusive to itself. By doing so it would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of that area all the more certain. [62]

Working to reach the status of a *useful* activity different from that of pure communication of informational contents, art developed a new age, the age of *Modernism*. Modernism according to Greenberg consisted just in this process of searching the area of competence of each art form, a process in which each art form studies and experiments with its own limits and possibilities, a kind of self reflection that should expose the authentic relationship of each art to reality.

This activity –almost phenomenological– was what defined the modernist achievement according to Greenberg and leads the artist to the exploring of the *medium* thorough his/her work:

> It quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique in the nature of its medium. The task of self-criticism became to form the specific effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of another art. […] The Impressionists, in Manet's wake, abjured underpainting and glazes. […] Cézanne sacrificed verisimilitude, or correctness, in order to fit his drawing and design more explicitly to the rectangular shape of the canvas. It was the stressing of the ineluctable *flatness* of the surface that remained, however, more fundamental than anything else to the processes by which pictorial art criticized and defined it self under Modernism.[63]

The accommodation process of Modern art, which became obvious through the revolutionary changes in painting, explored then, the limits of intentional representation and its limits against other art forms.

The thought of Marshall McLuhan

Marshall McLuhan wrote that the technological revolution of the 19th century, produce the fragmentation of culture, a 'revolution" of the communications in social life based on the division of work. When electricity became a social product and social consumed, people communicated with the velocity of light. The geographical distances between the messenger and the receiver became irrelevant and an *implosion* followed. The implosion created the Global Culture of our time, the revival of communications structures back from the ages of tribal existence.[64] Marshal McLuhan defined the connection between media and society as a deep relation between our bodies, society and communication. This relation included all social products, in fact the meaning of the word "medium" for McLuhan, is as complex and rich as the meanings of the words "thing" or "artefact" or "manufactured article". We could say that for McLuhan, "any-thing" can be and would be used in communication.

> It makes no difference whatever, whether one considers as artefacts or as media things of a tangible 'hardware' nature such as bowls and clubs or forks and spoons, or toots and devices and engines, railways, spacecraft, radios, computers, and soon; or things of a 'software' nature such as theories or laws of science, philosophical systems, remedies or even the diseases in medicine, forms or styles in painting or poetry or drama or music, and so on. All are equally verbal in structure. Laws of Media provides both the etymology and exegesis of these words: it may well turn out that the language they comprise has no syntax. So, the accustomed distinctions between arts and sciences and between things and ideas, between physics and metaphysics, are dissolved. A New Science replaces the current Old Science of media and artefacts, which is too narrow and too rigid, having drawn its techniques from the abstract Method used since the Renaissance. It is a science of content and of messages only. The study of human media and technologies must begin with their humanity and remain steeped in the

study of the senses.[65]

McLuhan's analysis of media, supposes that some media are principal and other subordinated. His example about the uses of electricity is illuminating. McLuhan said that the electrical light is "pure information", but it could be used to e.g. write advertisement in neon. He means, in our words, that the social purpose of electricity is to be used as a secondary object supporting some other intentional project as that of advertisement in neon. A placard advertising jeans in neon is a placard–media; the neon–medium is a principal media using the electricity-medium and as secondary media to communicate about jeans–media. That means for McLuhan that the content of a medium is always another medium. (That any intentional act supposes another intentional act). McLuhan refers indirectly to the question of synapsing, he asked him self: "Which is the content of language?" He answered that the content of language are "thoughts", which are not "linguistic".[66] McLuhan understanding of media makes the limits between the subject disappear – which became "pure communication" – the medium of communication and the message, and with that also the limits between work, the media of work – tools, machines – and the products of work. Any product became a productive media and any productive media became a product.[67] For McLuhan the process that makes history go on is the technological development. McLuhan established the grounds of a "new science", the science of media, which should be built answering four fundamental questions or "tetrads":

> More of the foundation of this New Science consists of proper and systematic procedure. We propose no underlying theory to attack or defend, but rather a heuristic device, a set of four questions, which we call a tetrad. They can be asked (and the answers checked) by anyone, anywhere, at any time, about any human artefact. The tetrad was found by asking, 'What general, verifiable (that is, testable) statements can be made about all media?' We were surprised to find only four, here posed as questions: What does it enhance or intensify? What does it render obsolete or displace? What does it retrieve that was pre-

viously obsolesced? What does it produce or become when pressed to an extreme?

He is so sure about the fact that only four and more than four questions are relevant that he challenged the reader and wrote:

> We issue this challenge to the reader: Can you find a fifth question that applies in all, or in even a significant many, instances? Can you locate an instance in which one of the four questions does not apply? Your answer is of the first importance as it determines the kind of our science. If one question is eliminated, if the tetrad is reduced to a triad, then, as will be discussed, we have merely Old Science tricked out in new clothes, not formal but efficient cause, and familiar Method. If five questions apply, we are in other, but again new, territory, the 'four' pattern has a special resonance and relation to language. Whatever the outcome, once the number of laws is known – and it will be four – then we can be certain that every human artefact will occasion exactly those transformations. [68]

McLuhan's understandings of media include the interpretation of artefacts as "*outerings* or *utterings* of the human body or psyche, private or corporate". In a more mystical way: "That is to say, they are speech, and they are translations of us, the users, from one form into another form, metaphors." The use of the term "translations" seems to mean the same as our definition of "transcription". That is, the changing of parameters in dimensionality or synapsing. McLuhan gave some examples, some are obvious, other almost incomprehensible[69]:

> Club, hammer extends forearm, fist; Clothing extends skin; House extends skeleton (as carapace); Saw, knife, bullet extends teeth; Writing extends eye; Mirror, telescope, microscope, camera, spectacles extends eye; Cup, bowl extends hands (cupped); Refrigerator extends stomach; Weapons extends arms, legs, teeth, nails; Rope extends sinew; Wheel extends feet (in motion); Crowd extends group, individual; Tribe extends family; Automobile extends whole body; Chair extends head, eyes

(numbs rest); Bed extends flesh

Satellite extends whole culture; Spacecraft extends planet; Stairs extends legs; Number extends hand, fingers.

McLuhan's list, reveals some of the problems which arises when we try to make a systematic study of intermediality which do not consider that different media work in different dimensions. The comparison is possible only trough their *differences* – that is, their reference to other dimensions. Because we cannot perform any experiment to verify a possible connection between media, the only method to use is that of the phenomenological analysis. If we try to push the logic of similarities too hard, we got *unintuitive* connections. The laws of media in tetrad form, belongs – following McLuhan – to "rhetoric and grammar, not philosophy. Our concern is etymology and exegesis."[70] The structure of a tetrad is the following:

TETRADS	
ENHANCES What does it enhance or intensify?	REVERSES INTO What does it produce or become when pressed to an extreme?
RETRIEVES What does it retrieve that was previously obsolesced?	OBSOLESCES What does it render obsolete or displace?

A tetrad can be read in any direction, as the horoscope. This method is very peculiar and actualises the issue of the general return of science to archaic methodologies. In fact this archaic character is characteristic for that we could call Postmodern science.

There is no 'right way' to 'read' a tetrad, as the parts are

> simultaneous. But when 'read' either left-right or top-bottom (Enhance is to Retrieve as Reverse is to Obsolesce, etc.), or the reverse, the proportions and metaphor- or word-structure should appear. (That they may appear more readily in some tetrads than in others suggests the need for a little further tuning.) [71]

The method of using tetrads to study media is also *structuralist* in its searching after systematic connections in a net-world. McLuhan's tetrads are both convincing and puzzling. As horoscopes and general divination, we cannot avoid seeing its usefulness. On the other hand and at the same time, how could we not see its deceitfulness? In fact, its truthfulness is grounded in the using of *rules* – the tetrads – to make visible the invisible. As horoscopes and the Tarot, tetrads capture relations between objects of the everyday world, an objective world populated by subjective products. The only truthfulness that counts then is the accuracy with which we apply the established rules.

POSTMODERNISM AS PHILOSOPHY

§ 9 Deconstructing logos

Jacques Derrida and the dissolution of the phenomenon

With "Logos" we mean, "the principles that determines Reason in Western civilization" and with "deconstruction" we mean, "the critics" of logos. Jacques Derrida's thinking can be placed among those who throughout history have sought to capture the variations of this development.

We could simplify Derrida's project by saying that he wants to create a new form of dialectic built on signs, a dialectic closer to Heraclites (540-480 BC.) than to Hegel. He wants to create a semiotic dialectic. In order to understand Derrida, we must also comprehend his attitude towards the great philosophic standpoints, standpoints from which his thinking originates. Unlike Foucault, Derrida is uninterested in problems within the history of ideas. Although his academic style stands close to the practise of literary history, his viewpoint is mainly a philosophical one. Derrida is critical towards Husserl and phenomenology. He denies the existence of the phenomenon and questions the possibility of studying historical processes with phenomenological methods. According to Derrida, Husserl's things-in-themselves cannot be anything else than symbolic representations. He writes (referring to Pierce): "From the moment that there is meaning, there is nothing but signs. We think only in signs."[72] Derrida could be described as a "linguistic philosopher", but more rightfully as; "a philosopher of writing", or "a writing-philosopher". Of all linguistic manifestations, the study of writing is his philosophical inspiration. His interest in the written word is based upon the particular characteristics of writing; it is both fixated on an objective ground, and at the same time open for interpretation. A text can never be considered to be completely or fully interpreted. It is always open for further interpretation.

Derrida writes in polemic with philosophers such as Plato, Rousseau, Condillac, Hegel, Marx, Husserl and Heidegger. He also writes about Kafka, Valéry, Mallarme, Joyce, Artaud, Freud and Lévi-Strauss among others. He criticizes Plato and Rousseau mainly for their overestimation of the spoken language in relation to the written one. More precisely: their way of dividing the two by considering the spoken language to contain presence, reality, truth, and letting the written word represent the false and the illusory[73]. As a writing-philosopher, Derrida debates with both Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Pierce. He criticizes Saussure for his sharp "structuralistic" distinction between word and idea, between the symbol and the phenomenon and finally between the signified (significant) and the signifier (signifié). Saussure thought of the signified (signs) as gratuitously chosen, completely independent of the meanings of the ideas. This sharp demarcation reproduces, according to Derrida, the typical western form of reason or *logos*. It is built upon logical or ontological dichotomies (sharp, alterative oppositions such as true-false, subject-object). Derrida describes this logic of dividing as logo-centrism, a standpoint that is historically exhausted. Furthermore, he looks upon his own philosophy as the tool for deconstructing this logo-centrism. Derrida includes the critique of Husserl and the phenomenology in his critique of classical philosophy. We could say that Derrida, in this sense, seeks to take the problems of western epistemology one step further than Husserl. Husserl created the phenomenon by putting the real "in parenthesis". Derrida, on the other hand, puts the phenomenon "in parenthesis" in order to create the *trace*, the characterizer of ontological differences.

> "Trace" is a term that emerges from reflection on the way that Zeno's old paradox of the arrow provides a simple but helpful example of thinking in terms of the trace. Regarding the arrow in 'motion as a mere succession of self-contained presences fails to yield the concrete phenomenon of a moving arrow. To avoid paradox, we must insinuate into each "point" of motion essential reference to past and future points that are not present but somehow

leave their traces.[74]

According to Derrida, the world consists of neither subject-object relations, nor relations between that which is experienced (noema) and the way that it is experienced in (noesis): the real consists only of differences that hardly leave any impressions.

About the concept of "différance"

With the word *différance* (with an "a"- a non-existing word in the French language, which Derrida creates) Derrida wants to refer to the tension between the logical and ontological alternatives. According to Derrida, there is no sharp distinction between the phenomenon and the formal structure of language. He chooses a word with two meanings. The French word "difference" (with an "e") has got two meanings: "to separate from" or "diverge" and to "postpone" or "dwell". The first meaning can be applied to spatial representations, while the other has got clear relations to the analysis of time and time-related conceptions[75]. In order to strengthen the philosophical meaning of the concept, Derrida switches the letter "e" to an "a", and by doing that he creates the neologism différance[76]. Derrida writes:

> The two apparently different values of difference are tied together in Freudian theory: to differ as discernibility, distinction, separation, diastem, *spacing*; and to defer as detour, relay, reserve, temporization. 1. The concepts of trace (Spur), of breaching (Bahnung), and of the forces of breaching, from the Project on, are inseparable from the concept of difference. The origin of memory and of the psyche as (conscious or unconscious) memory in general, can be described only by taking into account the difference between breaches. Freud says so overtly. There is no breach without difference and no difference without trace. 2. All the differences in the production of unconscious traces and in the processes of inscription (Niederschrift) can also be interpreted as moments of différance, in the sense of putting into reserve. According to

> a schema that never ceased to guide Freud's thought, the movement of the trace is described as an effort of life to protect it self by deferring the dangerous investment, by constituting a reserve (Vorrat).[77]

According to Derrida there are only signs, various symbols whose ontology is the "trace". He writes:

> In a language, in the system of language, there are only differences. Therefore, a taxonomical operation can undertake the systematic, statistical, and classificatory inventory of a language. But, on one hand, these differences pinyin language, in speech too, and in the exchange between language and speech.[78]

In polemic with Saussure, Derrida insists on the unity of signs in relation to the signified and the signifier. The principle of difference "affects the totality of the sign, that is, the sign as both signified and signifier".[79] *Différance* is a non-concept: "but rather the possibility of conceptuality, of a conceptual system and process in general".[80] Difference is "the playing movement that 'produces' – by the means of something that is not simply an activity – these differences, these effects of difference [. . .] [81]

Derrida's critique of Husserl

Already inn his study of Husserl's text on the origin of geometry, Derrida argues against the possibility of phenomenological reflection. In this case the critique is directed against Husserl's attempt to establish the history of the phenomenological object.

That critique is also relevant for the study of Foucault and his project: phenomenology of history, the attempt to replace objectivism (to speak truthfully) with a sort of temporary attempt to "be taken seriously". In his preface to *Edmund Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry"* Derrida writes that the critique waged upon geometry is not "specific to the origins of geometry". Instead it is a critique aimed at "a certain technical objectivistic irresponsibility in the practise of science and philosophy; but also a critique against a historicism which is

blinded by the empirical fact-cult and assumptions about the causal origins of everything". Derrida's philosophical system is a Modern and radical form of conceptualism. The only thing existing is language, and this exists by the concepts' differences (différance).

> Thus, difference is the name we might give to the "active," moving discord of different forces, and of differences of forces, that Nietzsche sets up against the entire system of metaphysical grammar, wherever this system governs culture, philosophy, and science.[82]

Corresponding to the way in which Derrida understands the topic, the problem of perception is a non-existing one. This standpoint is made very clear, as Gutting puts it: "there never was any 'perception'".[83] However, the main problem with Husserl's phenomenology is the impossibility of development, of the course of time and thereby of history as such. Derrida finds this problematic when studying Husserl's concept of time and states that Husserl's use of the concepts "now" and "origin" is paradoxical. This because "every moment" consists of an infinite number of smaller time-units, that in turn consists of yet smaller ones and so on. How can we explain development, then? As Derrida puts it, Husserl's problem is a heritage from classical metaphysics:

> The dominance of the now not only is integral to the system of the founding contrast established by metaphysics, that between form (or *eidos* or idea) and matter as a contrast between act and potency ("the actual now is necessarily something punctual and remains so, a form that persists through continuous change of matter").[84]

Husserl's solution to this problem is to regard both the event and the after-event as phenomena. Nevertheless, the problem entails yet other complications. Simultaneously when closing the possibility to development, the possibility of events that are "happening" is denied. In this sense: without being perceived by the consciousness. That kind of perception is unthinkable for Husserl; observe that such a situation precludes all forms of history. About this, Derrida writes:

> It is no accident that *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* both confirms the dominance of the present and rejects the "after-event" of the becoming conscious of an "unconscious content" which is the structure of temporality implied throughout Freud's texts.
>
> And then quotes Husserl:
>
> Husserl writes to this effect: "It is certainly an absurdity to speak of a content of which we are "unconscious," one of which we are conscious only later. Consciousness is necessarily a being-conscious in each of its phases. Just as the retentional phase was conscious of the preceding one without making it an object, so also are we conscious of the primal datum-lamely, in the specific form of the "now" – without its being objective; ... retention of a content of which we are not conscious is impossible;. . . if every "content" necessarily and in itself is "unconscious" then the question of an additional consciousness becomes senseless. "[85]

In the eyes of Derrida, Husserl is a Modern Parmenides who precludes all forms of change and movement. Derrida's critique is surprisingly close to Zenon's use of the paradoxes.

Derrida's technique of deconstruction

In the critique of the western philosophical tradition, Derrida's thinking does not remain passive. He advocates a new methodology or science – under the name grammatology, whose task is the revealing of the logo-centrism embodied in thinking. Examples of logo-centrism are, according to Derrida, systems organized after principles such as: the principle of identification (A=A), the principle of non-contradiction (A and not-A exclude each other) and the method of dichotomies (which organize the real by oppositions of categories that exclude each other as true-false, being-nothingness etc.) These oppositions are asymmetrical; the one alternative dominates the other[86]. From Derrida's point of view; such a stand implies an illusion, a false perception. It conceals a false simplicity and a

false plainness. The method for revealing these unsatisfactory states of things is to Derrida, the deconstructive reading.

As such, Derrida's philosophy becomes sort of a critical epistemology containing ethical connotations; like in the case of the critique of ethnocentrism, where a system of thoughts derives universal conclusions from subjective ethnological reflections. Like a Modern Socrates, Derrida wanderers about and questions things. His system leaves no answers, only questions. Is he a sceptic? That could be a matter of interpretation, but we also ought to read Derrida as a cure against Modern forms of a naïve and self-righteous thinking.

The paradox of deconstruction

Is it possible to deconstruct deconstruction? First, let us give an affirmative answer. What could be the consequences of deconstruction? We apprehend deconstruction as a form of critique which precludes the determination of a crucial difference between denotation and connotation in a text; and furthermore, precludes the possible meanings of that same text. When this is achieved, the inner determinations of the text collapse and the text is deconstructed:

> In fact, since the meaning of a text is often metaphoric, there is no point in even attempting to distinguish between *denotation*s and *connotations*, with the result that close inspection of the possible *significances* of a text will generally reveal an *aporia*, a moment at which the illusion of *determinacy* collapses because of some internal contradiction. This moment of collapse is the point at which the text supposedly deconstructs itself.[87]

In that case, the deconstruction of deconstruction would imply the impossibility to determine whether deconstruction actually works. In other words, the moment of insecurity is moved to the method of deconstruction itself, by looking at it as a positive discourse. Now, to the negative answer, what would be the consequence of this negation? As critical philosophy, it would be unaware of itself and show signs of typical positivistic features. As ideology, it would be a metanarrative. Finally as

method, it would be useless. Yet, if deconstruction as a metanarrative could be deconstructed – due to its methodological qualities – it is still active and practicable.

To deconstruct deconstruction

Postmodernism, Post-structuralism and Post-Marxism are the newest modernistic projects. Thereby, this way of questioning all things that are possible to question, could be raised to dogma. Man cannot escape his destiny of reason, not even when doing so in the belief of benefiting reason itself. After Derrida, we know that culture as such should be constantly deconstructed. However, this goes for Derrida's philosophy as well, otherwise the différance and deconstruction becomes the new metanarrative. On the other hand, a deconstruction of deconstruction requires that we stop deconstructing. That or we should deconstruct and construct simultaneously. The result must be a construction, made free from that naive attitude which characterizes the positive sciences before the 1980's. The new science should therefore be humble towards itself and its products, like a careful positivism or post-positivism. It must withhold a healthy distance to itself, show less dogmatism and promote the variety of ideas. It must become 'happy' in Nietzsche's sense[88].

Postmodernism has left behind lots of scattered philosophical remnants. It left a chessboard with only few pieces to play with, and in this allegory, only as references. The philosophical schools remain, but the study of them is strictly for an education in the history of ideas. The situation aggravates since the most important works from the 1960's and forth, deliberately have avoided obvious identity patterns.

A word in Rio de la Plata's jargon language describes this situation, *cambalache*, a sort of flea market where everything lies higgledy-piggledy. *Bricolage*, could be yet another suitable word for it, a name that brings to the fore the relationship between the Postmodern reality and the archaic conception of the word.

The deconstruction and the focus on differences are vital to Postmodernism. Remaining is therefore the intersec-

tions, the contrasts, shadows, sketches and relief's. When trying to orient such an intellectual environment, the task reminds of patching scatterings, and building upon that is necessarily done with tools of eclecticism. Not long ago, you could develop a problem from Marx as well as from Husserl. However, today it is necessarily too build upon that which makes both Marx and Husserl jigsaw pieces in a totality – characterized by its lack of focus. This situation has also resulted in a demand, greater than ever, for competence in the field of history of ideas, and it has simultaneously increased the risk of not making it.

I will now exemplify this situation with the study of the concept "praxis". Our task will be the study of how one may reflect on concepts like practice, action, commitment etc. First, we can state that since the great days of existentialism and Marxism, the concept of praxis has left the safe grounds of enlightenment, and entered a Postmodern concept of life. This way of thinking demands from us a diversified advance, an eclectic reflection that at its end involves a *deconstruction of Postmodernism.*

§ 10 The Postmodern Condition

Corresponding to Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) writings, the "Postmodern condition" arises, when Modern society tried to represent that *which cannot be represented*. Then, the mind instead represents *differences*. He found the Postmodern condition only in the most developed societies. As *Modern,* Lyotard understands the scientific discourse when it develops into a meta-discourse. Lyotard presents the Postmodern in his book *The Postmodern Condition* published in 1979 as incredulity towards meta-narratives (grand narratives) where meta-narratives were understood as *totalising stories about history and the goals of the human race that ground and legitimise knowledge and cultural practises.* An example of meta-narrative could be the ideology of democracy in USA, where the liberal political ideal reaches the category of a myth. According to this meta-narrative only representative democracy can bring happiness to human kind. The same can be said about Marxism and the dream of a communistic society in which any injustice would disappear. The Postmodern Condition is also an expression of a new form of *tolerance*, a feeling for the incommensurable, a feeling for the different and for *mini-discourses* importance for science and society.

The concept 'Postmodernism' refers to a very complex ideological movement concerning the entire cognitive field; from music to architecture, from film to philosophy and from technology to sociology. As an academic 'subject' or object of study, its origin can be dated to the midst of the 1980's, but as a historical process, the dating is more difficult. Some writers associate the birth of Postmodernism to Husserl's phenomenological revolution[89]. After Husserl's philosophy, according to Rafael Capurro, knowledge no longer depends on the subject.

The starting point of Postmodernism could also be determined from 'Modernism'. We could try to follow the modernistic movement and seek to determine its crisis and dissolution. Nevertheless, problems rise with that determina-

tion, due to the variety of references to one and the same concept. 'Modernism' means one thing in literary history and another in the history of ideas. In literary history, Modernism is associated to the works of Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Proust and Kafka. It is associated to a new form of writing that develops during the beginning of the 20th century and whose characteristics, among others, is the impressionistic discourse, the subjectivity, the variety of perspectives, the fragmentation of forms and non-continuous discourses.

During this period, the boundaries between high- and low culture vanish[90]. The modernistic literary movement show many qualities that later on will characterize Postmodernism, such as; the rejection of rigid forms, the use of *bricolage*, irony and playfulness. Furthermore, it also seeks a non-structured, non-cantered subject. The difference stands between the values of activity. While Modernism looks upon the fragmentation of the subject as a tragic consequence of an incomprehensible world, without the possibility of objectivity, Postmodernism views this as positive, and even strives to deepen it:

> Postmodernism, in contrast, doesn't lament the idea of fragmentation, provisionally, or incoherence, but rather celebrates that. The world is meaningless. Let's not pretend that art can make meaning then, let's just play with nonsense.[91]

From a perspective of history of ideas, Postmodernism can be studied through that complex of ideas that dominate European thought during a certain historical period. In this case, we no longer talk about "Modernism", but "Modernity ". Postmodernism then becomes a sort of "Postmodernity". A problem with this approach is the various periods that writers seek to capture with the concept "Modernity" – there is no unity. For some it initiates as early as in the 16th century, with the renaissance and the discovery and conquering of America. Other researchers define it as enlightenment and associate it to the French and American revolutions. Yet a third standpoint states the industrial revolution of the 19th century as the birth of Modernity.

When defining the contrast between Modernity and

Postmodernity, the period of choice is not as important as the ideals of the industrial revolution and the complex of ideas that show the distinctive features of Modernity.

The concept of Modernity contains optimistic beliefs in the social- and technological development. The cognitive paradigm of Modernity is natural science and that is possible because the subject appears as separated and isolated from "nature" as its study object. The experiment and experimental actions is regarded as unproblematic and possible to apply upon all sorts of situations. Reason is self-evident and to produce truth, the good and the beautiful, becomes the natural occupation of cultural life.

The cultural activity should be subordinated to rational criteria, and all divergent activity is described as irrational and objectionable. To summon, Modernity represents order, an efficient administration, control, and planning.

Euro–centrism is also a certainty in a world with inexhaustible natural assets, which expands the possibility of colonialism. Modernity is identified with capitalism, colonialism, European culture, and gradually with representative democracy. For the sake of science and the Modern world, other civilisations are colonized. Eventually, attempts are made to decultivate these civilisations with force.

The first aim is to spread the Christian beliefs, the second to spread free enterprising. In both cases, Modernity is considered firs rate for man and his rights. During the 14th and 15th centuries the best for the non-European, is to be Christian. From the 19th century and forth, the best for non-European people is to be free workers on a free market.

Because Modernity is about the pursuit of ever-increasing levels of order, Modern societies constantly are on guard against anything and everything labelled as "disorder," which might disrupt order. Thus, Modern societies rely on continually establishing a binary opposition between "order" and "disorder," so that they can assert the superiority of "order." But to do this, they have to have things that represent "disorder"-Modern societies thus continually have to create/construct "disorder." In western culture, this disorder becomes "the other"--defined in relation to other binary oppositions. Thus

anything non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-hygienic, non-rational, (etc.) becomes part of "disorder," and has to be eliminated from the ordered, rational Modern society.[92]

Jean-François Lyotard describes this strive for control and totality as “great discourses” (*grand narratives*). Every meta-theory or meta-ideology that raises itself to an unquestionable truth is an example of such a “great discourse”. Like the example with democracy in the United States, where the liberal-political ideology and its forms of organization is raised to mythical heights.

According to this “grand narrative” the only thing that can bring joy and wealth to the people of the world is: representative democracy, capitalism and consumption. The same can be said about the great Marxist myth of the communist society, of the announced collapse of capitalism and a world free from injustice.

The birth of Postmodernism occurs during the 20th century as a reaction against the empire of Modernism , especially in connection to; the anti-colonial movement in Vietnam and Algeria, the struggle against racism and apartheid in the United States and South Africa, and as a supporter for the new youth movement and its new cultural expressions, and finally to the struggle for justice by the poor people of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The biggest stronghold of Postmodernism in western culture is the feminist movement. Through feminism, Postmodernism finds a strong support amongst an increasing troop of European intellectuals that from one reason or another couldn’t find themselves in the situation at hand.

By getting inspiration from philosophical sources characterized of the anti-Modern – like Nietzsche and Heidegger – Postmodernism develops a new ideal. An ideal marked by mini-discourses that seek the contingent, the irrational and the fleeting. The world, for this new philosophy, is chaotic and enigmatic.

Postmodernism as positive pessimism

It can hardly be interpreted, never comprehended. Ac-

cording to Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) the characteristic of the Postmodern world is the copy, which he names "simulacra". Mass-production favours the existence of copies without originals. The situation of knowledge is also changed due to Postmodern conditions; the aim of knowledge is its application. There is a clear utilitarian goal in the Postmodern cognitive ideal. In addition, the effect of computers changes the conditions of knowledge. This is a new virtual society and its reality is an imitation, mediated by the notions of computers. A Postmodern society is also a global one, a society that strives for maximal standardization of culture in all of its manifestations, from food culture to clothing, from the products of technology to religious exercise. Simultaneously Postmodernism favours the divergent, that which separates itself from the mainstream and resists.

Jean- François Lyotard and Gianni Vattimo

Lyotard says that the Postmodern condition rises when the Modern tries to imagine what cannot be imagined. It is the conscious focus on the differences. He finds the Postmodern condition in the "most developed" societies:

> The object of this study is the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies. I have decided to use the word post- modem to describe that condition. The word is in current use on the American continent among sociologists and critics; it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts.[93]

Lyotard apprehends as "Modern"; all sciences that make use of a *meta-discourse*, "such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth". The Postmodern condition is that distrust which people entertain against all sorts of meta-discourses. The Postmodern condition is also an expression for a new form of tolerance, a feeling for the incommensurable, for the differences rather than the great

narratives.

For Gianni Vattimo, there is a lesson to be learned from Nietzsche and Heidegger's anticipation of the end of history. They showed that the picture of reality as a well formulated order was nothing but an expression of a primitive and barbaric humanity.[94]

> But what exactly might this loss of reality, this genuine erosion of the principle of reality, mean for emancipation and liberation? Emancipation, here, consists in disorientation, which is at the same time also the liberation of differences, of local elements, of what could generally be called dialect. With the demise of the idea of a central rationality of history, the world of generalized communication explodes like a multiplicity of local rationalities –ethnic, sexual, religious, cultural or aesthetic minorities – that finally "peak up" for "themselves".[95]

Through emancipation and its own dialectic, the confusion, which occurs when the delusion is followed by identification and vice versa, grows. People understand themselves as different and at the same time as part of a multitude. In the same way that one looks upon ones own linguistic dialect, one also looks upon ones own religious, ethical and political values. By this way, people understand their own existence in a multicultural world. This is, according to Vattimo, what Nietzsche meant with the task of the superman:

> Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, called this 'continuing to dream knowing one is dreaming'. But is such a thing possible? This is the essence of what Nietzsche called the 'overman' (or beyond-man), the *Ûbermensch*: and he assigns the task of attaining it to mankind of the future, in the world of intensified communication.[96]

In the works of Heidegger, the very same dialectic between identity and difference is manifested, in the study of the problems of technology. The essence of technology is described as *Ge-stell*, a sort of operative/arrangement/structure that characterises the essence of Modern technology and determines the horizon of being (Da-sein). Ge-stell may lead to alienation. The essence of technology is constantly leading people towards

new missions, always looking for a new turning point, a new technological adjustment and a way out of being. There is a possible way out of the alienation of Western Man, it is a reaction against Ge-stell:

> Precisely in the Ge-stell, that is, in the society of technology and total manipulation, Heidegger sees an opportunity of overcoming the oblivion and metaphysical alienation in which Western man has lived until now. The Ge-stell can offer such an opportunity because it is defined in almost identical terms to those used by Benjamin in speaking of shock. In fact, in the Ge-stell, Heidegger writes: 'Our whole human existence everywhere sees itself challenged – now playfully and now urgently, now breathlessly and now ponderously – to devote itself to the planning and calculating of everything.'[97]

The Postmodern condition offers a front for scepticism and technological conservatism, of the same kind that Heidegger's philosophy advocates. Heidegger's philosophy and the psychoanalysis of Lacan are two meta-discourses that deconstructionists have not touched. The reason for this is that a deconstruction of Heidegger and Lacan imply a *deconstruction of the philosophical deconstruction*, an examination of the utmost frontier of Postmodernism and thereby a task for future generations.

Difference-philosophy

During the 50's Lyotard worked as a professor of philosophy in Algeria. He became involved in the left-radical group *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, that rejected the French occupation. Lyotard has published several books that testify the evolution within his thinking – from an early phenomenological engagement grounded in Merleau-Ponty, through a Marxist political conviction, and further to an original study of language and the boundaries of communication, built upon Wittgenstein's illustrations of language as "play".

The works of Lyotard represent yet another example on the enormous significance of the Algerian war in relation to

the development of French philosophy from the 50's and forth. In his most important work, *Le Differend* (1983), Lyotard establishes a detailed theory of the incommensurability of linguistic phrases: of the fundamental incomparability of events:

> For a phrase to survive the test of universal doubt stems neither from its being real nor from its being true but from its being merely what happens, what is occurring, *ce qui arrive, das Fallende.* You cannot doubt that something happens when you doubt: it happens that you doubt.[98]

The word "differend" can be translated into "conflict", "dispute" or "opposition". Lyotard wants to find out why conversation is impossible. The task of philosophy is to expose these conflicts, by making them fully active and simultaneously deconstruct the meta-narratives that develop with the intention of concealing the conflicts.[99]

Lyotard's technique reminds of Descartes' "cogito ergo sum", when he writes: "the phrase exists, because it's happening". The essence of the phrase is "happening", to become one with accidental occurrences, with the event. All attempts to reach any metaphysical or semantic certainty of the role of the phrase in the world are gone. It is "only there" as a witness to the courses of events.

Phrases appear in a network of diachronic character, where the last phrase retroactively determines the meaning of the whole chain of phrases. Therefore, a phrase cannot mean the same thing for each and every interpreter. In such way every interpreter uses his own net of phrases, which in turn is affected by every new phrase that the interpreter uses. Silence is also a phrase. Every phrase implicates four connections in the forms of a referent, a meaning, a receiver and a sender. According to Lyotard, it is impossible for two phrases to show exactly the same combination of these four chains. All that exists is the organization of these phrases, and that is done by the classification of them in genres. "Genre" is a literary term, in Lyotard's philosophy it reminds of the classical *theory of indifference* of William of Champeaux (1070-1120), a theory that claimed that

things that are different are really the same, not essentially but indifferent. In other words, things share secondary qualities that imply the becoming of individuals into universals, in the sense that they resemble each other without being identical. This formulation, criticised by Abélard, can be viewed as a prequel to the theory which Wittgenstein presents in the name of family resemblances.[100] Wittgenstein's thinking has also deeply influenced Lyotard. Lyotard seeks an apprehension of culture that characterizes itself by accidental occurrences and complexity, and which by this reason stands in opposition to every form of simplified connections. These ideological simplifications, that view history as a semantic continuum, are "grand narratives" (or meta-language). Lyotard's attack on the grand narratives implies a sort of deconstruction, that amongst other things make use of art and esthetical action. Art produces, according to Lyotard, "small narrations" that reject all forms of meta-language. Lyotard identifies these "small narrations" with Wittgenstein's "games of language". The esthetical action seeks the *sublime*, not *the truth*. The esthetical action is "non-believing" and is characterized by scepticism. Lyotard describes the esthetical actions as *pagan* actions opposed to pietistic actions. According to Lyotard, the esthetical action characterizes *the post modern condition.*

Lyotard and the relation between text and figure

In the book *Discourse, figure* (1971), Lyotard studies the differences between a discursive semantic (meaning) and the rhetoric of communication (figure). According to Lyotard, the discourse is carried up by conceptions outside of the visual sphere. In geometrical terms, we can state that concepts mediate in dimension zero, the dimensionality of the geometrical point that also can be thought of as a contextual room.

The figure, on the other hand, occupies the visual dimension, for example through the graphic line of writing that implicates meanings that differ and is independent of the intended mediation of the texts. Central for this opposition is that the rhetorical figure occupies other geometrical dimensions

than the concepts. In the case of writing, the dimension is not the point but the line or plane. The differences between text and figures or between semantics and rhetoric, Lyotard allows to be argued as the fundamental indefiniteness of understanding. Combined with the complexity of the reference frames of phrases, all communication becomes uncertain and risky and marked by *conflicts*. Lyotard's final intention is the study of communication, or more specific the political communication and it's most important feature: conflict, the *differend*. Politics build on phrases, but does not constitute a genre. Politics are rather those phrases that occur through conflicts between linguistic games**.** When there is no common reference in terms of a "public" linguistic game, conflicts occur between the different linguistic games that lead towards "conflict situations", these situations makes some attempts at understanding impossible. Examples of such conflicts may be cultural clashes between archaic people and Europeans during the European enterprise of colonisation, or in the dialogue between capitalists and workers, between men and women and so on. The only way to create a public frame of references for an understanding of the rules of the linguistic game is to develop a meta-narrative. But these are actually linguistic rules from different linguistic plays that have been generalized into being valid for other linguistic plays. Instead of this, Lyotard proposes an independent study of each and every situation, without having preconceived ideas. The task of philosophy is to keep the conflicts free from the meta-narratives that hides them and justifies the rights of the strong. Philosophy should guarantee a voice for people without the possibility of expressing themselves.[101]

Grand narratives as structures of oppression

Like Foucault, Derrida, and Baudrillard, Lyotard belongs to that group of French thinkers that no longer can be placed in earlier philosophical currents. They all have certain connections to phenomenology, Marxism, existentialism, structuralism and psychoanalysis, but these connections are far from being clear. We are dealing with a group of thinkers

whose works easily can be associated to the prefix “post”. They belong to a time when one can no longer raise claim on an apodictic philosophy. That makes it extra interesting to study what they are saying about phenomenology, Marxism and psychoanalysis. Concerning phenomenology, Lyotard sees ambiguous attempts to overcome the gap between object and subject:

> It can, however, serve to reveal a truth of phenomenology. For it is clear that this ambiguity in phenomenological theses in turn expresses the intention to overcome the dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism. This intention is "realized" successively within Husserl's philosophy in the notions of essence, transcendental ego, and *Leben*. These concepts have one thing in common: they are all "neutral"; they all seek to establish the "ground" that nourishes the meaning of life.[102]

The phenomenological enterprise implies an attempt to reach life itself, to leave behind an objectivity that cannot be realized, and instead build the social sciences on more solid ground:

> The value of phenomenology, its "positive side," lies in its effort to recover humanity itself, beneath any objectivist schema, which the human sciences can never recover; and any dialogue with phenomenology clearly must take place on this basis.[103]

Lyotard, phenomenology and psychoanalysis

Lyotard is especially interested in clarifying the phenomenological critique of the psychoanalytic concept: “the unconscious”. The main critique against the existence of the unconscious is grounded in the impossibility of understanding how something unconsciously can have meaning, *when meaning is a conscious phenomenon*. His critique is strengthened by Sartre’s existential psychoanalysis, where he argues that Freud is presupposing a *mechanical ontology*. Sartre writes:

> Phenomenology's relation to psychoanalysis is ambigu-

> ous. Sartre, in the section of *Being and Nothingness* where he spells out his existential psychoanalysis levels to criticisms against Freudian psychoanalysis: it is *objectivist and causalist*, and it uses the incomprehensible notion of the *unconscious*. As objectivist, Freud postulates a "nature," the libido, at the base of the traumatic event, and thus of the history of all neurosis. As causalist, he introduces a mechanical action of the social milieu upon the subject, on whose basis he elaborates a schema of symbols that allows him to draw out the latent meaning of a dream from its manifest meaning (and this independently of the subject for of the "signifying ensemble," as Sartre puts it). Finally, if the meaning of a neurosis is unconscious, how can it be recognized when the patient, with the analyst's assistance, understands why he is ill? More radically still, how could something unconscious have meaning, since consciousness is the source of all meaning?[104]

According to Lyotard, there is no unconsciousness, only a consciousness that is not specified as such:

> What Freud called the unconscious is in fact consciousness unable to grasp itself as specified -- I am "circumvented" within a situation, and understand it only insofar as I move out of it, into another situation. In particular, only this transplanting of consciousness enables us to understand the psychoanalytic cure; for it is on the basis of the present situation, and especially upon the relation I experience with the analyst (transference), that I can identify, name, and ultimately deliver myself from the past traumatic experience. This revision of the notion of the unconscious obviously assumes that we abandon any deterministic conception of behaviour, and in particular of sexuality.[105]

In this way, Lyotard favours phenomenology and existentialism in two crucial questions: on the one hand he agrees with the impossibility of an existence of unconscious mentally occurrences, and on the other he agrees with the critique of Freud’s mechanical causality.

> There is, then, no causation of behaviour by the sexual, but an “osmosis" between sexuality and existence, since sexuality is constantly present to human life as an "ambiguous atmosphere.[106]

Lyotard’s quest for new theoretical synthesis, starting with deconstruction and with focus on the differences, finds a natural complement in Gilles Deleuze’s attempt to unify Marx and Freud into a new theory of human behaviour.

§ 11 Psychoanalysing philosophy

The thought of Gilles Deleuze

The keyword for the understanding of Gilles Deleuze's (1925-1995) philosophy is also the concept: "difference".[107] The most typical characteristic for being, that defines everything, is that no one repeats themselves, and more, every repetition is an unnoticed difference. Two exact objects differ for example by being at different places, or existing in two different spaces of time. Two cloned animals are exact copies of a genetic mass, but they live in different times and are therefore different. Deleuze's thinking can be described as "poststructuralist", and as "postmodernist" due to his attitude towards some classical problems of philosophy.

Deleuze does not treat problems as subject-object relations, conceptions or cause-effect relations. He gets his ideas from classical sources such as; the stoics, Lucretius, Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza, Kant, Marx and Freud.

Apart from other Postmodern thinkers, Deleuze defends the role of philosophy and the value of building metaphysical systems. His philosophy is grounded on some basic "intuitions", that being (everything) is radically *diverse*[108]. This contemplation implies the success in formulating and understanding these differences and *not* to reducing them into common forms (Plato) or into some sort of common "essence" like the Christian philosophy in Aristotle's spirit does.

Deleuze's problem is finding the solution to the problem of "the one" and "the many", in the history of philosophy known as the "universals". Uniformity should be viewed, according to Deleuze, as a form of a great variety:

> Traditional metaphysics privileges the unity of forms by making it the basis and explanation of all differences. Differences in kind occur because one kind includes forms that another does not. Within a given kind, differ-

> ences between individuals are due to the fact that the individuals belong to different sub-kinds. In either case, what differentiates something (kind or individual) from something else is entirely a matter of the forms that determine its reality. Difference is always derived from unified metaphysical structures (forms) that, therefore, constitute the reality of everything there is. Traditional metaphysics, accordingly, denies Deleuze's intuition that the fundamental principle of reality (being) is not unity but difference that at root to be is not to be one but to be diverse.[109]

By the end of the 1960's, Deleuze writes his most important works; *Différence et repetition* and *Logique du sens*, where he discusses the issues sketched above and seeks their solution. His key conception is (beside "difference"), "event":

> Deleuze's positive ontological project is to develop concepts and language that express this view that "the thing differs with itself", that to be is to be different. In *Difference et repetition* he does this by recasting the standard distinction between difference and repetition In the standard view, for which the being of concrete realities is understood in terms of forms, two concrete things differ by expressing different forms or they repeat one another by expressing the same form. […] Difference and repetition are, therefore, on this under- standing, exclusive alternatives. Deleuze, however, asks us to think that to repeat is to differ. In one sense, of course, standard metaphysics allows this. Every repetition (instance) of a form will differ, in some non-essential way, from other repetitions of the form, by, for example, having a different spatial or temporal location. Deleuze's thought, however, is that a repetition is essentially different from what it repeats.[110]

During the 70's and 80's Deleuze collaborated with Felix Guattari (1930-1992) in a political-philosophical project that attempted a connection of the most important ideas of Marx and Freud, with a view of society that underlines the *differences*

rather than the *forms*.

Together they wrote the two books *L'anti-oedipe* (1972)[111] and *Mille plateaux* (1980), in a project called *Capitalism and schizophrenia*. According to Manfred Frank the project presented a "Dadaistic and carnivalistic style". Deleuze's and Guattari's aim was to explain why fascism is possible, or: "why there is a little fascist within me?"

Their main concept is desire, but not in the way that Freud apprehends it, but as a pure affection of differences as such. Desire is nothing but the desire of "something different", the constant desire for "something else". Desire is *not* ruled by ethical, religious or cultural values. Schizophrenia is not a diesis that should be cured; it is a value that should be encouraged. The authors devote themselves to a schizo-analysis of capitalism. In this sense, man is apprehended as a desiring-machine, not because of any determinism or mechanism, but based on the productive nature of machines. What Deleuze and Guattari are aiming at, is a synthesis of Marx' social theory and Freud's family theory. They recognize the Oedipus-complex, as presented by Freud, as the great problem of civilization, as an obstacle to human progress, when it bounds man to the primitive family and to its psychological condition: *the neurosis*.

In *L'anti-oedip*, Deleuze and Guattari try to construct an alternative man, a new man, free from the Oedipus-complex and the neuroses. The new way is the schizo-analysis where a schizophrenic behaviour is opposed to a neurotic one. In Deleuze's and Guattari's conception of society, desire becomes part of the basic structure of society. In this way, Marx' conception of production is permeated by unconscious productive desires, that convert the universe into a gigantic net of desire-production-machines.

Julia Kristevas' concept of "abjection"

Kristeva is born in Bulgaria 1941. In 1966, she moves to Paris to study. In 1970, she finishes her linguistic thesis *The Revolution in Poetic Language* (*La révolution du langage poétique: l'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle*) Shortly after her arrival in Paris she starts writing for the magazine *Tel Quel* and

gains a dominant position in the intellectual debate. She gets in contact with personalities such as: Philippe Sollers, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Lucien Goldman, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan.[112]

Kristeva develops an original psycho-linguistic theory, with roots in psychoanalysis. Apart from her linguistic studies she becomes a psychoanalyst and works as such. Lacan's influence is of great importance. Kristeva disagrees with his thinking at an early state. She describes a subject that is heterogeneous, that cannot be submitted to laws of logic.[113]

In 1980, she publishes *Powers of horror: an essay on abjection*. Here she applies her earlier studies of the poetic language to an analysis of the human soul. Slightly pessimistic; Kristeva finds in her approach that the Modern subject which she meets in psychoanalysis, reminds of the writer that is driven by melancholy and death instinct.[114]

Recently, Kristeva has entered the political arena, especially with the book *Strangers to ourselves* from 1988. In this work she studies the concept "alien" and alienation from a historical perspective.[115]

Kristeva's most original thought is perhaps that the human soul in some cases exists in such a situation that man lacks the ability to differ between subject and object. This situation - abjection - is explained as follows:

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful–a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself.

When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly

speaking, a definable *object*. The abject is not an object facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I*. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, in fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is *abject*, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.[116]

Examples of these situations are:

> Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. The shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery.[117]

In this analysis we can trace the classic literary motif of existentialism, like Sartre's *Nausea*. Abject is what people loathe, it can be about physical objects like food or bodily waste products but also certain forms of behaviour that normally are seen as "perverted". From Kristeva's viewpoint; the Modern personality is abject, like the writer that researches the boundaries of the human soul.[118] The concept abjection has, in the French language, also a religious significance, concerning the degradation that follows the original sin.

> Abjection origins from the Latin abjicere = "toss away", and it is in this literary meaning that Kristeva makes use of the word as a signifier for a phase in the development of the subject as a subjective position. The subject is born in a violent and horror-filled "repellent" of the simultaneously attractive and repugnant body of the mother, in connection with "separation", the development of the own and demarcated body, and before the entrance into language. As a perverted form of separation, where the difference between inner/outer and subject/object remains vague, abjection implies that an "I" never establishes it-

> self in language. When no complete abjection occurs, a latent position for perversion, phobia, and psychosis arises. [119]

In her religious interpretation of abjection, Kristeva means the condition where we try to restrain desire by making the space of the mother and death in culture invisible.[120] It is a kind of denial of our own identity with the mother, a form of incest-fear which will be expressed within the Christian mystery, amongst other things, as denial of the sexual desire.

Kristeva's critique of structuralism

Kristeva criticizes the structuralistic treatment of language as a dead phenomenon. She compares structuralists with archivists, archaeologists and necrophiles. She criticizes all attempts to understand language through formalities.[121] She criticizes Derrida, who despite his view on writing as a living act and a product of a living body, still tries to write what cannot be written. It is the living body that cannot be captured within the writing.

The semiotic elements of language are associated with rhythms and tones that are significant parts of language in terms of bodily driving forces. Semiotic elements cannot be captured in language because they are incompatible with the grammatical and logic structures of language.[122] Kristeva finds it, like Hegel, that there is no way to overcome the gap between the semiotic and the symbolic.[123]

§ 12 Post-Marxism and Post-colonialism

Étienne Balibar and post Marxism: class struggle without classes. In *Race, Nation, Class – Ambiguous Identities* (1991) Balibar writes about the "to be or not to be" of Marxism. A lot has happened on the historical field since the days when Balibar and Althusser worked for a deepening and clarification of "positivism" of historical materialism, of its objectivity and status as science.[124]

The most important of all events was the collapse of the Soviet Union, a collapse that to a certain extent had been anticipated by many Marxists, who identified the closure of an era. This period in social thinking is characterized by its lack of attention concerning how cultural phenomena affect the course of events, in other words, how cultural behaviour shapes what happens and will happen. The consequences were a catastrophe, for a theory that thought it could place itself outside courses of events. A theory that thought that it could foresee (from an objective platform shaped during the 19th century) the development of society and thought that it could shape the cultural life of society. Surly Marxism was aware of the necessity of adjusting theoretical assumptions, and Marxists were willing to adjust their basic theoretical material to the changeable reality. But the adjustment never concerned the basic ideas of Marxism, its meta-theoretical assumptions. As historical materialism was identified with Marxism, the questioning of, for example, the existence of classes was simultaneously a questioning of the existence of Marxism and the entire project of historical materialism. The collapse of the Soviet system in 1989, frees historical materialism from Marxism and made possible an examination of Marxism out of prerequisites that no longer "belonged" to Marxism. From being the last instance of meta-theory, the Marxist teaching became subordinated the meta-

theory of historical Marxism, a meta-theory by the name "post Marxism". That of historical materialism, which survived the Soviet collapse, is characterized by its understanding of the significance of the cultural sphere, in relation to the development of society. It also understands that the cultural sphere cannot be identified with the Marxist "superstructure". This last identification – between culture and "superstructure" – guided the theoretical reflection into a mechanical understanding of culture that simplified the relation between economic processes and cultural phenomena. Culture now includes the Marxist superstructure but only as part of a whole that is independent of economic determination.

This new understanding admits biological influences in society in terms of; ties of kinship that in turn originates phenomena such as family, clan, regionalism, nationalism, and racism. This revisionist project is slow and difficult to associate to single names. Changes occur as usual in the political and economic arena, especially outside the centre of civilisation, where innovation and experiment are inflicted by harsh living conditions.

Changes still occur along the shaping of new utopias, striving for new goals to live and die for. Some new theoretical attempts can be found in the writings of earlier Marxists. Balibar represents one of these; he has been able to adjust himself to Modern times. Here it is apparent that Balibar's reflection already starts out from a meta-theoretical position. He questions if Marxism is aware of itself and finds the conclusion that it cannot be. Marxism cannot be "its own" meta-theory. The development of a meta-theory presupposes that the fall of Marxism is worth it, that is to say, that it is possible to change Marxism, criticize Marxism and finally to reject Marxism. But the disregard of Marxism should be done in the service of historical Marxism:

> All that comes to exist deserves to perish' (the quote is from Goethe's *Faust* and is used by Engels to describe the workings of the 'Hegelian system'). Marxism, therefore, in each of its existing forms, is inevitably bound to perish, sooner or later, and this applies, too, to its form as

> *theory*. If Marxism *is going* somewhere, it can only be towards its own destruction. Let me now add another thesis, this time from Spinoza: there is more than one way to perish.[125]

The development of a postmarxist teaching presupposes the understanding of the reasons behind the decline of Marxism, namely the necessity of developing new meta-theoretical assumptions that disintegrate the cognitive paradoxes of historical Marxism or the cognitive paradoxes that are born in liaison with all forms of social reflection that views itself as "objective".

These paradoxes have been noticed in various ways by every philosophical, literary or artistic school during the 20th century, but it was not as relevant to the thinkers of the 19th century. From Cantor and Russell to Gödel and Turing, from Borges and Escher to Derrida and Mandelbrot, the entire intellectual production of the 20th century has been dominated by the problem of self-reference.

In the days of Marx' and Engels' the paradoxes were solved from a Hegelian horizon. "Dialectics" and the dialectical logic made possible the self-reference of thinking, without paradoxes. The method was applicable, but the lack of space for the meta-theoretical reflection also made the dialectical reflection an ineffective method.

> The historical impact of Marxism, as it appears to us now, as it completes its cycle of elaboration, practical deployment, institutionalization and 'crisis', has an astonishingly contradictory, even doubly contradictory aspect. (…) Marxism has thus been party to the superseding (dépassement) of its own future prospects. (…) Here, by another paradox, Marxism, as a theory of social conflicts, appears to be ever *in advance* of its own 'completion'. This is the reason for the extraordinary way in which Marxism is intertwined with the divisions and social formations of the present; it seems that the relation to Marxism still divides the contemporary world, but it would seem, too, that class struggles, the 'law' – or principle of intelligibility – of which it aims to set out, are

never where they ought to be…[126]

According to Balibar the meta-theoretical reflection should begin with the reestablishment of two of the main concepts of historical materialism: the existence of class and class struggle. Without these two realities, there can be no Marxism. But Balibar does not always differ between "Marxism" and "historical materialism". He wonders if classes have ever existed and if they are not only products of the political and theoretical debate.

He wonders whether the working class is a product of the development of political and social workers organizations. If I understand Balibar right, "classes" would be objective realities, but only as products of society's superstructure. The existence of classes would then entirely lack a "material" existence. Since the apprehension of what is material and none-material is decided by the Marxist dualistic teaching, which finds it that everything that isn't work is "illusions":

> I must move on now to this central theme. Let me formulate it as succinctly as possible: it is fairly clear that the identity of Marxism depends entirely on the definition, import and validity of its analysis of class and class struggle. Without this analysis, there is no Marxism – neither as a specific theorization of the social, nor as the articulation of political 'strategy' and history. (…). But it is precisely on this point that there is controversy and it is here that the factual evidence of Marxism has become unclear. A number of the notions it originally developed as part of a seemingly coherent whole – terms like 'revolution', or, more especially, 'crisis' – have become trivialized in the extreme. On the other hand, class struggle, at least in the 'capitalist' world, has disappeared from the scene, either because those who lay claim to it seem to have less and less purchase on the complexity of the social, or, at the same time, because, in the practice of the majority of people and in the most significant political arenas, classes themselves have lost their *visible* identity. Their identity, then, has come more and more to seem like a myth. It is a myth, one might say, that has been

> fabricated by theory, and projected on to real history by the ideology of organizations (primarily workers' parties) and more or less completely 'internalized' by heterogeneous social groups, who saw in it a way of having their claims to certain rights and demands acknowledged in conditions that are today largely outdated.[127]

Class identity is viewed, out of the post Marxist perspective, as a "myth", as an illusion created by worker ideologies: Marxism's own superstructure with its associated ideologies. Instead society is dominated by blood related conflicts, far away from being effected by "class struggle":

> Many of the hardest and most important of the typical workers' struggles of the last few years, like the British miners' strike, or the action of the steelworkers or railway workers in France, have taken the shape of isolated trade disputes (which could even be described as 'corporatist' in nature), thus as honourable but defensive last-ditch stands without significance for the collective future. And, at the same time, social conflict has assumed a series of different forms, some of which, in spite of – or because of – their lack of institutional stability, seem to be of much greater significance. This applies to conflicts between generations, conflicts linked with the threat to the environment from technology, as well as other so-called 'ethnic' or 'religious' conflicts, and endemic forms of war and transnational terrorism.[128]

Balibar establishes that the objective figures of classes are more difficult to find in the social reality. Thereby the question actualizes to save the "concept of class struggle" in a reality without classes. The method will be a deconstruction (Derrida) of the teachings of Marxism:

> Each of these rectifications and distortions has come to light through historical experience as well as the work of historians or sociologists, and they have resulted in a deconstruction of early Marxist theory. Do they entail the abolition pure and simple of its principles of analysis? One may wonder, with good reason, whether they do not rather open the possibility of a recasting of that theory, to

> the extent that, if one undertakes a radical critique of those ideological presuppositions which support the belief in the development of capitalism as a 'simplification of class antagonism' (containing 'in itself' the necessity of a classless society), it then becomes possible to take the concepts of class and class struggle as referring to a *process of transformation without pre-established end*, in other words an endless transformation of the identity of social classes. In that case, a Marxist could with total seriousness take up – in order to return it to its sender – the idea of dissolution of class in the sense of a cast of players invested with mythic identity and continuity. In a word, what is at issue is the need to advance both the historical and structural hypothesis of a 'class struggle without class'. [129]

A deconstruction of Marxism implies a view on Marx beyond Marx. Balibar specifies what he's aiming at; a proletarian identity is an ideological product, hence an illusion that does not justify the existence of objective classes:

> I want to suggest, to begin with, that what showed itself in the nineteenths and twentieths century, as a relatively autonomous 'proletarian identity' needs to be understood as an objective *ideological effect*. An ideological effect is not a 'myth', or at least it cannot be reduced to one (…). This inversion of perspective comes down to an admission, in accordance with what is historically observable on the surface, that there is no such thing as the 'working class' solely on the basis of some more or less homogeneous sociological situation, but that it exists only where there is a labour movement. In the same way, it is a realization that the labour movement exists only where there are workers' organizations (parties, trade unions, stock exchanges or co-operatives). This is where things become more complicated and more interesting. We must be careful not to identify, step by step, the labour movement with workers' organizations, or the (relative) unity of class with the labour movement. This would be a kind of reductionism in reverse, the same indeed as that under-

pinning the idealized representation of class as 'subject'.[130]

Class struggle then occurs independently of the superstructure's apprehension of class. Class struggle therefore happens beyond all forms of conception, beyond all control, in the background.

Class struggle is governed by the state

The politician, analytic, has not got a chance to understand or affect class struggle if he/she does not assume that what's happening can't be imagined without being fooled. The role of the state has to be reconsidered. It is not subordinated class struggle; it creates and governs class struggle:

> In this sense, what history shows is that social relations are not established *between* hermetically closed classes, but they are formed *across* classes – including the working class – or alternatively that *class struggle takes place within classes themselves*. But it shows to that the state, by means of its institutions, its mediating or administrative functions, its ideals and discourse, is always already present in the constitution of class. This is true, first and foremost, of the 'bourgeoisie', and this in particular is where classical Marxism has fallen down. Its conception of the state apparatus as an organism or 'machine' outside 'civil society', sometimes as a neutral tool in the service of the ruling class, or else as a parasitic bureaucracy, is something it inherited from liberal ideology and simply inverted to challenge the idea of the general interest; but it is a conception that prevented it from properly articulating the constitutive role of the state.[131]

This new meta-theory explains the limitations of Marxism and creates new questions. What is an engaged Marxist to do in the shadow of the new Post-Marxist era? Eventually we will see that the new action-methodology adjusts to the new battlefield where regional, national and ethnic problems dominate.

Balibar is aware of this factor and spends the rest of

his study in *Race, nation, class* on an examination of the effects of these new factors on Postmarxist teaching. Unfortunately his remarks, in our opinion, do not provide anything new to the current debate.

Laclau and Mouffe: post-Marxism during the 80's

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe leave classical Marxism behind in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*[132] from 1985 and with this, the ambition of making science out of the development of history. Instead they have converted some of the Marxist thesis into instruments for a hermeneutic analyse.[133]

Laclau's and Moffes's critique of classical Marxism is mainly based on a clear conceptualistic spirit, on the critique of essentialism, that is to say, Marxism's quest for the abstraction of concrete occurrences or its *realistic* use of the *universals*. One example is the concept "class" which in classical Marxism is a universal category – a category abstracted through every single class manifestation. This conception, according to Laclau and Mouffe, has misled Marx and Marxists into a positivistic illusion. The situation is opposite; the conception of class can only be understood from its particularity.

Laclau and Mouffe replace the original realism of Marxism with a conceptualism inspired by Wittgenstein's *family resemblance theory*.

Marxism – Wittgensteinism

As familiar, the late Wittgenstein developed a Modern form of conceptualism by the name game-theory. According to this theory there are no common concepts or *essence*, there is only single occurrences of facts that are *related*. The philosophical position of universals originates from the problem of finding a correlation between the semantic and the ontological sphere.

While the reflecting subject is in contact with particular cases, knowledge is built upon common conclusions and laws. We may find that Wittgenstein's family resemblance-

theory solves the problem when it replaces essentials with common similarities, but how different are the universals from these common similarities?

One thing stands clear: except for Wittgenstein, Laclau and Mouffe follow Derrida in creating a sort of conceptualism where courses of events are reduced to linguistic or/and communicative – "discourse" – relations. All that is *differences* in discursive relations.

Secondly, the philosophy of Laclau and Mouffe is a sort of *difference philosophy* and is therefore related to Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Deleuze. The root of this position already exists in the Marxism of Georg Lukács, especially as presented in *History and Class Consciousness* from 1923. This book also inspires Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* which in turn is an early effort to Derrida's deconstructionism.

> Georg Lukács is now seen as one of the great apologists for Marxist dialectics, but his early work, too, gestures in a Postmarxist direction; particularly his *History and Class Consciousness*, with its insistence that Marxism is not a body of doctrine as such, but a methodology. *History and Class Consciousness* inspired the work of the Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin, for example), giving rise to what has become known as Western Marxism.[134]

Thirdly, Laclau and Mouffe's philosophy contain traces of Althusser and his methodological *reading* of Marx. Laclau and Mouffe read Marx and compare some of his statements with each other. They find it that Marx talks about two incompatible forms of opposition. One is an expression of the necessity of events and the other is a consequence of human liberty; a "true" Hegelian *contradiction* – an ontological contradiction. They find this when Marx talks about the contradiction between social productive relations and production forces within the frame of economic means of production.

In other contexts, Marx talks about *antagonisms* – practical confrontations of political character, such as the class struggle. Laclau and Mouffe then make valid that the first form

of opposition is *not* an antagonism despite the fact that it is a contradiction. Correspondingly, they find it that class struggle is a form of antagonism but not a contradiction.

In other words the first contradiction is an objective opposition and very independent of human praxis, and thereby an objective expression for social determinism. The other is an open expression of free will.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, the problem raises - within Marxist teaching - when we try to comprehend how one relates to the other. As familiar, Marx and Engels solved this incongruence by referring to "dialectics", but that does not satisfy Laclau and Mouffe. They choose to eliminate the necessity (also Althusser worked on a similar solution in his later days.) In order to succeed with this, Laclau and Mouffe strengthen Marxism's ever-strongest side: the political and ethical praxis. They do this by sacrificing Marxism's general picture. Society, classes, history is no longer, and their objective existence now becomes a discursive construction, a praxis that directs towards winning every confrontation of communication. The result becomes a pragmatic seeking of *hegemony*, a concept of Gramsci that is being attempted, with modifications, in order to build a new apprehension of the social structure. A worker is actually a combination of many and synonymous identities:

> For instance, the same man may be simultaneously a productive worker, a trade union member, a supporter of the SDP, a consumer, a racist, a homeowner, a wife-beater, and a Christian. No one of these 'subject positions' can be logically derived from any of the others. No one of them is the 'essence' underlying the others. Laclau and Mouffe develop from Gramsci the concept of hegemony as a new logic in which political action no longer expresses the 'economic-corporate' interests of particular classes but expands across class lines to form a 'historical bloc', a 'collective will' of popular forces united in struggle. At the same time they reject Gramsci's own view that hegemony necessarily involves the leadership of a fundamental class, treating this as a residue of classist thinking incompatible with the new logic implicit in

> the concept. They themselves see hegemony as a particular form of articulation (linkage) between different social agents.[135]

When the economic means of production no longer are in centre, the teachings of Laclau and Mouffe are hard to understand as a form of Marxism. Here, their post-Marxism differs from Balibar's that keeps the Marxist reference as a theoretical starting point for reflection.

Laclau's and Mouffe's concept of discourse

According to Laclau and Mouffe, the social "discourse" is *always significant*. It consists of a linguistic and a "practical" component:

> Let us suppose that I am building a wall with another bricklayer. At a certain moment I ask my workmate to pass me a brick and then I add it to the wall. The first act, – asking for the brick – is linguistic; the second – adding the brick to the wall – is extra linguistic. Do I exhaust the reality of both acts by drawing the distinction between them in terms of the linguistic/extra linguistic opposition? Evidently, not, because, despite their differentiation in those terms, the two actions share something that allows them to be compared, namely the fact that they are both part of a total operation, which is the building of the wall. […] This totality… is what we call discourse.[136]

Another of their examples is the comparison of the act of kicking a spherical object on the street with the act of kicking a balloon on a football field:

> The physical fact is the same, but its meaning is different. The object is a football only to the extent that it establishes a system of relations with other objects, and these relations are not given by the mere referential materiality of the objects, but are rather, socially constructed. This systematic set of relations is what we call discourse.[137]

We may think that Laclau and Mouffe advance to quickly. Here we find Marxism's greatest problems and we

have seen that they are hard to solve. We learn that Laclau's and Mouffe's most important contribution to the Marxist philosophy is their critique and rejection of "essentialism". After their contribution the social object shall be "constructed" in every social situation or discourse. Then there cannot be objective and independent "physical occurrences". Furthermore we cannot say, "the physical fact is the same" when kicking a spherical object on the street and a balloon on a field. It is only possible to say that the acts are intuitively *related*. They can be related due to the similarity of the objects or acts, but we cannot go too far in this clarifying because of the risk of falling into new forms of essentialism. These and many other examples make clear that Laclau and Mouffe, despite everything are "realists"; because realism is not the aim of the critique, but a variant of realism which they describe as *essentialism*. The risk of relapsing into realistic positions is therefore very large. When Laclau and Mouffe do not wish to be realists but *conceptualists*, like Wittgenstein, a greater philosophical work is demanded in order to succeed, than the one which they have achieved.

Louis Althusser and Postmodernism: "random" materialism

Shortly before his death in 1988, the Mexican philosopher Fernanda Navarro interviews Althusser and during their conversation, Althusser presents a new conception of causality and thereby commits a revising of his earlier ideas of social cosmology. He uses an analogy. Two passengers travel on a train; one philosophical idealist who knows in advance where he/she is heading, who knows every station and can predict the arrival times, and another one, a philosophical idealist who follows the "travelling train", he/she can take the one or the other train and also wait on the station if demanded. The materialist knows nothing about the principles, the timetables or possible destinations. The latter takes the train that comes, finds an empty seat and starts conversations with fellow travellers, observes what is happening without making plans because what is happening is unexpected, it happens occasionally. This materialistic traveller cannot – according to Althusser

– derive laws from isolated cases that he/she comes in contact with. But it would be possible to make some *generalizations* that could lead towards some sort of understanding of social variations.[138]

We see that Althusser, during his last years, develops in that direction which is called post-Marxism. He wanted to escape the Marxist determination, the foundation to Marxism's positivistic features, and also by many thought of as its despotic political consequences. This concept of society describes social phenomena as *random.* Gone is now the Marxist dream of a science of history. History is now understood as an open scenario, where everything is possible. In other place, we have described the importance of random occurrences for the development of Civilization.[139] We state that the entire Post-modern, poststructuralist and Post-Marxist movement seeks a new similar random cosmological frame. Althusser's turn towards an occasional cosmology confirms that the Postmod-ernistic movement, in reality is a sharpening of that historic modernistic process which has its starting point in the ancient Greece.

Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial is the name of that broad and complex political and cultural movement which unites writers and activists. As their object, they have the global non-western culture and identity. The movement mainly includes the Anglo-Saxon world as it was after the collapse of the British Empire. It covers a broad geographical territory: Africa, Australia, India, Singapore, New Zeeland, Canada, The Caribbean, Ireland, and Great Britain. The concept postcolonial does not just allude to the culture of the new nations and old colonies, foremost it alludes to that new culture which becomes established by immigrants and expatriates. Postcolonial studies use the methods of cultural anthropology, of post-structuralism and Postmodernism and last but not least it makes use of Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction. Non-European classical sources are the works of Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) and Paulo Freire. Four writers are seen as the founders of Post-colonial theory;

Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha (1949-), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-) and Edward W. Said (1935-2003). Bhabha was born in Bombay and became professor in English and cultural theory at the university of Chicago. *The Location of Culture* (1994) is considered his most important work. The works of Spivak combine Marxism with a feministic perspective in order to deconstruct the various discourses of imperialism. The most important work of Said is *Orientalism* (1978) where he studies western worlds' creation of the "orient", which has never really existed, according to Said:

> I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest, richest, and oldest colonies, the source of its civilisations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other.[140]

Both Bhabha and Said study the transitional process of culture, from colonial to post-colonial; in this transition culture is somehow undetermined, it experiences a moment of difference which is characterized by invisibility and isolation. This phase is typical for the culture of refugees and immigrants. One of the most central points in Post-colonialism is the analysis of the concept nationalism, viewed out of various perspectives as presented above. The culture of refugees and immigrants is converted into a negotiation centre for the development of new national and cultural identities, affecting race, gender, class and customs. According to Bhabha this situation of negotiation unites the colonized and the colonizer in a historical unit, in which the one takes from the other to create a new and common cultural identity.

Post-colonialism also applies a self-critique grounded in deconstruction. Spivak's text *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) brings up the subject of whether Post-colonial studies in reality is a product of imperialism – if the task of this cultural movement is to reinstall the cultural dominance of the colonial power in the post-colonial reality. She asks if post-colonial

studies are a movement serving privileged men, scholars who are more or less infected by the perspectives of imperialist cultures. Spivak sees in all forms of open discussion a logo-centric assumption which confirms the subalterns' dependency of the dominant culture. As the one and only solution to this Spivak suggests Derrida's deconstruction – a constant questioning of all certainties, a deconstruction of the most convincing truths.

Postcolonial studies and Marxism

Most colonial studies have developed in connection with Fanon's studies of the cultural oppression of imperialism, Simone de Beauvoir's feministic philosophy, Foucault's apprehension of history and the deconstruction philosophy of Derrida. Post-colonial studies are the product of that theoretical milieu which flourishes amongst French-affected intellectuals after the Algerian war (1954-62). It materializes with this group of exiles in Great Britain and the United States. The creation of post-colonial studies is initially done with cultural criticism in the shape of literary criticism – its methodological tool. Post-colonial studies illuminate the differences that are being made between what is Western European and what is not. Euro-centrism – here synonymous with "Western European centred" – is the target of the post-colonial critique. Even Marxism is criticized out of this perspective, when its teaching puts European culture in centre through the apprehension of England (the cradle of colonialism) as the place of "capitalism", in Marx' and Engel's view: the highest historical stage of humanity, so far.

Anti-imperialism without Marxism

Marxism apprehends post-colonial studies as a new form of imperialistic dominance-ideology. It speaks of "globalization" and irrationalism and thereby reduces sociological, political and economic problems to "cultural problems". About this Crystal Bartolovich writes:

There has in fact, been little direct, serious, dialogue be-

> tween Marxists and postcolonial theorist. The neglected (even ignorance) of Marxism in postcolonial studies has often been countered by the reflexive dismissal of the entire field of postcolonial studies by Marxist writers. In this longstanding dispute, a good deal of oversimplification, caricature and trivialization has crept into the discourse of both sides, with the charges each group hurls against the other being by now well known: Marxism I said to be indelibly Eurocentric, complicit with the dominative master-narratives of Modernity (including that of colonialism itself) and, in its approach to texts, vulgarly reductionistic and totalising; postcolonial studies, in turn, is viewed as complicit with imperialism in its contemporary guise as globalization, oriented exclusively to metropolitan academic adventurism, and in its approach to texts, irredeemably dematerialising and unhistorical.[141]

The post-colonial critique of Marxism is among other things based on Marx' and Engel's writings on Algeria, India and Mexico, such as Marx' description of Mexicans as "lazy". But basically the critique is directed towards Marx' and Engel's determinism, which deprives the possibility of capitalisms periphery to go their own way, and instead judges it to follow the developing pattern that the centre already lived through. Marxism is the teaching of acceptance of the historical oppression before any form of freedom can be possible. Marxism's defence against the post-colonial critique (Euro-centrism) is to, through a "traditional" hermeneutic praxis, read Marx "the right way". It is the post-colonial theorists who haven't understood what Marx and Engels "really mean". To the critique of the western European culture Marxists sees "the desire to provincialize Europe".[142] An attempt that would conflict with the actual historical development which has made European culture (thanks to capitalism) the "universal" culture.

Frantz Fanon and the wretched of the earth

Fanon was born in 1925 in the French colony Martinique where the population mainly was of African origin. During

World War II Fanon fights with the French army and at its end he stays in France to study medicine and psychiatry. He dies in 1961 of leukaemia. In 1952 he publishes *Black Skin, White Masks* and in 1961 *The wretched of the earth*. These works reflect his own experiences as a black intellectual in colonial France. His reflections are supported by the psychological studies of culture that he, empirically as a practising doctor, had collected for several years. Fanon's apprehension is that culture determines the role of the colonizer (the white man) and the colonized (the black man):

> Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification, which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler – was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannon. The settler and the native are old acquaintances. In fact, the settler is right when he speaks of knowing 'them' well. For it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say his property, to the colonial system.[143]

According to Fanon, racism judges the black man to a bad mental health. The colonization begins with language, as the talking act of language implies an assumption of a culture. Language can be categorized as "white" and "black". The categories exist in relation to each other. White cannot be thought without black and vice versa. Only "liberation" can reshape the human features of the wretched:

> Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing

> if its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself.[144]

In 1953, Fanon becomes chief of the psychiatric department of the Blida-Joinville hospital. During that time the Algerian freedom war against the French occupation was fought and Fanon experienced the treatment of torture victims. Struck with horror, he resigned in 1956, moved to Tunisia, and enrolled himself for the Algerian cause. This period is the origin of those reflections that consider the practise of the psychiatric profession ("the intellectual" in general) as impossible out of a colonial viewpoint:

> The well-known principle that all men are equal will be illustrated in the colonies from the moment that the native claims that he is the equal of the settler. One step more, and he is ready to fight to be more than the settler. In fact, he has already decided to eject him and to take his place; as we see it, it is a whole material and moral universe, which is breaking up. The intellectual who for his part has followed the colonialist with regard to the universal abstract will fight in order that the settler and the native may live together in peace in a new world.[145]

Fanon states in *The wretched of the earth* that the only way to overcome the dichotomy black/white is through a complete revolution which in turn is achievable only through violence. Only through violence, the black man can change himself and the white man's culture. This absolute revolution can be driven only by the poor peasants of the colonies. Fanon bears a deep misbelieve towards the urban milieus of Africa; he considers them to be highly susceptible for the colonizer's culture. He also has got certain suspiciousness towards the workers movement and Marxism as they are viewed as parts of the cultural colonization. Without violence the colonized relapses into fatalism and the circle is shut in alienation:

> A belief in fatality removes all blame from the oppressor; the cause of misfortunes and of poverty is attributed to God; He is Fate. In this way the individual accepts the disintegration ordained by God, bows down before the

> settler and his lot, and by kind of interior restabilization acquires a stony calm. Meanwhile, however, life goes on, and the native will strengthen the inhibitions which contain his aggressiveness by drawing on the terrifying myths which are so frequently found in underdeveloped communities. There are maleficent spirits which intervene every time a step is taken in the wrong direction, leopard–men, serpent-men, six legged dogs, zombies – a whole series of tiny animals or giants which create around the native a world of prohibitions, of barriers and of inhibitions far more terrifying than the world of the settler (…) The atmosphere of myth and magic frightens me and so takes on an undoubted reality. By terrifying me, it integrates me in the traditions and the history of my district or of my tribe, and at the same time it reassures me, it gives me a status, as it were an identification paper.[146]

Homi K. Bhabha and the concept "negation"

Bhabha divides the world into a First and a Third world, in a system where the first represents capital and surplus value and the third labour. He also believes that the 20th century is experiencing the blooming of an "Anglo-American nationalism", which represents a new form of imperialism.[147] Bhabha's theoretical starting point is that all of the dominant contemporary theoretical assumptions that guide the historical reflection – semiotics, post structuralism, deconstruction etc. – reflexes the dominant new-imperialistic statements. Bhabha tries to solve this problem by finding an in-between position between the activist and the theorist. His belief is that a critique, which wants to be successful, always should start with a *negotiation* and not a *negation.* In other words, we should not *negate* what we seek to criticize but instead *negotiate ourselves into* the standpoints of the other.[148] Bhabha rejects John Stuart Mills' (1806-1873) liberal dialogue which through sound reason aims at consensus. Such a dialogue is possible only between equals.

Instead he suggests a negation where the respective roles already exist in the starting point of the negotiation. Bhabha writes in *The Location of Culture*:

> When I talk of negotiation rather than negation, it is to convey a temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements: a dialectic without the emergence of teleological or transcendent History, and beyond the prescriptive form of symptomatic reading where the nervous tics on the surface of ideology reveal the 'real materialist contradiction' that History embodies. In such a discursive temporality, the event of theory becomes the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects, and between theory and practical-political reason. If I have argued against a primordial and previsionary division of right or left, progressive or reactionary it has been only to stress the fully historical and discursive difference between them. I would not like my notion of negotiation to be confused with some syndicalist sense of reformism because that is not the political level that is being explored here. By negotiation I attempt to draw attention to the structure of iteration which informs political movements that attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of simulation or transcendence.[149]

Political as well as cultural negotiations penetrate deeper into the spheres of society. The method is superior to the classic logo-centric way of attack which presupposes liberalism's blind faith in reason's role in the dialogue, or the essentialistic socialist assumption of class belonging and class struggle. Negotiations study the structure of "repetitions", which articulates antagonist elements.[150] Negation studies the "hybrid" moment where political change occurs when positions are not yet locked.[151] The negotiation situation implies that no final position is reached and that finished negotiations are replaced by new ones.[152]

Bhabha differs between "cultural diversity" and "cultural difference". The first is an epistemological category which treats culture as a cognitive empirical object. The other treats culture as a power factor (Foucault), and directs itself against authoritarian elements in culture[153]. The time for cultural "liberation" is a time of cultural indeterminably.

Edward Said and the concept *orientalism*

Said's most important work is *Orientalism* (1978) where he studies the Western world's creation of the "orient" – a phenomenon that has never existed, that is a creation of imperialism and colonialism. With the concept "orientalism" Said refers to a reality which is neither geographical nor cultural. The concept has also been used to signify a "race" or a category of humans with the intention to segregate, discriminate, and oppress natives in the colonies. But orientalism is a very complicated concept that according to Said, makes claims of signifying a net of important knowledge's, organized in the most various scientisms.

In *Orientalism* Said seeks to answer how philology, lexicography, history, biology, the political and economic theories and also literature, together have contributed to the creation of the "oriental", this inferior human being, doomed to never understand his best. The answer to that question is crucial for the deconstruction of the colonial culture and the creation of a post-colonial reality without "Orientals". Said follows Foucault's apprehension of knowledge as power and displays this through the study of numerous historical texts and statements by political actors. Said's deconstruction of orientalism is to the highest possible degree a deconstruction of that authority which West constitutes concerning the knowledge of the oriental. As well in the creation of "anthropology" as in the science of "the other", the primitive, and the non-civilized – the oriental – represents a specific knowledge where the study object fits the colonial model and vanishes in it. To question orientalism implies to question the "truth" of a certain concept of the world. The starting point for Said's thorough deconstruction-process is a lecture held by Arthur James Balfour in June

13th in 1910 addressing the British Under house concerning "the problems we stand before in Egypt". Said quotes Balfour:

> Is it a good thing for these great nations – I admit their greatness – that this absolute government should be exercised by us? I think it is a good thing. I think that experience shows that they have got under it far better government that in the whole history of the world they ever had before, and which not only is a benefit to them, but is undoubtedly a benefit to the whole of the civilized West… We are in Egypt not merely for the sake of the Egyptians, though we are there for their sake; we are there also for the sake of Europe at large.[154]

The description of the oriental shows, according to Said, some reappearing features: "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, and 'normal'."[155] Said states that orientalism in no way is a positive doctrine about an unknown culture, but a collection of limitations and tough hinders where western superiority is confirmed on every point. One of Said's most important methodological conclusions, is that Euro-centric, colonial and imperialist power structures live on in post-structuralism and Postmodernism. He is one step ahead when he seeks these traces in post-colonial studies. The deconstruction of its power structures is, according to Said, a long-term and partly unforeseeable intellectual engagement.

§ 13 Postmodernism turns to *hyperreality*

Jean Baudrillard's critique of the classic semiotic ontology (Saussure's dualistic ontology with *significant* and *signifié*, and its uncompleted phenomenology) leads him to a new and original ontological statement, the ontology of the *hyperreal*. This new concept of the world, born simultaneously with "digital ideologies", is typical after the 1980' introduction of personal computers in public everyday life. Now the "real" is identical with the symbolic, there is no other reality. The new hyperreal reality is not the reality of phenomena, but symbols:

> Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map nor survives it. Henceforth it is the map that precedes the territory – *precession of simulacra* – it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. […]. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models – and with these, it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance.[156]

Baudrillard gives as example on hyperreality:

Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation. To begin with, it is a play of illusions and phantasms: Pirates the frontier, future world, etc. This imaginary world is supposed to be what makes the operation successful.[157]

In *Fatal Strategies (Les Stratégies fatales)* (1983)

Baudrillard further develops this ontology by specifying his demarcation against the Kantian object-subject horizon. Instead he suggest an analysis that takes the objects perspective. It is deeply pessimistic; the world has lost its rationality, individuals are no longer "citizens" but consumers and the diversity of things has created a pointless existence:

> Things have found a way to elude the dialectic of meaning, a dialectic that bored them: they did this by infinite proliferation, by potentializing themselves, by outmatching their essence, by going to extremes, and by obscenity which henceforth has become their immanent purpose and insane justification. The universe is not dialectical: it moves toward the extremes, and not towards equilibrium; it is devoted to a radical antagonism, and not to reconciliation or to synthesis. And it is the same with the principle of Evil. It is expressed in the cunning genius of the object, in the ecstatic form of the pure object, and in its victorious strategy over the subject.[158]

It can be proclaimed that the thinking of Baudrillard develops from all dominating philosophies in France of the 1960's. However, at the same time his writing develops into a more literary one, with more pessimistic contents. The pessimism in his latter production is grounded in unannounced and sneaking ethics, which still convey the left-wing values of the 60's. Baudrillard's writing contains an aura of resentment due to unfulfilled hopes. His critique is of the kind that accuses and judges.

Jean Baudrillards' semiotic critique of Marxism

Baudrillard (1929-2007) gained his disputation in Sociology in 1966. Earlier he had already published articles in Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes.* Back then, Baudrillard's thinking was far from being original. He was strongly influenced by Sartre's Marxism, Henri Lefebvre and the structuralist Roland Barthes.

By the time of the student revolt in 1968, Baudrillard starts to develop his personal critique of capitalism and technol-

ogy. He then writes for the eclectic magazine *Utopia* and comes in contact with Marshall McLuhan's writings on the media-phenomenon and publishes his first book *The System of Objects (Le Système des Objets: la consommation des signes, 1968)*, containing a theory that can be connected with Barthes' book *The Fashion System (Système de la mode)*, of the same year.

Baudrillard was inspired by semiotics and structuralism and attempted the development of a Marxist semiotics. The new semiotics had been developed by the Prague School during the 1920's and 30's. Some years later it became elaborated by French structuralists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, who sought significant language-like particles in all sorts of cultural phenomenon such as film, architecture, clothing and behaviour.[159] Rooted in the teachings of Marx and Freud and with a substantial dose of irony, Baudrillard criticises the rising consumer-society. He establishes new and decisive qualitative changes within the traditional liberal ideologies:

> Everywhere today, in fact, the ideology of competition gives way to a "philosophy" of self-fulfilment. In a more integrated society individuals no longer compete for the possession of goods, they actualize themselves in consumption, each on his own. The leitmotiv is no longer one of selective competition, it is personalization for all. At the same time, advertising has changed from a commercial practice to a theory of the praxis of consumption, a theory that crowns the whole edifice of society.[160]

The concept "need" is central in Baudrillard's critique. In *The System of Objects* he questions the explanation value of the classic economy's *category of need*. According to Baudrillard; that which is being "consumed" in the consumption-society is "signs", in other words, purified cultural representations without any connection what so ever to "natural needs":

> In fact, the ideology of competition, which under the sign of "freedom" was previously the golden rule of production, has now been transferred entirely to the domain of consumption. Thousands of marginal differences and an often formal differentiation of a single product through

> conditioning have, at all levels, intensified competition and crated an enormous range of precarious freedoms. The latest such freedom is the random selection of objects that will distinguish any individual from others. In fact, one would think that the ideology of competition is here dedicated to the same process, and consequently to the same end, as it is in the field of production. […]. We still want what others do not have.[161]

Later in 1970, Baudrillard elaborates these arguments in *Consumer Society* (*La Société de Consommation: ses mythes et ses structures*). In this book Baudrillard gets even with his earlier relations to Marxism and especially with Louis Althusser. He develops his critique by showing how the relation object-sign works in the consumption society and criticizes the traditional liberal picture of *homo economicus*, who freely acts in the capitalist market:

> The autopsy of homo economicus: There is a fable: "There once was a man who lived in Scarcity. After many adventures and a long voyage in the Science of Economics, he encountered the Society of Affluence. The whole discourse on consumption, whether learned or lay, is articulated on the mythological sequence of the fable: a man, "endowed with needs which, "direct" him towards objects that "give" him satisfactions.[162]

Baudrillard finds that the consumption-society should be studied through the different sign-systems and their internal relations. The consumption of signs is the determining factor for the constituting of class distinctions. This represents dissociation from classical Marxism and a closer association to Marcuse's Marxism and especially to Barthes' culture-critique and Levi-Strauss' structure-analysis:

> In the language of Levi-Strauss we can say that the social aspect of consumption is not derived from what appears to be of the realm of nature (satisfaction or pleasure), but rather from the essential processes by which it separates itself from nature (what defines it is a code, an institution, or a system of organization). Consumption can be compared with the kinship system which is not determined in

> the final analysis by consanguinity and filiation, by a natural given, but rather by the arbitrary regulation of classification. In the final analysis, the system of consumption is based on a code of signs (object/signs) and differences, and not on need and pleasure.[163]

"Consumptionism" is, from Baudrillard's viewpoint, the ideology of a new capitalist phase.

Baudrillard's break with Marxism

Besides the combination of Marxism, psychoanalysis and semiology, that leads Baudrillard towards his concept and critique of consumption, he also develops (inspired by Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille) another more important direction: the idea of a different form of exchange that differs essentially from classical commodity-exchange. These ideas appears in his third book (1972) *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (Pour une Critique de l'économie politique du signe)*.

Here, the critique of Marxism takes its definitive form as opposition between symbolic organization (sign-system) and capitalist exchange-culture. According to Baudrillard, both needs and commodities exist *outside of* the cultural sphere as objective or "natural" phenomenon. In order to succeed with this enterprise it is necessary to break with the Marxist distinction between the *use value* and *exchange value* of commodities:

> Beyond use value: The status of use value in Marxian theory is ambiguous. We know that the commodity is both exchange value and use value. But the latter is always concrete and particular, contingent on its own destiny, whether this is in the process of individual consumption or in the labour process. […]. So it appears that commodity fetishism (that is, where social relations are disguised in the qualities and attributes of the commodity itself is not a function of the commodity defined simultaneously as exchange value and use value, but of exchange value alone. Use value, in this restrictive analysis of fetishism, appears neither as a social relation nor hence as the locus of fetishization. Utility as such escapes

> the historical determination of class. It represents an objective, final relation of intrinsic purpose (destination proper), which does not mask itself and whose transparency, as form, defies history […]. It is here that Marxian idealism goes to work; it is here that we have to be more logical than Marx himself – and more radical, in the true sense of the word. For use value – indeed, utility itself – is a fetishized social relation, just like the abstract equivalence of commodities[164].

Baudrillard finds that Marx' use of the category exchange-value should be looked upon as a *pretext* for value. Marx' conception of use-value is built upon a myth about *objective needs*.

The myth of "objective needs"; use-value as cultural phenomenon

Use-value is, according to Baudrillard, a cultural phenomenon of semiotic character, and should thus be analysed as such. On the same grounds he criticizes structuralism in general and Saussure especially, when he criticizes the distinction between words (*significant*) and ideas (*signifié*): Precisely the same thing is going on here:

> Use value and signified do not have the same weight as exchange value and signifier respectively. Let us say that they have a tactial value; whereas exchange value and signifier have strategic value. The system is organized along the lines of a functional but hierarchized bipolarity. Absolute pre-eminence redounds to exchange value and the signifier. Use value and needs are only an effect of exchange value.[165]

The development of this problem and the theoretical implications of the attempt to solve it will characterize the rest of Baudrillard's work:

> This is why use-value fetishism is indeed more profound, more "mysterious" than the fetishism of exchange value. The mystery of exchange value and the commodity can be unmasked, relatively it has been since Marx – and

> raised to consciousness as a social relation. But value in the case of use value is enveloped in total mystery, for it is grounded anthropologically in the (self-) "evidence" of a naturalness, in an unsurpassable original reference. This is where we discover the real "theology" of value – in the order of finalities: in the "ideal" relation of equivalence, harmony, economy and equilibrium that the concept of utility 'implies. It' operates 'at all levels: between man and nature, man and objects, man and his body, the self and others. Value becomes absolutely self-evident, la chose la plus simple. Here the mystery and cunning (of history and of reason) are at their most profound and tenacious. […]. Every revolutionary perspective today stands or falls on its ability to reinterrogate radically the repressive, reductive, rationalizing metaphysic of utility. All critical theory depends on the analysis of the object form. This has been absent from Marxist analysis. With all the political and ideological consequences that this implies, the result has been that all illusions converged on use value, idealized by opposition to exchange value, when it was in fact only the latter's naturalized form.[166]

In this matter, the influence of Heidegger and phenomenology cannot be denied. Although Baudrillard never mentions phenomenology, it is obvious that the critique of the existence of objective needs, and the encouraging of reflecting everyday life in relation to use value, implies a phenomenological perspective. Baudrillard's thinking is obviously rooted in semiotics, but his critique of Saussure and structuralism would have been impossible without the dissociation of these teachings. Baudrillard is a typical eclectic author; he combines elements from semiotics, Marxism, structuralism, psychoanalysis and phenomenology. His definite rejection of classic Marxism is developed in *The Mirror of Production (Le Miroir de la production ou l'illusion critique du matérialisme historique)* (1973). Baudrillard writes:

> In order to achieve a radical critique of political economy, it is not enough to unmask what is hidden behind the concept of consumption: the anthropology of needs

> and of use value. We must also unmask everything hidden behind the concept of production, mode of production, productive forces, relations of production, etc. All the fundamental concepts of Marxist analysis must be questioned, starting from its own requirement of a radical critique and transcendence of political economy.[167]

Baudrillard's settlement with Marxism is grounded on an application of Marxist methods on Marxism self. Once upon a time Marxism was revolutionary, it made a difference against the then existing ideological world. Later Marxism became identical with establishment and indirectly glorified what was being criticized. For example, the critique of political economy became an indirect defence of its basic perspective and immanent ontology. Hence, the title of the book refers to Marxism as a mirror-reflected image of capitalist society.

THE DIGITAL ERA

§ 14 Artificial Minds: a brief history of the computer

The contemporary history of the personal computer (PC) whose social impact is just beginning starts at the end of the 19th century with the works of the philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and other mathematicians as Georg Cantor (1845-1918) and Gottlob Frege (1848-1925). Besides of that, in the field of physiology the revolutionary studies of the brain accomplished by Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934) and in the field of engineering with the fundamental technological development happened in connection with the office-supply machines and with the performance of new administrative methods demanded of the expanded industry in USA. What we have then that the origins the Modern computer is related to a logical – mathematical horizon as well as to one physiological, anatomical and other technical and social.

Self-reference, logic became postmodernist

In reaction to the projects that Frege and Cantor had accomplished during the last years of the 19th century, Russell publishes *Principia Matematica* cooperatively with Whitehead in the year 1910. The work had a great impact during all the 20th century and presents several original ideas. During the following pages we will follow the evolution of some of these ideas, for example, the idea of matching the elements of a set with the elements of another, and the idea of "self referring" a set, (that is: matching a set with itself). We shall also see the relationship of these ideas with the new notion of *contradiction*, of *mechanism*, and of *completeness*. Though the use of the techniques of self-referring sets with logical purposes can be found in Greek philosophy, – e.g. the paradox of the *Liar* – it is in the actual

period these techniques become central for the logical argumentation. The idea of self-referring is used in mathematics by Cantor in his famous "demonstration in diagonal". Cantor shows that trying to align the elements of two sets in pairs, one to one, it could happened that some elements remained free. These free elements lead Cantor to the idea of the existence of infinite sets of different size, an idea of paradoxical character, since we cannot intuitively associate the notion of infinite with the idea of counting elements. The technique of pairing elements of different size later lead to the idea of an "effective procedure", that is, to the technique of listing each element of a set. This idea would be fundamental in the moment of defining a "mechanism" or algorithm.

The merit of introducing the auto-referring procedure in the philosophical and logical practice as a technique of the philosophical analysis corresponds to Bertrand Russell. The so-called "paradox of Russell", is deducible in the framework of the "naive" theory of sets of Cantor and Frege. Cantor and Frege believed that each possibly property define a set. Russell demonstrated that this was not possible for the property: "to be contained to itself". According to this property, the set of all the possible sets would be divided in those that "are contained in itself" and those that "are not contained in itself" (For example, "the set of all the lions" is a set but the set is not self a "lion"). Russell reasoned in the following way: Let A be the set of all the sets that "are not contained into it selves" and B the set of all the sets that "are contained in it selves". Russell introduces then the technique of self-referring and asked himself if the set A belongs to the set A or to the set B. If for example we suppose that A belongs to the set A, we have a contradiction, because A is the set of all sets which "are not contained into them selves". If on the contrary we suppose that A belongs to the set B, we obtain other contradiction because the set B is the set of all the sets which "are contained into them selves"; in every case an unavoidable contradiction.

The notion of self-referring - now transformed into an instrument of logical analysis capable of revealing the limits of a thought free of contradictions – passed from Russell to a mayor part of contemporary philosophy. Until our days, this

technique influences all the exact sciences especially those related to the technologies of computation. The evolution's process of this notion can be divided in generations. Being Russell and Frege the first, a second generation constituted by Wittgenstein and Carnap, generalizes the use of the notions of matching the elements of a set and that of self-referring to the completely filed of cognition. A third generation integrated by Gödel (1906-1978) and Turing (1912-1954), finds the logical limits of those ideas, achieving to define clearly that which can be understood as a "mechanism" or an "effective procedure". With this third generation, logic came into Postmodernism. A fourth generation integrated by John von Neumann (1903-1957) and Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) participates in the creation of the first computers, transforming the theoretical conclusions of previous generations into practical results. This generation is the first that breaks the barriers of enclosed study fields and manages to work with physiologists and engineers in electronics. A fifth generation created the bases to "artificial intelligence", "cognitive psychology", and "generative linguistics". The philosophy of Maturana and Varela belong to this generation.

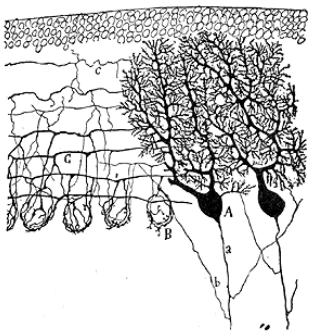
Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Modern neuroscience

Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852 –1934) was a Spanish histologist, physician, and Nobel laureate. He is considered one of the founders of modern neuroscience.

Santiago Ramón y Cajal

Ramón y Cajal postulated that the nervous system is

made up of billions of separate neurons and that these cells are polarized. Cajal suggested that neurons communicate with each other via specialized junctions called "synapses".



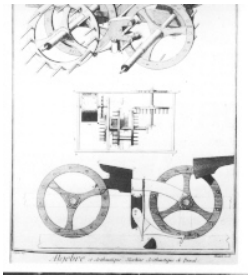
Cajal's drawing of the cerebellar cortex (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/articles/cajal/)

This hypothesis became the basis of the neuron doctrine, which states that the individual unit of the nervous system is a single neuron. Electron microscopy later showed that a plasma membrane completely enclosed each neuron, supporting Cajal's theory.[168]

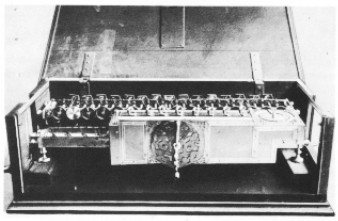
The evolution in the technical front: the office-supply machines

The origin of the personal computer is the same as that of the calculator, which today is found integrated to the computer as an important, but not essential, part of it. The development of a calculating machine was always related to the needs attached to the financial world or to the war industry. It is so that the pioneers of this technology had almost always some relationship to these two fronts of the social activity. Blais Pascal (1623–1662) for example, the creator of the first calculator deserving such a name, built it in the year 1642 to help his father in the work of calculating profits. The firsts calculators were developed because they accomplished in an effective way, the calculus of the basic operations, reducing the time of the job and the risk to commit mistakes. Pascal’s

calculator could perform additions ands subtractions but not multiplications and divisions. Gottfried von Leibnitz (1646-1716) created in the year 1671 another machine which could perform the four basic operations.

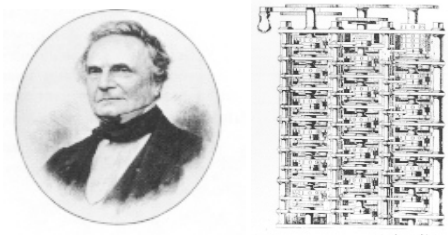


Blais Pascal's calculator from 1642



Gottfried von Leibnitz calculator from 1671

Another great forerunner of the Modern computers was Charles Babbage (1791–1871) who from year 1820 and after worked in the development of a machine capable of calculating tables of logarithms.



Charles Babbage and his machine

But the development of the Modern calculator had to wait until the 20th century, when under the pressure of the Modern industrial state and with the support of the technological and scientific revolution, made it necessary and possible the massive production of a calculators for the public and private administration. This achievement had a great impact on the organization of the society. At end of the 19th century, the administrative demands of the industrial society in full expansion impose the development of machines for individual use at the offices of banks and insurance offices. Therefore, the calculator participates in the birth of the industry of the office-supply machines, together with the cash register and the typewriter, both also integrated today to the functions of the computer. At the beginning of the 20th century an American company dominated the market of building cash registers: it was the NCR (National Cash Register), founded by John H. Petterson in 1884.

At the year 1900 the NCR made 25.000 cash registers per year and employed 2.500 persons. In 1910 the numbers ascended to 100.000 and 5.000 respectively. One of the executives of this company was Thomas J. Watson, born in New York in the year 1874. In the year 1911 he left the NCR and passed to form part of another company the TMC (Tabulating Machine Company) later known as the IBM (International Business Machines). The TMC was building programmable calculators with punctured cards.

The first large electronic calculators

A development of these primitive tabulating machines is known as the MARK I of the University of Harvard, developed by technicians of the IBM and of the American Navy between the years 1937-1943. This was the first calculator capable of accomplishing any mathematical operation. It was used to calculate tables, ballistic tracks, and encoding of military messages.

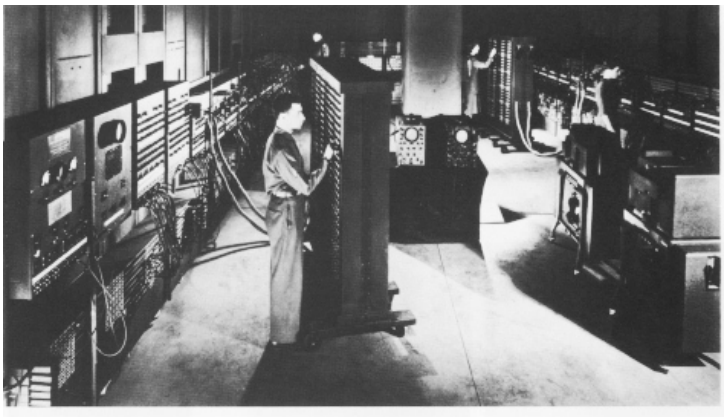
A last link in the development of the calculator and at the same time the step immediately before the creation of the

first computer was the project ENIAC, developed of John W. Mauchly – a meteorologist and John Presper Eckert an engineer in electronics, both active in the Moore -school near Philadelphia. The ENIAC was the first gigantic calculator. It contained 18.000 electronic lamps to a cost of 400.000 dollars. The machine permitted any kind of mathematical calculation and showed for the first time the practical limitations of a pure calculator of those dimensions, imposing new needs as the incorporation for example of new structural elements besides of those needed for calculation. These new elements were first thought as helping structures that facilitated the performance of calculus. The great problem was programming the machine. It is important to remember that its task was accomplished through the modification of a large number of switches, to produce the wished logical and mathematical combinations. The state of the switches was modified through cards or punched tapes, but the translation of the mathematical language to the "language of the machine", had to be made before entering the instructions to the calculator. This situation made the calculation with computer less practical. In spite of provoking a revolution in the speed of the calculation, the quantity and the precision of the calculations, depended on the slowness of the programming process. Programming demanded the availability of highly specialized programmers to a very high cost and that was offsetting the initial positive aspects.

The first computer

Toward 1944 the Hungarian mathematician John von Neumann contacted the group of the ENIAC and in cooperation with it, modified the first model of the ENIAC to create the EDVAC, the first computer strictly speaking. The incorporated differences were some memory devices (resistance systems that "were delaying" the electronic impulses earning in this way "useful" time in the rest of the machine). A part of the machine was designated to housing the translation instructions from the mathematical language to the language of the machine, in such a way that the programmers could express them selves directly in mathematical terms and the first "operative system" had been

born. A part of the machine was designed for calculation and after that the calculator became an underlying part of the computer. Finally it was a unit for the INPUT and another for the OUTPUT of the process. Another decisive decision was to substitute the decimal numerical system for the binary numerical system, accelerating and simplifying the internal mechanisms of the computation. The novelties were many and very important and the report on this work, known as the "EDVAC Report", was written by von Neumann. The rapport provoked a theoretical and technical revolution, starting the period of Modern data processing. At that time, Von Neumann was actively participating in the group of scientist and engineers that were developing the atomic bomb at The Alamos.



The ENIAC

Cybernetics

The model proposed by von Neumann meant the generalization of the known model of the human brain and of the animal nervous system. John von Neumann found inspiration in the appearance of some works of historical importance, such as "A Logical Calculus of the Ideas Immanent in Nervous Activity" of McCulloch and Pitts, and "Behaviour, Purpose and Teleology" of Wiener, Bigelow and Rosenblueth, both from the year 1943. At this point, the technological efforts were combin-

ing the results of three different fronts: the work of mathematicians and logicians, the work of engineers in electronics and the work of physiologists. These three fields contributed to the birth of a very large number of new sciences, for example: cybernetics, artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, generative linguistics, and other more specific fields of Modern knowledge as “systems engineering” and “computer programming”.

Alan M. Turing and John von Neumann

The computers begin to work in real time

During the fifties, some American and British engineers succeeded to perform new great steps in the design of computers. Of all the machines that were developed during those years it is worth to mention the first which were capable of working in “real time”, that is to perform the communication of their results simultaneously to the happening of events of everyday life. One of these projects is initially associated with the person of Jay Forrester and with a project named “Whirlwind” at the M.I.T. This machine was initially thought to coordinate the air force defence of the USA. The project begun in 1945 and was maintained during many years until the development of the intercontinental missiles made it less interesting. During the sixties and seventies, the basic ideas of this project were applied for civil purposes, for example in the development of systems of managing the information of the passengers flow for the largest air companies. To work in “real time “ supposes great reaction speed and great memory, as well as a new way of programming using larger interactive data-

bases.

During the sixties other great innovation became a reality: the simultaneous managing systems, “Time-sharing systems”, were permitting several operators to work independently but simultaneously with the same computer. This step shows a new trend to the individualization of the use of the computers, and anticipates the birth of the PC.

The graphic “interactive” system: “windows”, icons, mouse and menus

Finally, one of the large technical developments that would make possible the computer of Modern office was the development of the “Graphical User Interface” (GUI) today popularised in the metaphor of “the computer’s desk” to which the screen of the computer appeals, with its “catalogues” and “files”. This development released the user from the early dependence on memorized codes and commands. The system that was known as WIMP (Windows, Icons, Mouse, Pull-down menus) was developed in the framework of a project named HARP directed by Doug Engelhard with the collaborations of several laboratories at USA. Around the beginning of the seventies, XEROX produced the first accepted construction. The first MAC (around the beginning of the eighties) would then popularise the GUI system.

The technology of programming

Simultaneously with the development of the “hardware” the technology of programming was developed, a technology that at the beginning was not understood to be as important as that of electronic design. This technology had two principal fronts, that of general languages or instructions, which translate human language into the procedures of the machine, and that of the operative systems, used to reduce the distance between the language of the programmer and the instructions of the machine. The first great programming language was the FORTRAN (FORMULA TRANSLATOR), which during the sixties became the standard language for scientific and techno-

logical work. Other standard language were COBOL (Common Business Oriented Language) a language that was specialized to perform administrative tasks. In the field of operative systems UNIX became a classic construction, developed between the years 1969-1974 in the laboratories Bell by Ken Thompson and Dennis M. Ritchie. However, in spite of those developments those languages and operative systems were still presenting a higher level of difficulty, demanding users of wide knowledge in data processing technology and in mathematics. Those programs and systems were not well adapted for teaching of undergraduates. This situation was remedied in part with the development of the language know by the name BASIC - Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code - developed initially by John Kemeny and by Thomas E. Kurtz at the Dartmouth College working with a " Time-sharing system " built by General Electric.

The hobbyists and the "computer liberation"

The first version of BASIC was presented in 1964 provoking a revolution radically increasing the number of users of computers and making it possible for a group of hobbyists to participate. With the incorporation of the hobbyists the necessary market for the PC was born and the science of programming entered the Postmodern age of popular science and popular technique.

In January of 1975 the front page of "Popular Electronics", announced a microprocessor named ALTAIR 8800 to the price of 397 dollars, constructed by a small company of New Mexico named "Micro Instrumentation Telemetry Systems". MITS was founded and directed by the hobbyist Ed Roberts. This was the first processor with a price and a technology accessible to the hobbyists and it became the starting point of the PC. Bill Gates and Paul Allen created a primitive operative system using BASIC to this processor. It is important to recall here that neither Gates and Allen were young hobbyists with an extraordinary talent for businesses and a very clear vision of the way that the development of the sector would follow in the nearly future. Continuing with a policy that would

give them great results, instead of selling the rights of their system to the MITS, they instead signed an agreement relinquishing the rights of the system in exchange for a commission of the sales of the ALTAIR 8800. In the next years they founded MICROSOFT . Later they made the agreement with IBM for the development of an operative system - known as DOS – for their first PC and the agreement with Apple Computers according to which, Apple Computers relinquished the rights of their GUI system to MICROSOFT, making possible the development of WINDOWS for MICROSOFT.

Other hobbyists of great importance were Stephen Wozniak and Stev Jobs developers of Apple Computers and of the first computer with the GUI system. Jobs maintained an open relationship to the "Computer Liberation" movement, which today is still outstanding and which since then, propagate for social release through the use and popularisation of computers. An ideologist of this group is Ted Nelson (1937) the creator of the term "hypertext" and the head driver of the group of the hobbyists who worked for a new social order.

Computers and "regular people"

Around the seventies, two groups of users of computers could be distinguished, the professionals and the hobbyists. The professionals of the branch and the large companies saw this development with antipathy. Especially when it became obvious that the group of the hobbyists became economically powerful and dominates the destination of the inversions dedicated to investigation and to industrial development. Since then there are two easily identifiable ideological schemes, the first that we will call "difficultism" –the one which considers all that is technically obscure and inaccessible for the majorities as "good" – and another group that we will call "functionalism", that works to simplify the use of computers. By that time, some hobbyists became multimillionaires and their small companies became multinational. Their relation to professionals and to the "computer liberation movement" changed. This ideology then moved over to other individuals of new generations and is today still the political ideology of the

"hackers". A very interesting late product of this ideology is the system known as LINUX, a free of charge variant of UNIX, which was distributed through the Internet to any one who wants to get a copy.

As we can see, the development of the computer shows the following developing steps generally valid for all of the processes of the creation of any technology: a) A first moment in which the social groups which are involved are reduced and highly competent. The product is complex and its results are poor. The discoveries can be maintained secretly with facility. b) A growing simplification and a process of amplification of the wrapped social circles happened at the same time that the practical value of the developed technology increases. c) The new technology reaches new and informal spheres of application. This process is a "democratisation" process of the accesses to technology.

Besides that, the entrepreneurial culture varies in relationship to this process. The companies that do not achieve to be adapted disappear or lose importance, being substituted by new. The destiny of IBM and of MICROSOFT is quite illustrative of this process. The development of data processing has in the USA its natural centre although its leadership has always been questioned. Other countries, as Sweden, are in some branches also leading. Sweden counts with a very high number of computers per capita and with one of the highest integration level of data processing between industry, school/university and state. This is the result of a massive investment into the democratisation of data processing technologies, an investment which begun already in the eighties, and which impelled the whole society, including all the social levels. Even though there are many specific reasons, which make this situation possible, it is important to emphasize one of them: the massive investment into the democratisation of computer technologies with the purpose of qualified consumption. Sweden's high computer concentration, has been achieved also through informal nets of the hobbyists kind, popularising the "knowing how" within popular culture and valorising spontaneous implementation; an experience, which could be applied in any country and in any circumstance.

The so-called “new economy” born to the light of the data processing revolution, is bound to the wheel of the “knowing how” of the industry of data processing, but above all, to the “knowing how” of the consumers. Today more than ever, industries are developed where there is “knowing how”, both within the producer and in the consumer, since the limits between these two sides are today very flexible.

§ 15 What is human and what is artificial in electronic communication

The topic of scientific exchange throughout nets of information can be approached from different points of view. One of them can be the historical, showing the meaning behind the contacts between philosophers and scientists during time.

Other form of boarding the issue would be to show the particular importance of the exchange in our days, the "globalisation" of information, revealing the political and economic value of the information's accuracy and the speed of the information's flood. However, we have chosen a third form of boarding the subject. In short words we shall try to explain the character of the communication accomplished through electronic means of communication based on computers. We are interested in studying the "human" and the "artificial" aspects of communication to explain the possibility of a communication distorted by the presence of a machine. We will begin our exposition departing from an analysis of the differences within computer–nets and the nets of direct human communication.

It is obvious that Internet cannot be considered a net of computers, because the machines in this case, act as mere support, "amplifying" and "accelerating" the flood of information. Other is the situation of the nets build to perform calculations with a technical or scientific purpose. At those nets, the computers complemented each other accomplishing an expected result. In those cases, the function of man is reduced to planning and directing the process. This difference, it is not of any manner obvious, to judge by the permanent need of comparing and distinguishing one kind of net from the others. It is not uncommon to find critical allegations to communication through Internet, based on the idea that it consists on a net of machines and not of persons.

The critiques that frequently are directed to the "globalisation" of human relationships attribute to the communication process between persons, properties typical of mechanical communication. For instance, this allegation defend the idea that communication via Internet is *alienating* because of the fact that you loose the "face to face" contact of traditional communications.

We suspect that behind this appreciation, exists a misunderstanding built on the identification of the body of machine with the human body and on artificial intelligence with human intelligence. The idea that machines are capable of reproducing intelligent processes has been the ideology of several important disciplines, between them cognitive psychology, symbolic logic, and linguistics. The philosophy of mind and contemporary cognitive psychology, tend to distinguish between the "phenomenological mind" and the "computational mind", being the first, the expression of consciousness and the second, the expression of *unconscious* mental processes. This kind of analysis of intelligence, assume that it is possible to differentiate between these two types of intelligence and setting aside the phenomenological aspects to concentrate in the development of a theory of the "computational mind".

The specialists agree that it is possible to compare the "hardware" of a computer with the human brain and "software" with the set of unconscious mental operations that regulate the intelligent operation, especially the logic procedures and its Grammatik. Continuing this line of analysis it is made possible to work from the base of an "artificial intelligence" comparable to the real intelligence, when this is manifested through unconscious mechanical processes. Even more, it can be asserted that in this area of the intelligent activity, the computer is more effective, that is to say "more intelligent" than human intelligence.

The exposed conclusions show the principal aspects of contemporary reflection about artificial intelligence. These conclusions can furthermore be identified with an ideology - in the sense of a collection of ideas and social attitudes – that made the breakthrough of computers possible in society, granting to those machines a growing roll in the process of

communication and in the nets of human relationships in general. That ideological base and its consequences within society have created an understanding of the human mind, which is *mechanistic*. The philosophy of mind defended by researchers in the field of AI and cognitive psychology, remained apprehended to the vision of Turing and his machines and with the mathematics and logics in the years of the Second World War.[169]

Alan Matheson Turing: Can a machine think?

The origins of the idea of an artificial intelligence, is found at the work of the English mathematician Alan Matheson Turing. The more important theoretical contribution of Turing dated from 1936 when he publishes his work "On Computable Numbers with an Application to the *Entscheidungs*[170] problem". This is a work directed to professional mathematicians and of little incidence outside of specialized circles. During the 1950's he publishes "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" in the philosophy magazine *Mind*. In this article, his thoughts transcend the limited circles of the specialists, and became an important issue in the foundation of a new Philosophy of Mind. Turing's ideas leaded also a new ideology for technological action; this is an ideology that, without a better name, we will call a*rtificialism*.

In those historical pages, Turing asked, "can a machine think?" His answer was affirmative, arriving to it through a series of pragmatic substitutions to the initial question. He shows that the question "can machines think?" is of difficult precision and propose to substitute it with another question. To be able to do this, he proposes an ideal situation of an "imitation-game". It is easy for us to understand the kind of game that Turing created, since we practice it daily in electronic communication. In the daily exchange of electronic mail, it is often of secondary importance to know what kind of partner with we are communicating. Is it a man or a woman? In what country or city is living? Which is her/his education? How old is she/he? Supposing that someone connected a machine to the net: Would it be possible to chat with it without detecting the mechanical

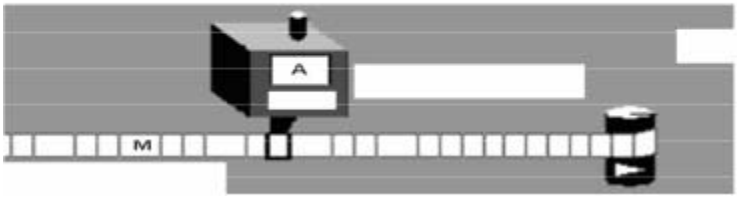
nature of this communicative partner? Could the answers of the machine be confused with those of a person? Turing's second question, which substitutes the question: "Can machines think?" can be put as following: "Is it possible to distinguish a machine from a person in the moment of "non face-to-face" communication? Turing answers negatively to this question and assure that with the progress of the programming technique will be increasingly difficult to distinguish between a machine and a person in the moment of the communication. We can see here all the ingredients of the ideology of *artificialism*. We can see that Turing identifies mechanical communication, with human communication.

Let us say that already the first question of Turing is misleading. We observe that the question *presupposes* the answer. If we apply the criterion distinguishing between the phenomenological mind and the computational mind, we observe that the question seems to be addressed to the phenomenological mind. In this question, the verbs "think" associates clearly to the topic of conscience and not to the topic of an unconscious process. The substituting question is more adequate but not less misleading, because in any case, we are asking ourselves if we will be capable, in electronic communication, of distinguishing between a dialogue in *real time*, accomplished *on line*, with a person, and other accomplished *in deferred* with another person the machine's *programmer*. The correctly formulated question then would be "Can a *programmer* be able to condense the rules of human communication (human thought) in such a way that these could be expressed by mechanical procedures? The answer is now understandable. The question about the machines capability to think is so naive, as like asking if the gramophones can sing, or if a video camera possesses the sense of sight. While the gramophone reproduces the voice or music, the book reproduces words the computer reproduces *abstract human action*. The great contribution of Turing and of his generation in general, is that of have being capable of capturing the formal structures of human action and to being able to reproduce it mechanically. The fascination that this achievement has generated has carried some excesses – nothing different of those that all great achievement generates

in the mind of the man of all times.

Turing machines or the capturing of the elemental rules of the mechanical action

The essence of programming (that is to say, the art of understand and reproduce the rules of human action) consists on describing the steps of any process in its atomic units, one by one, in a univocal way. In the ideal model of Turing, the actions are univocally specified, for instance "do a movement of x many cells to the right/left", "do print/do erase", "do change the internal state"; etc.



Prototype of an ideal machine of Turing's type. About it, see the page: http://www.bvu.edu/facultyschweller/Turing.html (2004-01-26)

tic operations and of logical operations to the rules of the mechanical operation, as well as grammatical and idiomatic rules, communicative rules, etc. To make it possible, those operations have been reduced to their more elementally part, to be performed one by one.

In the ideal model of Turing, an isolated machine is supposed to be faced to a very long tape (this tape has often been described in the specialized literature as "infinite"). The model supposes also a minimal programming language, in which the *affirmation* and the logical *denial* appear decomposed in simpler operations as those of "to continue" or "to stop". This limitation in the number of words being used is fundamental. We observe that the effectiveness of Turing machines is based on their simplicity, a simplicity provoked by the effects of

making them understandable. We have to remember that these processes have to be governed by the mind of a programmer, who translates to the machine the standards of the *finite* process of human action, that she/he has in her/his mind. For this purposes the work accomplished by a computer, is the work that the programmer has designed and the *diachronic* expression of her/his thoughts.

The Turing model of communication and its limitations

We begin by making a list of the limitations of the mechanical metaphor of Turing. The most important objection that can be raised by a Turing model of the human mind (and in general to any similar model of any living process) is that the human action (human communication) cannot be understood as an *isolated individual process*. The imitation game proposed by Turing to illuminate the problem of the mental capacity of machines, is a good example of a wrongly representation of human action, of human communication and of any living process in general.

To make it possible to reproduce a mental living minimal cell, would be necessary, to project a Turing model of at least *two machines with one interconnected tape*. The fact is that living intelligence is subordinate to the rules of communication. Without communication, there is no intelligence. From this, can be deduced that all form of analysis of possible artificial intelligence, must incorporate the interactions between machines that simulate with success the interactions that are given in the living communication.

We are aware that the underlying misunderstanding of the Turing metaphor has deeper sources, for instance the generalized idea that human thought is generated in the brain, that is, at the *individual* brain and that it is "there" where communication takes place. On the contrary, it is much more likely, that human thought has its base in a net of *brains*. Nevertheless, the objections do not end at this point. The relationship between the internal states of a Turing machine and the symbols of the tape is of *independence*, that is to say, there is no connection between the tape and the internal state of the

machine outside the program. Another form of expressing the same is to say that the program is the only link between the internal state of the machine and the read symbol. This situation is practically impossible to obtain in reality, where the act of reading and the written content are not independent from each other and where their relationship, do not seem to depend too much on a genetic code. The internal state of a machine's would depend on the read symbol *a posteriori*, and the action generated in the relationship symbol-internal state, would generate an action *a posteriori to the reading.* The "internal state" of the machine, will be relinquished to the pressure of the "symbol" on the tape, when it became the not anticipated expression of the real world. It is in this case that we can talk about *unconscious* processes, when the connections between the internal state and the tape are not connected *a priori*.

§ 16 Kafka, IT, surveillance and democracy

Society has always had control over its members; in old times family, the farm or the village or Church managed this control because life was constricted to a physic place. When during the 19th century the Modern city grew faster with millions of peasants moving in to work in factories, the need for individual information grew proportionally. To manage the administration of Modern states in Europe, governments needed information about their citizens, their family conditions, their education, their health, their dwelling, etc. Under this period began the development of public records, recollecting information through general *census* of the population in the country. The first census in USA is from 1790, but already in 1860, 142 questions were asked.[171]

The use of massive information, about the citizens of the state, became increasingly a problem when, during the 19th century, individual rights entrained in the collective consciousness of almost everyone. After 1950, with the development of powerful computers, the paradox "social control" versus "individual freedom" became urgent as the most powerful threat against individual *privacy*.

Some definitions of *privacy*

According to Solove many of the problems that confuses us when we try to understand the threats of the Digital Age, arises because we insist in using definitions of privacy that belong to another era. Some of these old definitions lead us to confound e.g. the *private* with *secrecy*. This identification leads to the conclusion *that anything that is not secret is necessary public* (that is, *not private* and therefore *open to anybody*).

Another misunderstanding is the identification of *sur-*

veillance with the act of *collecting information*. This leads to the conclusion that databases are some variant of surveillance and because surveillance supposes control, databases exercise some kind of control upon us. However, databases are in fact, the Digital Era's consequence of *bureaucracy* that affects the individual not to control him, but to manage information about him that is *out of context*. As we see it, the real threat of collected information in databases arises first when that *information* is used as *knowledge*.

Traditionally privacy has been understood as the lost of freedom in a closed-society in which the state identifies with a kind of "Big-brother" that controls every moment of the life of the citizens. In this case, the dominant ideas are those of *control* and *lost of freedom*.

> The dominant metaphor for Modern invasions of privacy is Big Brother, the ruthless totalitarian government in George Orwell's novel 1984. Big Brother oppresses its citizens, purges dissenters, and spies on everyone in their homes. The result is a cold, drab, grey world with hardly any space for love, joy, original thinking, spontaneity, or creativity. It is a society under total control. Although the metaphor has proven quite useful for a number of privacy problems, it only partially captures the problems of digital dossiers. [172]

The second traditional way of understanding privacy is, as said previously, associated to the idea of *secrecy*, that is, the individual right to keep secret about some facts that concern the own life. The violation of this privacy supposes the disclosure of secret worlds.

> The harm such invasions cause consists of inhibition, self-censorship, embarrassment, and damage to one's reputation. [173]

However, those traditional definitions of privacy cannot be used to understand the problem of privacy in connection to digital dossiers. As Solove alleges, Franz Kafka's depiction of bureaucracy in *The Trial* is instead, a very good metaphor to describe the kind of violation that databases occasioned to the individual.

Franz Kafka

The threat of the digital dossier consists on the threat of an increasingly large bureaucracy in which *information about individuals* are used *to produce beliefs* about them.

> Kafka's novel chronicles the surreal nightmare of a person who is unexpectedly informed that he is under arrest but given no reason why. [174]

Kafka's metaphor in *The Trial* illustrates "an individual's sense of helplessness, frustration, and vulnerability when a large bureaucratic organization has control over a vast dossier of details about one's life. Bureaucracy often results in a routinized and sometimes careless way of handling information with little to no accountability. [175]

Differences between information and belief

The invasion of privacy that bureaucracy conveys, has more to do with the *nature of information* and its *difference with belief* than with direct political control. The discrepancies and coincidences between "belief" and "information" reveal a hidden ontological problem. According to Rafael Capurro[176], information is fragmented intentionality that reduces or attenuates it in a communicative act. The fragmentation of intentionality *in small and disconnected parts* (information) can be reconnected producing different and *always unexpected results* (beliefs). Unexpectedness of meaning depends on the vanishing of intentionality. When the bureaucrat use information to produce beliefs, he creates unexpected meaning that may not be connected to reality at all.

The concept "information" is not so easy to define because it is used in different contexts. It is used in connection

with natural sciences and technology with a specific signification and in social and human sciences meaning something different.[177] The term comes from Latin and originally meant "to form" something. It can be found already in Publius Vergilius Maro and after that in Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Later it appears again in Descartes and the new philosophy meaning "to form matter" and "to communicate something to someone". After World War II, the term associated directly to the theoretical and technological developments in the fields of mathematics, communication technologies, and computer science and also to the names of men of science as Norbert Wiener, John von Neumann, and Claude Elwood Shannon. Especially important is the book of Shannon *A Mathematical Theory of Communication* from 1948. Shannon distinguished the meaning of the term "information" from that of the term "meaning". According to Shannon, "information" not necessary had to be meaningful. "Information" is to Shannon the measure of a "difference" between signals. The binary difference between "yes" and "no" is the simplest of all possible contents of information. This measure defines a binary unit or "bit". The richer the open alternatives, the richer the content of information in the message, therefore the technological meaning of information is a measurement of "organisation" and "order".

> Messages are themselves a form of pattern and organisation. Indeed, it is possible to treat sets of messages as having entropy like sets of states of the external world. Just as entropy is a measure of disorganisation, the information is a measure of organisation.[178]

One of the uses of the term "information" was important for the philosophy of materialism:

> The mechanical brain doses not secrete thought "as the liver does bile", as the earlier materialist claimed, nor does it put it out in the form of energy, as the muscle puts out its activity. Information is *information*, nor matter nor energy. No materialism, which does not admit this, can survive at the present day.[179]

Rafael Capurro introduced a very interesting connec-

tion of the technological meaning of "information" with the phenomenological field of philosophy[180]. Capurro understand the Modern age of informatics as a Postmodern phenomena, which can be found already in the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger. The informative content can be understood according to Capurro as Postmodern knowledge because it is neither rational nor scientific. Another important difference is that informative communication leaves behind the opposition between object and subject and substitutes it with *intersubjectivity and context*; the informational content is not attached to a subject.

We see, as Capurro does information as "fragmented" intentionality and even that, being disconnected parts of knowledge, information can conduce to different and revealing results. When the original message has been converted to pure information, intentionality disappears from it, and inevitably, even its cognitive character disappears.

The digital database in the private sector

The problems, that the management of databases convey, increased dramatically when even the private sector of society, began to collect information of their customers. In this new situation, it is not the interest of planning society matters or to guaranty the well functioning of services, which lies behind this massive collection of information. The private sector collects information to make money through increasingly efficient marketing. The first steps of marketing is characterised by the direct contact with all the potential customers. Introducing databases and information's strategies, the companies increased the profit in direct proportion to their knowledge about their customers and their preferences.

> In the 1920s, the sales department of General Motors Corporation began an early experiment with targeted marketing. GM discovered that owners of Ford vehicles frequently didn't purchase a Ford as their next vehicle-so it targeted owners of two-year-old Fords and sent them a brochure on GM vehicles.[181]

The usefulness of databases has to do with the technical properties of the storing of data, in separate fields that can be combined in many ways depending on the property targeted. Because of this, companies organize people depending e.g. on their buying capacity and personal interests. Databases' structure, constructs also following cultural and racial patterns, organizing customers by age, education, nationality, religion, political ideas, etc.

With time, the usefulness and profitability of large customer's databases increased when the companies understood that they could *sell* their collected information to other companies. Information became a commodity at the market, which a company could negotiate with others, to increase the amount of information accessible and produce more profits.

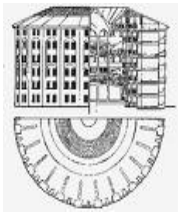
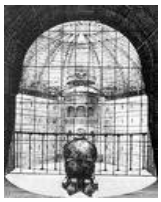
> The most powerful database builders construct information empires, sometimes with information on more than half of the American population. For example, Donnelley Marketing Information Services of New Jersey keeps track of 125 million people. Wiland Services has constructed a database containing over 1,000 elements, from demographic information to behavioural data, on over 215 million people. There are around five database compilers that have data on almost all households in the United States.[182]

The storage of large amount of information in databases is significant for banks and credit organizations. The effectiveness of this business relies on the predictability of the conduct of their costumers. Predictability decides the rate of the interest that they will charge to each transaction. However, because databases are disconnected from reality, the effectiveness of this business has very little to do with the rights of their customers, that more than often, become victims of the bureaucracy naturally involved in this kind of operations.

Surveillance and the *Panopticon*

The traditional idea of surveillance is material and not digital. It has been explained remarkably clear by Jeremy

Bentham in his project on a building usable as prison, hospital, or school.

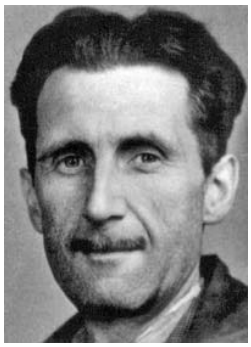




Bentham and the Panoticon

The *Panopticon* designed by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) in the late eighteenth century. The concept of the design is to allow an observer to observe (-opticon) all (pan-) prisoners without the prisoners being able to tell if they are being observed or not, thus conveying a "sentiment of an invisible omniscience." In his own words, Bentham described the Panopticon as "a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example." (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007).

Bentham's Panopticon is an extraordinary example of the growing Modernity of the capitalist society in 18th century Britain and has inspired George Orwell's dystopian societies as they were presented in his novels.

Eric Arthur Blair (1903-1950), better known by the pen name George Orwell, was an English author and journalist. Noted as a novelist, critic, political and cultural commentator, Orwell is among the most widely admired English-language essayists of the 20th century. He is best known for two novels critical of totalitarianism in general, and Stalinism in particular: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007).



The totalitarian world of Orwell, as it refers in the novel "1984", reminds the *Panopticon*-world. In the novel "1984", Big Brother is the all-seeing leader of the dystopian Oceania and it has inspired the authors of the well-known *reality television show* with same name.

The picture of this leader shows in posters with the text: "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU". Everything the people do is targeted by the *telescreens*. However, nobody has seen Big Brother in person. There is some kinship between the telescreen in Orwell's novel and the Internet. To surf the Internet means also to be watched and registered.

Dataveillance and the gathering of information in Internet

Internet has become the most powerful medium of communication in history, it is also, a natural place to exercise marketing and for gathering personal information:

> The Internet is rapidly becoming the hub of the personal information market, for it has made the peddling and purchasing of data much easier. Focus USA's website boasts that it has detailed information on 203 million people. Among its over 100 targeted mailing lists are lists of "Affluent Hispanics," "Big-Spending Parents," "First Time Credit Card Holders," "Grown But Still At Home," "Hi-Tech Seniors," "New Homeowners, "Status Spenders," "Big Spending Vitamin Shoppers," and "Waist Watchers."[183]

The methods to do this are many and more or less sincere. Sometimes the user has to register and answer questions, to access to some sites. Sometimes the company uses "cookies" (a short identification code that installs onto the user's computer when a web page is entered). This situation has let researchers to redefine surveillance in the era of Internet as *dataveillance* or the "systematic use of personal data systems in the investigation or monitoring of the actions or communications of one or more persons." [184]

Dataveillance differs from traditional surveillance in the *act of observation* –human who watches other humans– is

indirect and appear *after* the wished information has been collected. Dataveillance consists principally in computer's surveillance, that is, a collection of information that is harmless for the individual as long as other humans do not process it.

> Being observed by an insect on the wall is not invasive of privacy; rather, privacy is threatened by being subject to human observation, which involves judgments that can affect one's life and reputation. Since marketers generally are interested in aggregate data, they do not care about snooping into particular people's private lives. Much personal information is amassed and processed by computers; we are being watched not by other humans, but by machines, which gather information, compute profiles, and generate lists for mailing, emailing, or calling. This impersonality makes the surveillance less invasive.[185]

Bureaucracy

The real problem with *dataveillance* arises with the empowerment of the completely bureaucratic organization of Modern society. Bureaucracy is as old as civilisation, and it is expressly important for Modernity . It is with the rise of the Modern society, when the administration of the state became "bureaucratic", meaning with it, the situation of empowerment of the class of officials and clerks and the mechanization of their working procedures. This group of people are not being democratically chosen, however, they have often more power than the politicians do. "Bureaucratic" is the public or private administration that decides over individuals lives with the support of information collected mechanically and without regard to context.

> Weber observes that bureaucracy can become "dehumanised" by striving to eliminate "love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation." Bureaucracy often cannot adequately attend to the needs of particular individuals not because bureaucrats are malicious, but because they must act within

> strict time constraints, have limited training, and are frequently not able to respond to unusual situations in unique or creative ways.[186]

Another property that characterizes bureaucratic organizations is their *lack of transparency*. Most of the decisions, made by an official based on facts that affect individuals, are secretly related to the more or less "hidden" interests of the state or of the companies involved.

> As Weber notes, "bureaucratic administration always tends to exclude the public, to hide its knowledge and action from criticism as well as it can."[187]

To avoid this negative effect of the bureaucratic process, transparency would be needed, accompanied by other actions, as e.g. the prohibition of the gathering of information about some areas of the private life of individuals. Solove enumerates some of the necessary changes:

> 1) There must be no personal-data record-keeping systems whose very existence is secret. 2) There must be a way for an individual to find out what information about him is in a record and how it is used. 3) There must be a way for an individual to prevent information about him obtained for one purpose from being used or made available for other purposes without his consent. 4) There must be a way for an individual to correct or amend a record of identifiable information about him. 5) Any organization creating, maintaining, using, or disseminating records of identifiable personal data must assure the reliability of the data for their intended use and must take reasonable precautions to prevent misuse of the data.[188]

Law protecting privacy in 19th century USA

According to Solove, the starting point of privacy law in USA can be dated to the critical works of Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis as early as 1890. Warren and Brandeis reacted to the aggressive and worthless communication–manner

inaugurated by the newspapers and magazines, their time's mass medial phenomena. "During the latter half of the nineteenth century, newspapers were the most rapidly growing form of media, with circulation increasing about 1,000 percent from 1850 to 1890."

> According to Warren and Brandeis: "The press is overstepping in every direction the obvious bounds of propriety and decency. Gossip is no longer the resource of the idle and of the vicious, but has become a trade, which is pursued with industry as well as effrontery." [189]

Warren and Brandeis were also concerned over the development of photography. When in the year 1884 Kodak Company could produce a handy camera, which could be purchased by almost anyone, the incursions in the privacy of others became an urgent problem.

At the year 1903, the first privacy torts were promulgated which authorized people to sue magazines and newspapers for privacy violations. According to Solove the torts of privacy in USA are:

> 1) Public Disclosure of Private Facts. The tort of public disclosure of private facts creates a cause of action when one makes public "a matter concerning the private life of another" in a way that: (a) would be highly offensive to a reasonable person, and (b) is not of legitimate concern to the public."
>
> 2) False Light. The tort of false light is primarily a variation on the defamation torts of libel and slander, protecting against the giving of "publicity to a matter concerning another that places the other before the public in a false light" that is "highly offensive to a reasonable person.
>
> 3) Appropriation. The tort of appropriation occurs when one "appropriates to his own use or benefit the name or likeness of another." In the courts, this tort has developed into a form of intellectual property right in aspects of one's personhood. [190]

As we can see, these torts are not usable in the cases

of the privacy problems derived from dataveillance. This motivated in 1974, to the legislation of a new law regulating the collection and use of public records and giving individuals the right to access and correct information in these records. Moreover, in 1998 a new law protecting the integrity of children's privacy at Internet was legislated.[191]

The problems caused by dataveillance leads us to the discussion about possible solutions. Could it be possible to correct the excesses of dataveillance? Can it be possible that private interests auto regulate to avoid the excesses of dataveillance? The answer to these questions is almost the same as to the question of the auto regulation of private interest in similar matters, as in the case of magazines and newspapers. The problem is that the commercial actors at the market see information as a *commodity* that belongs to the collector – the company that gathers information about individuals to construct a database – and not to the individuals who are the subject of the information's bank.

However, even in those cases in which the collector of information and the individual that provided the information arranged the commercial conditions of the use of the gathered information, it is not always so easy to determine who the owner of this piece of negotiated privacy is.

Foucault's theory of social power

The idea of the *Panopticon* is central also for Michel Foucault's critic of the concentration of power in Modern society. The *Panopticon* is not only an architectural solution; it is also a new technology of power. Foucault's critics discover the existing relation between power and architecture in general.

Michel Foucault 1926-1984 was a French philosopher and historian. His critical studies of various social institutions, most notably psychiatry, medicine, the human sciences, and the prison system, are well known, as is his work on the history of sexuality. (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007)

Foucault's work concerning power, and the relationship between power, knowledge, and discourse, has been widely discussed and applied. To Foucault, power is the expression of the action of society over the body. Power cannot be associated to any special place in society; on the contrary, it is present everywhere. Alan Sheridan writes:

> As Foucault demonstrated at length in *Surveiller et punir*, it is these micro-mechanisms of power that, since the late eighteenth century, have played an increasing part in the management of people's lives through direct action on their bodies: they operate not through a code of law, but through a technology of normalization, not by punishment, but by control, at levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its machinery[192.]

Foucault's own ideas:

> Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. One should probably be nominalist in this matter: power is not an institution, nor a structure, nor a possession. It is the name we give to a complex strategic situation in a particular society. [193]

Foucault follows Merleau-Ponty's thought, understanding the body as the centre of power. Furthermore, sexuality can be found as the essence of the body:

> This conviction that confession reveals the truth finds its most powerful expression in our attention to sexuality: the belief that the body and its desires, seen through a

> prism of interpretation, is the deepest form of truth about a particular individual and about human beings in general. From the Christian penance to the present day, the desires of the body have held centre stage in the confession. Beginning in the Middle Ages, then during the Reformation, and continuing in the present day, the language and techniques employed in religious confession have become more refined and their scope increasingly widened.[194]

This powered nucleus of the body cannot be reached without the help of the specialists, which produce and reproduce the technology of social power:

> The key to the technology of the selves the belief that one can, with the help of experts, tell the truth about oneself. It is a central tenet not only in psychiatric sciences and medicine, but also in the law, in education, in love. The conviction that truth can be discovered through the self-examination of consciousness and the confession of one's thoughts and acts now appears so natural, so compelling, indeed so self-evident, that it seems unreasonable to posit that such self-examination is a central component in a strategy of power. [195]

Foucault's idea of social power is clearly influenced by the idea of "gravitation", and it is obvious that he play with many physical associations.

POSTMODERN LIFE STUDIES

§ 17 Artificial Life or the Vitalism of Postmodernity

Defining "life"

When philosophers in different times tried to define "life", they confronted some archetypical problems. One of the first problems was that of deciding if living and non-living matter showed the same properties. If not, which of those was that which was the most primitive?

The second problem was that of developing an epistemological model of life. Philosophers worked on two families of models, one model, which we could call a *substance-like model*, and a second that we could call a *scene-like model*. The first model understands life as a *substance* with all the properties that characterizes substances. This is the point of view of a *chemical* metaphysics. On the other hand, a scene-like metaphysics understands life as a "projectile" that is a particle that moves in space and time. The second model reflects the point of view of physics.

A third problem was to find a good method to organize the living process in a causal model. Is life a mechanism? Alternatively, shall we understand life as a goal-oriented process (teleological)?

The problem of the nature of living and non-living matter

Considering that non-living matter is not the same matter as the living matter conduces to the conclusion that living matter lacks physical and chemical properties, (because non-living matter shows physical and chemical properties). Such a conclusion conduced to the needs of introducing non-material substances. In this sense, life became *animated* matter (*anima* as *spirit* or *soul*, expresses the idea of "breath.")

The hypothesis, at the other hand, that non-living matter is the same matter as the living matter, conduced to a new level of problems. It could be possible that the differences between living and non-living matter were the same between *organic* and *inorganic* matter. However, in the year 1828, this possibility showed to be an illusion when Friedrich Wöhler (1800-1882) managed to produce *urea* (NH2CONH2) from inorganic matter.

> Wöhler is regarded as a pioneer in organic chemistry as a result of his (accidentally) synthesizing urea in the Wöhler synthesis in 1828. Until 1828, it was believed that organic substances (i.e., *protoplasm*) could only be formed under the influence of the vital force in the bodies of animals and plants.[196]

Today, the problem of the differences between living and non-living matter, is still actual and there is not any convincing answer to this question. To the history of this study, some other important results shall be named, for example the discovery of viruses as large molecules. This discovery was done by Wendell Meredith Stanley (1904-1971) whom received a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1946 for his work on the tobacco mosaic virus, which he crystallized in 1935. Stanley demonstrated that a virus has molecular properties and grounded a new approach that study viruses as large molecules.

However, if it is not possible to decide which the limits between living and non-living matter are, could it be possible to decide which of the two is the more primitive? During Antiquity the dominant Ideas were that life dominated in the universe. With Descartes philosophy, this idea changes to the opposite. Today scientific view coincides with that of Descartes and we understand life as a special state of matter.

Two competing epistemological models

During Antiquity, the dominating idea of the living was the *substance-like* epistemological model. Greek philosophy understood life as the presence of soul in matter (psyche). For Plato, this substance was the underlying cause of the self-

motion of the living. Death occurred when the life-giving substance disappeared from matter. However even in Antiquity there are exceptions to this tendency, Atomists understood life as moving particles.

The metaphysics that understands life as independent from any other form of matter has been called "Vitalism". This ontology appears often associated to substance-like models. In a corresponding way, mechanicism is easily associated to scene-like models. The confrontation between vitalists and mechanicists reach the higher point during the last years of the 19th century.

To the vitalists life is not reducible to any mechanism. "Life" is a category itself, as space, time, substance and movement are. In doing this, the metaphysics of Vitalism worked with two different forms of matter. The mechanicists, on the other hand, believed that life is nothing but a special combination of physical and chemical properties. That means that life could be produced in the laboratory. While vitalists could explain what life was, mechanicists chose to explain what life was made of.

From life-studies *in vivo* to life-studies *in vitro*

Once, in the beginnings of science, the need of systematic classification of life forms was unavoidable. Aristotle and many others after him until Linnaeus worked in this direction. The characteristics of primitive science determined that those systematic studies should be done "in vivo". At that time, life forms where understood as wholes, as they appeared to everybody in the world of common sense. This direction has been followed by evolutionist as Charles Darwin and genticians as Gregor Mendel and in our days by the ecologists.

Gregor Johann Mendel, 1822- 1884. Augustinian priest and scientist often called the "father of modern genetics" for his study of the inheritance of traits in pea plants. Mendel showed that the inheritance of traits follows particular laws, which were later named after him. (Wikipedia, 2007-07-24).

With the development of scientific technology, with apparatus as the microscope an the wave, another form of study life became possible. Life forms were desiccated and studied "in vitro". The scientific strategy worked with living beings as mechanisms and decomposed them as a jigsaw puzzle. The first step consisted in finding a minimal particle, the minimal piece of the machine. Following the inheritance of atomism, the scientists found the *cell* and studied how it worked.

Robert Hooke, 1635 –1703. Hooke coined the biological term *cell*, so called because his observations of plant cells reminded him of monks' cells which were called "cellula." (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007).

Modern Vitalism

During the 18th century, a group of scientist that would be called "vitalists" flourished in Europe. Among those vitalists, there was Georg Ernst Stahl (1660-1734), the creator of the theory of phlogiston.

Marie François Xavier Bichat (1771-1795), French anatomist and physiologist. Despite the fact that he worked without a microscope he was able to advance a great deal understanding of human body. He was the first to introduce the notion of tissu (tissues) as distinct entities. He maintained that diseases attacked tissues rather than whole organs. (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007).

Marie F. X. Bichat meant that: "life is the same as the summa of the functions which resist dead".

Georg Ernst Stahl 1660-1734), was a German chemist and physician. In chemistry he is chiefly remembered in part with the obsolete *phlogiston* theory. In medicine he professed an animistic system, in opposition to the materialism of Hermann Boerhaave and Friedrich Hoffmann. (Wikipedia, June 27, 2007).

After Stahl and Bichat, the debate between vitalists and mechanicists reached the highest point during the last years of the 19th century. Among the vitalists we will name Max Verworn (1863-1921) who had the idea that chemical particles with special chemical actions are "living" and Hans Driesch (1867-1941) an anti Darwinist that defended the autonomy of life. For Driesch there is a special power, which he called "monads" – a concept he borrowed from The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716). Driesch had demonstrated by experiment in 1895 that it was possible to remove large pieces from eggs, such as shuffling the blastomeres at will or taking some away and thus interfere in many

ways, yet not affect the resulting embryo. This was taken as proof that any single monad in the original egg cell was capable of forming any part of the completed embryo."[197]

The 19th century debate was the last debate between vitalists and mechanicists that was centred in trying to find proof about the nature of life in biology and chemistry. The next generation of vitalists, worked in a digital environment and would be one of the typical expressions of the Postmodern era.

Postmodern Vitalism

We call Postmodern Vitalism the position that defended the possibility of creating life forms from the application of intelligent programs in computational environments. The new variants of Leibnitz's monads were robots and androids. The differences from traditional Vitalism are remarkable, when the traditional Vitalism saw in the machines the opposite to life, Postmodern Vitalism see in machines the platform of life forms.

The point of departure for Postmodern Vitalism was Alan Mathison Turing's (1912-54) work and his reflexions on the capacity of constructing a thinking machine. Another important contributor to this new branch was Norbert Wiener's (1894-1964) program on *Cybernetics*.

After the Second World War the needs of a new ground for a philosophy of life grew in direct proportion to the astonishing scientific discoveries and outstanding technological achievements. There were many different disciplines which contributed to this development and many of them changed decisively themselves in combinations with others to create new interdisciplinary results. Some of those decisive sciences were mathematics, electronics, and neuronal physiology. Some very important results in the field of Cognition were the works of Humberto Maturana (1928) and Francisco Varela (1946-2001).

Maturana and Varela: the notion of "autopoiesis"

Maturana's main ideas were introduced in his most important works Autopoiesis *and Cognition* (1980) and The *Tree of Knowledge* (1987) and *Science and Daily Life: the*

Ontology of Scientific Explanations (1991). Among the works of Varela should be mentioned *The Embodied Mind* (1991– Varela, Rosch and Thompson) which anticipated the ideas of intelligence as "evolutional intelligence".

Humberto Maturana, Chilean biologist och cybernetist, the author of the theory of autopoiesis reelaborating ideas from Bateson and Wittgenstein.

Maturana first worked with studying vision and its phenomenological aspects.

Francisco Varela and embodied knowledge

According to Varela, knowledge can only be reached through the body's participation in the process of cognition. He worked with his own ideas, as that of "neuronal phenomenology" which tried to combine neuronal physiology with Husserl's phenomenology.

Francisco Varela was influenced by East philosophies and following this tradition developed the notions of embodied action – *enaction* – and embodied intelligence.

Varela suffered hepatitis–C and died after a liver–transplantation. During his convalescence, Varela wrote, "Intimate Distances - Fragments for a Phenomenology of Organ Transplantation." (http://www.enolagaia.com/Varela.html)

The central question these authors ask is "in which way are living creatures organized?" Already here, their orientation is clear. Life is not to be explained extracting the properties which living things have in common. The class of living things is not defined by common and essential properties, but by a particular form of organization. An explanation of life would be accomplished if it could prescribe a "generative mechanism" which if "realized", would lead to experiencing the phenomena wanted to be explained. So if there could be specified an organization, which, if realized would behave in a manner indistinguishable from the other phenomena we would call "life", then, we would have an explanation of life. Some questions now surface. If one succeeds to specify a generative mechanism, for example a computer program or a conceptual system, would this, apart from being an explanation of life, also be an example of life, as the phenomenology of the generative mechanism would be indistinguishable from real life? If so, artificial life would also be real life.

Maturana and Varela could be said, be following a tradition started by von Neumann and formed by cybernetic research; an early version of what now is known as cognitive science. The field of cybernetics is now experiencing a revival (Varela, Rosch and Thompson), partly because of the influence of Maturana and Varela. A blossoming underground movement in cognitive science known as Artificial Life (also known as AL) is drawing heavily on the cybernetic tradition. A-life researchers seem to be in accordance with the theoretical stance of Maturana and Varela.

Christopher Langton defines life similarly to them: "a property of the organization of matter, rather than a property of the matter that is so organized" . So the phenomena of life, can emerge from simple physical matter and complexity. The important point is that life, though it has to be carried out by a physical structure, is not a property of the matter. It is not a form, not a colour or some kind of life force connected to living tissue. If this way of thinking is right, then to know the organization of the living is to know what life is. A first objection

might be raised at this point: what is complexity and how is complexity distinguished from simplicity?

The notion of complexity is a very central one for the Modern theories of automata and artificial life. It is normally used pragmatically. The notion of complexity is accepted without analysis as belonging to some ontological reality. To work with it in spite of this, it is defined in operative terms. An example of this can be found in the book of Håkan J. Holm Complexity in Economic Theory "An automata theoretical approach". He defines "complexity" indirectly, through defining a "measurement" of complexity.

A measurement of the complexity of any problem could be precise as follow as 1) a description of the computer that can handle it, 2) a description of the algorithm (computer program) which can handle that problem, 3) the kind of input data, 4) the demands of time and space of data.

Asking about the organization of an entity, is asking about how this entity is structured and even how this entity is working. Now, one may object that a question about the organization of an entity, would tell us what the entity is, because I cannot explain what life is through a description of its structure or through a description of how life works (or both). The reason for this is the same as the reason of why we are not able to explain what a car is through a description of its structure or an account of how it works. If this explanation is given to a man who never has seen a car, he would not understand what we are talking about. I cannot say for example that a car is "some particular relationships of four wheels with an engine". We cannot answer a question of the type "what is A?", with an answer of the type "the organization of A is so and so" That is why, in spite of the progress of the philosophical Mechanicism, it has not been possible to answer the question of what life is.

We may not forget that mechanicism raises upon the development of Nominalism and the question of what life is, is a question about essentials. The organization of matter is not what life is but rather the conditions for life to be. Now, some of the arguments of Maturana and Varela make us think that they are not mechanicists. For example, they think that life has

a unique place in the world of nature. At this point, they are more close to Vitalism than to mechanicism. As we are going to see, they are not physicalists either. This means that the use of the word "organization" in their language must mean something else. It is rather more appropriate to understand that with it, they refer to life's essential organization. What is essential to the organization of the living is for example, the existence of *neighbourhood's relations*. This idea seems to provide us with a solution of the problem of teleology. The different parts of a living organism act independently. Each part is working with some immediate step and do not influence the others directly. The results are the combination of each particular, but not globally but independently (see even Langton, 1993).

Cognition as embodied action: *enaction*

When a materialist model is used to represent life, or some connected process of cognition, usually an identification is made between "a world of matter" (life inclusive) and "the physical world". We may ask us if this is the intended interpretation of Maturana and Varela. That is, are they physicalists? Well, the answer is no. It seems that they are trying to develop an epistemological state that is of a new kind. It is neither a reductive physicalism nor any other kind of physicalism. Living systems may be then the consequence of a state of matter that is emergent as well as it is not physical (the biological state). Thus if you ask Maturana and Varela, they would say that they believe that life can be produced by complexity from simple physical objects and in support of this would show to you how emergent proprieties can be produced in a computer. The intended interpretation then is that life is a complication of the physical world that is by definition "simple". As a consequence of this, and because complexity is itself the bearing factor of life, a computer program as a "virus" for example, has to be in some way living (or at least living in the same way as a non-artificial ("real") virus). What is new in all this, is that the reduction of the living to the non-living that was the central issue of Mechanicism has changed to the opposite. It is not the case that Maturana and Varela try to avoid materialism as the

classical vitalists wanted to do, but their strategy as we saw, is not that of mechanicism either. Their project is, the continuation of that of the alchemists as well as that of the computer scientists of Artificial Life. Maturana and Varela are neither mechanicists nor physicalists; we might call their interpretation as *organizationism*.

Complexity

Life is complex and circular but we learn that an organization may be complex and circular at the same time without being living. What distinguishes life from other non-living things that might be circular? Maturana and Varela say that life is self-producing and self-organizing. Complexity and circularity without structural coupling and self-production is not life. The idea that the complexity of its organization is the bearing property of life has a very strong intuitive appeal and deserves therefore to be studied in more detail. We shall not forget that this idea with more or less influence from physicalism and mechanicism, is shared by Maturana and Varela with the researchers of AL. I know that life is embedded in physical and chemical processes and even if I do not believe in a complete reduction of life to physical and chemical processes, I have to accept that somewhere, sometimes, something happens that make non-living matter to a living being. I may say therefore, that life is an emergent quality arising from the complexity of some physical and chemical processes. If the complexity of the organization is the bearing property of life, then nothing more is necessary and we may presume that to introduce complexity into non-living matter may transform it into life.

Getting over to the consequences of those assumptions, we shall assume that nothing could be more practical than to use computational devices to check our ideas. The reason to this choice is that with the help of computers it is very easy to provoke complex behaviour from the mere repetition of simple initial patterns. Computers and computer-technology have provided a new and precise idea of complexity.

The history of AL shows us a very large list of ex-

periments of this kind and it is also possible to find one in Varela, Rosch and Thompson (1991). These experiments depart from the application of some algorithm (computer's program) without knowing the consequences of that action. We will emphasize that the key of the understanding of those programs, is just that we cannot know a priori, what the machine is going to do. I instead, we do know step by step, what the program will make the machine do, then the action of the machine will not be considered complex at all. Complexity then, is the name of some degree of ignorance as well as the name of some degree of uncontrolled behaviour. These conclusions seams to be in some sense, paradoxical. Take for example the idea of algorithm. An algorithm is usually understood as a procedure to know and control a process step by step. If this is right, it is in some sense paradoxical to create algorithms that violate this strong claim. Another paradoxical consequence arises from the original assumptions: If we have sustained that life is a complex organization, and we have gone further and carried out some experiments to show that our assumptions are demonstrable, we have assumed that the secret of life is revealed in the secret of its organization. It is natural then, to demand an account of how all this has gone on. Now, even if we succeed in create life-similar phenomena with the recourse of a computer, we still do not know if complexity is the bearing factor, as long as we do not show, step by step, how all this has occurred. As we already said, to know about the organization of something is to know how it works. To know how it works is in its turn, to describe systematically the whole process; but this is, by principle, impossible.

We will now draw some general conclusions about the use of computers and other automates to study life and life-depended qualities: 1) computer's programs might succeed in producing life, if life is understood as uncontrolled and unpredicted machine behaviour. At best, it would be a copy of life and at worst, it would be an imitation of life. 2) In both cases, it may be a matter of uncertainty if the arising life-similar qualities, are the consequence of the applied algorithm - who knows? 3) Arising complexity cannot explain what life is.

To visualise our conclusions we will present an exam-

ple: let us say that some researches may found that the combination of some chemicals under some physical conditions produce living beings. They have shown then, that life can be produced if we follow systematically some chemical and physical methods. Now if this is possible, we still do not know what life is. The epistemological situation is the same as that of the computational life-similar device.

Let us now analyze in more detail the roll of uncontrolled action. The action of some underlying program has to be demanded if a computer's virus shall be understood as having followed the power of rules. Unfortunately the relation between rules and behaviour is no an easy one. There is in fact a kind of distance between rules and behaviour, which may not be the same for computer's and living viruses. To be able to decide if the distance between the rules and the behaviour of a computer virus is the same as the same distance in a real virus, we should need not to copy or imitate life, but to know what life is. We want to emphasize again that if life has to be created in some artificial way, it would be unpredicted and uncontrolled even in the way it would reproduce. The idea of artificial life cannot be associated to the idea of controlled conditions. If we succeed in producing life through artificial devices, it would reveal for us its mysteries a posteriori.

§ 18 Life as mechanism at the age of cloning

The philosophical backgrounds of the epistemology of genetics

The current discussion about the promises and the risks of genetic manipulation recalls us previous situations as those in which the freedom of the human being has been questioned by some form of "necessity". This necessity has been expressed frequently as the presence of an omnipresent and all mighty God but also and above all, from the 17th century, as the inexorable mandate of nature. The problem of genetic manipulation is related to other philosophical problems not less important, for example to the problem of the existence of universals - problem that in its moment gave place to the development of two mayor philosophical schools the realists and the nominalists - and to the existence of the soul as a different and independent substance. A study of the problems treated in relationship to genetic manipulation shows us that such manipulation supposes the freedom of modifying the genetic inheritance. At the same time, this manipulation is made possible thanks to the character purportedly mechanical of the genes, or with other words, to the necessary interrelationship between properties and genes.

The phenomenon known as cloning

In fact, it is not the process of cloning in itself (multiplication of exact copies of a certain genetic code) the revolutionary phenomenon by excellence, but the fact that it has been achieved through "universalizing" an already specialized (particularized) cell which had been transformed to a primitive stadium of undifferentiated properties (even called *totipotent*).

The group of scientists that cloned Dolly, achieved to develop a undifferentiated cell from the point of departure of a perfectly differentiated one. Life is revealed to us now as *reversible*, as able to be changed through the axle of time, then, as *mechanic*. However, far from of being a great victory of Mechanicism, cloning reaffirms exactly the opposite, that is, the non mechanical properties of life, which became revealed when the mechanical step backwards surprised everyone.

Cloning is not the case of a simple step backwards as in the wheels of a mechanism; it is the jump from the particular to the universal, a jump without sharp-edged limits.

> What exactly do we mean by cloning? There are two possible types of cloning, the first of which is really a misnomer. The first type is creating two, four, or eight embryos out of one original very early embryo. When the embryo is composed of only two to eight cells (called *blastomeres*), before it has begun to differentiate into the inner cell mass (which will become the embryo) and support cells (which will become the placenta), all the cells are *totipotent* which is to say that each of them has the ability to become an entire new organism.[198]

Davis understands this as *kvasi-clonning*. Cloning is understood by Davis as follows:

> The second type of cloning, and the one on which I will concentrate here, is somatic cell nuclear transfer. A somatic cell is any cell in your body other than sperm or eggs. Somatic cells have the full complement of chromosomes, half from your mother, half from your father. But germ cells (sperm and eggs) have only half that number (otherwise, when they came together in fertilization, there would be twice the correct number). In somatic cell nuclear transfer, the genetic material is scooped out of an egg cell and replaced with the genetic material of a "regular" or somatic cell, taken from anywhere in the donor's body.[199]

Cloning also, is the process by which it is made possible to copy a genetic code independently of the course of the historical time. The properties of life appear now as reversible

functions, which can be multiplied and be transmitted to other particulars, in other times. That is why it is possible to imagine the recovering of extinguished animals as dinosaurs or the recreation of dead persons as Hitler, Jesus or Einstein, now in a very different historical situation. All indicates that within few years it will be possible to recreate an exact copy of a dead human being from the genes of his hair or from his nails. But will those particulars be the same particulars as they were in the past?

We can be sure that they would be in such a case, and without any doubt, the exact copies of a genetic code, with what this entire means, but never the same particulars. History manages to introduce historical time through the interstices of cloning through the unavoidable variations of circumstances. In a few words, we can say that the plasticity of life will not affect the course of history, course in which the genetic code is only a part of an enormously complex reality.

We have here once again, the great topic of the existence of universals and particulars. Consequently, in connection with cloning it will be necessary to distinguish between vital time and historical time. The fabric of life demonstrates that the relationship between what is particular and what is universal is *reversible*. In the vital process, the passage of what is universal to what is particular coincides with the direction of time, while the passage of what is particular to what is universal reverses the course of time, modifying the chain of the events through the repetition of a certain genetic code emerged in a disappeared historical time.

The concept of cloning supposes furthermore a redefinition of the topic of death. In some way the genetic code is appeared to us as a-temporal, free of all kind of decadence and from death. Life, seen now under a mechanical light, seems to enjoy two parallel capacities, that of evolution and that of involution.

Freedom and necessity: the roll of the humanists

The next topic is that of the freedom of man against the threat of the world of sciences and technology in coopera-

tion with commercial interests. The mechanistic ideology, which inspires the investigations in genetics, may drive many people to a simplistic vision of the vital phenomenon, creating the conditions for new forms of domination and privilege of some men upon others. The genetic manipulation can give place to the desire of developing a society that imitates the biosociology of some animals, with social functions created by means of genetic manipulation. History shows a number of almost inexhaustible sources of inspiration for a project of this type. We cite for example the political work of Plato, or that of Tommaso Campanella including the nearly experience of the Nazis in Germany. The dreads of the profane that follows the march of the events from outside of the scientific centres where the decisions are taken, are justified and should be considered seriously. In fact, there exists a real risk that individuals, by commercial interests or by states, will use genetic technology criminally, even. There are those who dream about the superiority of their race, culture or civilization. It is unavoidable to notice the fact that racism continues trapping the mind of scientists and academics. It is strategically important then, that the advances in the science and genetic technology will be accompanied by renewed ethical, historical and philosophical studies, to maintain the simplistic explanations out of influence. Although the biologist is the one who will reveal to us the mysteries of life, it will be the humanist who will make it congruent with the democratic interest of the majorities.

Some historical precedents

Toward the date of the birth of the Reformation at the beginning of the 16th century, philosophy was divided into two main groups depending on their understanding of the universals: they were *via moderna* and *via antiqua*. In the first group, that of the *nominalists* William of Ockham (1288-1348), Gregori of Rimini (1300-1358), Pierre d'Ailly (1351-1420) and Jean Gerson (1363-1429) was aligned. The group of *via antiqua* also called *realists*, included Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Duns Scotus (1266-1308).

> Two major scholastic 'school influenced by realism dominate the earlier medieval period. These are Thomism and Scotism, derived from the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus respectively. Neither of these schools had any major influence upon the Reformation, [...]. Two later forms of scholasticism, however, appear to have had a major influence upon the Reformation, and thus merit careful attention. These are the via moderna and *schola Augustiniana moderna.* [200]

The problem of *free will* against *predestination*, divided realists and nominalists in two new groups. William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel for example, followed Pelagius in the recognition of the existence of the free will, that is, the capacity of man to reach salvation because of their own actions. This question was debated with some intensity in the early fifth century during the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy is known as the *Pelagian controversy*, and Augustine's writings concerning the doctrines of grace and justification, which arose out of this controversy, are known as the *anti-Pelagian* writings.

In many ways, this controversy was replayed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the *via moderna* tending towards the position of Pelagius, and the *schola Augustiniana moderna* towards that of Augustine.

The Reformation can be considered to be the consequence of the appropriate combination of the results of the school of the *nominalists*, with the idea of *predestination* of Augustine, developed by Gregori of Rimini in Paris as the *via Augustiniana moderna.* Luther follow the *via Augustiniana moderna*, that is, take the cause of Augustine against Pelagius.

Nominalism is also one of the metaphysical grounds of *mechanicism*, understanding by this the belief that nature consists in the sum of simple particulars, related according to finite steps, and surrendered a complete description and reversible to previous steps. Being a condition of mechanicism that the steps of a process shall be *a priori* necessarily continued -that is to say, without ambiguities- it is possible to oppose it to the metaphysics of the *free will*. This last metaphysics

supposes a sufficiently complex reality, which reject all deductible truth to the margins of the particular human experience. The metaphysics of the free will supposes that there is an irreducible space for the human soul, space that grants to man kind the final triumph upon mechanicism.

The logical limits of genetics

Besides all the surprises with which genetics and other sciences of the living could submit us in the future, there exist some limits which are inexorable. Those limits can be drawn, when the explanation substitutes empirical observations with logical reasoning. It is well known since Hume's classical work that the conjunction of events cannot be seen as a casual relationship. To solve this problem it has been useful to see causality as a very complex reality, often explained as necessary and sufficient conditions for something to happen.

To see the genes as codes does not create problems if those codes are understood as empirical realities, that is, an entity which cannot work independently over concrete life. The relationship between genes and properties then, have to be of an empirical kind, in which some genes will be necessary conditions for some properties and others sufficient conditions of some other properties. However, if the scientist insists in the logical character of the gene, that it works as an unity of information, as a kind of a computer program and therefore as an algorithm, then it is possible to criticize this point of view with logical arguments.

The gene which controls the capacity of "controlling"

1) Suppose X is a gene that controls the property of "controlling" anything as humans control things or events. (It may be that X is responsible of the capacity of focusing the mind or the capacity to disciplining attention, or something like this).

2) If X exists, we may ask our selves if X controls itself. If X does control itself, then it is *free*. That means that X is

free from necessity, because only those processes, which can control themselves, can escape necessity. Otherwise X cannot control itself and is not free, but this means that X is no the gene which controls the property of "controlling" which characterizes humans. A property like "controlling" as humans do, is absolute, it cannot be thought as working in some directions only.

3) Conclusion: a gene such as X cannot exist.

The possibility of a genetic transmission of "intelligence" is one of the favourite topics of many scientists. To clarify the impossibility of such inheritance is very important in the struggle against racism and other fallacies. Let us see if it was possible to find a gene Y that determines "intelligence". Let us define this gene as the biological code of the capacity of "consciousness" or "awareness" etc. If a gene controls "intelligence", then it "*intelligentizes*" (make intelligent") something. What can it be? The human soul or some other animal's soul. However, to determine "intelligence" is not the same as being "intelligent". There are then two main ways to transfer "intelligence" or to "intelligentize":

a) The idea of a gene, which controls the capacity of being "intelligent" but at the same time, is a blind expression of necessity. That is, Y is not itself "intelligent".

b) The idea that the gene Y is "intelligent" itself, but only the transference is mechanical.

To refuse the first case (a) we need only to repeat the case of the opposition between *control* and *freedom* producing a paradox when Y applies to itself. We shall ask our selves if Y can or cannot be aware of itself. If it is aware of itself, then it has to be "intelligent" in some way. However, if Y is aware of itself, then it is intelligent and not blind. It is not a blind expression of necessity. Therefore, Y cannot exist as a "code".

On the contrary, if Y is not aware of itself, and is a necessary condition for awareness, how can this condition work for human intelligence which is self referent?

The interdisciplinary fallacy

Other of the classical topics updated by genetics is

that of the limits between matter and soul, that is to say between the empirical sciences and the sciences of culture. *Racism* and *xenophobia*, *sexism* and the *speciecism* have their roots in an epistemological mistake that we shall call the *interdisciplinary fallacy*, a fallacy that consists of applying mechanical reasoning to the sciences of culture.

Therefore, there exists a sure criterion to follow to avoid the interpretative excesses that lead to racism and other related ideological forms, and it consists in avoiding to deduce relationships between non-material and material properties. Therefore, it is perfectly correct to seek relationships between genes and the physical properties of individuals, such as the colour of the eyes or the skin, the height, the dispositions to develop certain diseases, etc. On the contrary, it is not correct to deduce non-material qualities as "intelligence" from the presence or absence of certain material qualities.

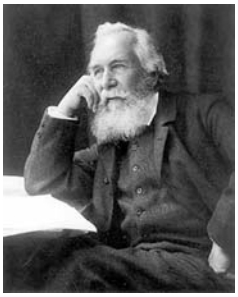
Anticipation of future cultural events

We return to the topic of the anticipation of future events in the sciences of culture. It is certain that the present is built on past facts. From this we could understand the causes or motives behind some events. Einstein's work, for example, could not have existed without Newton's work, and this work, could not have existed without Kepler's and Galileos' work. Now then, being someone transported to the time of Newton and knowing his relationship to the work of Galileo and Kepler, could he have anticipated the work of Einstein? The answer is *no*. It can be asserted that if Newton might have been able to anticipate Einstein's work, he would have been Einstein himself. Something similar but more simple is to assert that Einstein would not have been able to be, if his parents and grandfathers did not exist previously. However, this does not permit us to conclude that the grandfathers and parents of Einstein could anticipate that Einstein should show such particular characteristics. The qualified anticipation, that is to say an anticipation of details, supposes that the subject who make the anticipation, live in historical conditions that still do not exist, something that is impossible.

§ 19 The ecological Movement

Some of the ideological roots of ecologism

Ecologism has two roots, *biological holism*, and *energy economics*. Biological holism is related to the work of Ernst Haeckel (1854-1919) a German biologist, and artist who named thousands of new species, mapped a genealogical tree relating all life forms, and coined many terms in biology, including *phylum*, *phylogeny* and *ecology*. Haeckel was the one who introduced the term *oekologie* in the book *Generelle Morphologie* from 1806.



Haeckel promoted Charles Darwin's work in Germany and developed the controversial "recapitulation theory" claiming that an individual organism's biological development, or ontogeny, parallels and summarizes its species' entire evolutionary development, or phylogeny: "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny". Wikipedia, 2007-07-07.

Haeckel's work became very popular in England and in English speaking countries and had an important influence in Darwin's studies. At the beginning, the term "ecology" was used to mean "ethology", that is the science which studies the behaviour of animals.

During that time, the debate between those scientists that wanted to work with life forms *in vitro* and those, which wanted to work *in vivo*, demanded a justification of the importance of behavioural studies. *In vitro* studies were more usable for *mechanicists* while *in vivo* studies were more interesting for *vitalists*. That means that the confrontation between those ideologies presupposed deeper philosophical roots. Vitalists

believed in the existence of a *life force* and tried to avoid simple mechanical explanations.

The studies of animals and their environment demanded a carefully observation of the whole web of relationships between animals and their surroundings, including the human impact on these animals' behaviour. Another German, Jacob von Uexküll introduced the word "environment" in 1909 to refer to "the subjective or the phenomenal world of the individual", [201]

Another important scientist that promoted environmental studies was the Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz.

Konrad Lorenz was an Austrian zoologist, and ornithologist. He is often regarded as one of the founders of modern ethology. Lorenz studied instinctive behaviour in birds. He shared the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine "for discoveries in individual and social behaviour patterns" with two other important early ethologists, Niko Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch. Wikipedia, 2007-07-07.

Lorenz tried to deduce the behaviour of birds from mechanical causes. He believed that studying human's animal nature would redound in a better society.

Besides the naturalists, there was another important font of influences coming from the ideas of *energy economics*. The group of *energy-economists* was very heterogeneous and their members came from almost every political ideology, from leftists and anarchists to conservatives. The foundational idea of energy economists was that energy resources are scarce and that their exploitation shall be rationalized.

> Ecological economists are claimed by some writers to be the first real ecologists. Certainly, the call to conserve scarce resources is today perhaps the strongest green argument.[202]

Economists with backgrounds as naturalists first formulated these ideas in the beginning of the 20th century. Many of them were also writers of science fiction novels. Because of their typical apocalyptical understanding of future society, their solutions were very radical and often distant from reality.

The basic economic ideas of this group had a common reference in the recommendation of small economic unities instead of large factories or large farms. The idea of an economic structure, which was near the everyday of the people, was a reconstruction of the old times of the minimal economy of peasantry. This was also the vision of Prince Peter Kropotkin the Russian anarchist who designed a plan for the development of Siberia. His writing would come to be important for Tolstoy, Gandhi, and Mao Tse-Tung. [203]

Prince Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) was one of Russia's foremost anarchists and one of the first advocates of anarchist communism. Wikipedia, 2007-07-07.

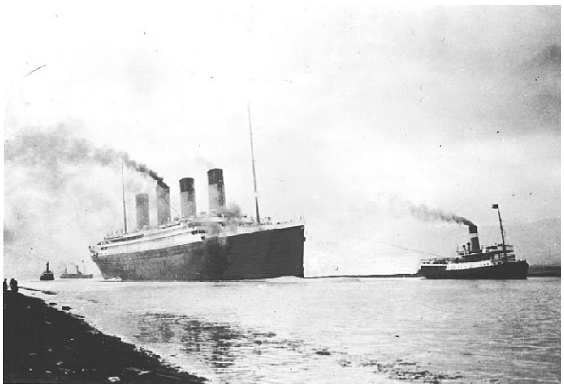
Kropotkin understood nature and people as interrelated wholes. In *Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* (1899) Kropotkin wrote that "per hectare productivity was the crucial factor, and that improved technology combined with peasant ownership of land would bring about increased food production."[204] Following the same tendencies as the other ecological economists, Kropotkin recommended small solutions grounded from the bottom and up, from the individual peasant to the whole society.

The limits of technology and the perversity of negligent human action on nature

During the period between the two World Wars, the ideals of ecologism were very strong in Germany, and even during the Nazi period. For the Nazis the ideals of a "peasant state", in which people returned to their "natural environment", were an important part of their utopian views of the future. However, this ecologism had mythical connotations and remained imprisoned of a debate with roots in the 19th century developing ramifications about "racial purity" and "racial engineering" which had catastrophic consequences.

The ecologism of today, which nevertheless bears all these traditions, departs from the same sources but due to other causes. The ecologist reaction of Romanticism after Haeckel or the ecologism of anarchists as Kropotkin and the later ecologism of the Nazis, were reactions to the development of a hard competitive and exploiting capitalist society in which small communities and small environments were condemned to disappearance. This first ecologism was a reaction to the advances of Modernity. Today's ecologism in contrast is the consequence of the collapse of Modernity.

After Second World War, triumphal optimism dominated the Western countries and the confidence in technology had no limits. The triumph over the Axel Nations was crooned with the development of the Atom Bomb and the use of atomic energy was open for friendly purposes. Nothing but pure politic and economic optimism had place in the Western societies after the Second World War. The confidence in technology was almost infinite. However, the limitations of technology had begun to be seen but without global connotations. Already in 1911, the sinking of the Titanic was a warning sign showing the risks of the excesses of confidence. But this kind of technological defeat had not global social consequences. The world would wait until Chernobyl to get to an unreserved use of technology their final doom.



RMS Titanic was a British Olympic class passenger liner that became famous for her collision with an iceberg on 14 April 1912 and dramatic sinking on 15 April 1912. The Titanic was considered a pinnacle of naval architecture and technological achievement, and was thought to be "practically unsinkable." Wikipedia, 2007-07-07.

During the fifties and sixties the technological optimism lead the world to a general fumigating campaign with the miraculously pesticide DDT. Thousands and thousand square kilometres were fumigated all around the world before any negative signs were detected and the deadly inheritance of poisoned animals and people were discovered. DDT (Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane) is a pesticide that was used as an insecticide against mosquitoes spreading malaria, typhus, and other insect-borne human diseases and in agriculture to eliminate plagues.

In 1962, the American biologist Rachel Carson criticized, in her book *Silent Spring*, the fatal consequences of the use of DDT for birds and other animals. She also signalled for the negative consequences of DDT for the human health. The book resulted in a large public protest that became one of the starting events for the environmental movement as it is today.

The final catastrophe, which definitely collapsed the unreserved optimism of Modernity, was the Chernobyl catastrophe followed immediately by the end of the Soviet dream. The Chernobyl catastrophe definitely established the agenda of today's ecologism, that is, the *perversity of negligent human action and the limits of technology*.

The Chernobyl disaster was a major accident that took place at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant on April 26, 1986 at 01:23 a.m. A Large areas of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia were badly contaminated, resulting in the evacuation and resettlement of over 336,000 people. (Wikipedia, 2007-07-07).

History of ecologism shows how a first step of *naturalism* and *Vitalism* motivated to the studies of the *ethology* of animals. This first ecologism was a vague but strong reaction to industrialism and to uncontrolled liberalism. In science, that meant the defence of the old methodology of observation and of analytical *holism* rather than the new technologies of laboratory.

It became the expression of a reactionary Modernism, which reaches its maturity in Germany during the Third Reich with ramifications on ideas of racial purity and racial engineering.

A second phase of ecologism began during the first years of the 20th century, with men as Kropotkin, which introduced the idea of the *scarcity of natural resources*, especially the scarcity of *energy resources*. This was the time of the colonial wars and the end of colonialism.

Together, these steps constituted the ideology of the movement of ecologism of today, biological holism, and consciousness of the scarcity of natural resources, limitations of technology and perversity of negligent human action on nature.

GLOBALIZATION

§ 20 Global History of Ideas and the History of the Ideas of Globalization

According to The Swedish National Encyclopaedia, globalization is "a process of change in which states and societies over the entire world connect together through mutual relations of dependence". The term "global" derive from the Latin word *globus*, which means ball or globe. In general, the term has been used to refer to social and economical processes in respect to the transnational character of nowadays capitalism. The world's countries have come closer together because a common structure of consumption. In a cultural context, the term means something different, it refer to the cultural impact over the local culture that the standardization of the everyday world have as consequence.[205]

The starting point for globalization can be placed long back in history, however this process underwent a radical acceleration phase when the World became unified, just after the discovery and conquest of America.

Globalization means also "modernization" and "technological development". We could say that "globalization" refers to Modernisms last phase, a process which began sometime during the Second World War with the end of Colonialism and the development of revolutionary means of communication, Radio, TV, Internet and satellite communication. A very important moment was when the Berlin Wall was dismantled in 1989.

The Berlin Wall was a separation barrier between West and East Germany. An iconic symbol of the Cold War, the wall divided East and West Berlin for 28 years, from the day construction began on 1961 until it was dismantled in 1989. The fall of the Berlin wall paved the way for German reunification, which was formally concluded on 1990. (Wikipedia, 2007-07-18).

Global history of ideas mean the study of ideas that give rise to the globalization of culture, ideas as e.g. those with a scientific and technological character. Nevertheless, a global history of ideas can also be understood as the study of the ideas that emerged as a consequence of globalization. In this case we refer to ideas that give rise to the United Nations, the Olympic Games, to the culture of Internet, etc. In short, we can refer both to the process of globalization and to the resulting culture of globalization.

With history of the ideas of globalization we also refer to a comparative history of ideas. In this case ideas are studied comparing different cultures and periods of time. For example, we can compare the ideas of Rome and Greece in Antiquity or the ideas of socialism and Christianity. It is also possible to study micro-history, the micro-processes of a period or of a culture as Michael Foucault did.

The origin of the modern use of the term "globalization" began with Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) and his vision

of a *Global Village*. McLuhan meant that Modern society communicates with the "velocity of light" after the introduction of electricity, which was the driven motor of communication. Electricity ended the world of Mechanicism created during the 18th century by the Industrial Revolution. During that time, the communications with Railway were the trendsetting organization of society. While the 18th century societies was divided and shattered, the velocity of electricity unified the new globalized society and geography played a secondary role in communication.

One of the critics to McLuhan ideas was Paul Virilio (1932), an Italian-French architect who against McLuhan's Virtual Village proposed the idea of a Virtual City. According to Virilio, it is not globalization that is essential to the society of today but the *virtualization* of reality. The Virtual City of Virilio is a *hypercentre* with international projections. Virilio emphasize the importance of *velocity* and *acceleration* in the social connections of the society of today. He suggested the development of a new science, which he called *dromology* (*dromos*: from the Greek word to race) a new science that studied the rhythm of social relations.

The process of globalization can be organized in different stages as follow: the first stage, stretches until to the 17th century. During this period, the National States consolidated and the population grew in Europe. The old world of the Church was substituted by a new Europe and a new European mentality. Science and technology developed strongly and dominated the structure of the productive sector of society. A second phase could be described between the 17th century and the 1870's when Colonialism experienced its best time. Colonialism became the same as capitalism and European culture became the same as Civilization. A third phase includes a period from 1870 to 1920 with the breakthrough of Modernity. During this period the communicative revolution, with the telegraph, the first telephone, the radio and the railway began. Also an administrative revolution happened, when the office began to use the typewriter, the calculator machine and the cash register. The fourth phase between 1920 and 1980 is the phase of

the globalization of economy and of the end of Colonialism. This period is also the time of the Second World War, the Cold War and the Vietnam War. During the 1950's television took over as the most important communication media ever and the televised image took over the written word as the dominant *modus operandi* of communication. This is the time of the United Nations, the Berlin Wall, the Olympic Games, and the personal computer. With the end of the Cold War and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, globalization came into the era of Internet.

The concept of culture and globalization

Immanuel Wallenstein defines "culture" in respect to the amount of behavioural preferences that people share with each other. More specific, he calls "culture" those behavioural preferences, which only shares by a determined group of people.[206] The logical possibilities are:

Each individual shares some behavioural preferences with *every* other	Each individual shares some behavioural preferences with *only some* other	Each individual has some behavioural preferences which are *only* personal and which are not shared with any other

Personal behavioural preferences can be described as following:

According to the universal behavioural preferences typical for the human race.	According to the universal behavioural preferences typical for a person which is a part of a group.	According to the universal behavioural preferences typical for an individual.

"Culture" shall be defined as the set of behavioural preferences that determines that a person belongs to a group or some groups.

With other words, each group of people has specific cultural preferences. Because each individual belongs to many groups, there are many cultural forms, depending on gender, ethnical origins, language, nationality, religion, etc.

The process of globalization in the West and in the Third World

We can list two different perspectives in respect to a classification of the process of globalization:

To understand what globalization means for the West	To understand what globalization means for the Third World

Albert Paolini writes that the understanding of globalization is very different from one and the other perspective.[207] If globalization is studied from the Western point of view, it seems as a natural phase of Postmodernity. If globalization is studied from the point of view of the Third World, it is understood according to Post-colonial principles. However, in both cases, the process is studied with the application of the methods of "deconstruction" (about this see on page 108).

The process of globalization	
In the West: *Postmodernism*	In the Third World: *Post-colonial theory*
Post-National movements, internationalists	Post-colonial often nationalistic movements
In common: The theory of deconstruction	

According to Albert Paolini[208] the West understands globalization as a three step process:

Modernity	Late Modernity	Postmodernity
Changes and transformations typical for the Industrial Revolution and for industrial capitalism	Intensification of the capitalistic process of organization of society in all its manifestations Production completes with distribution and consumption all over the world	Means the situation in which capitalism goes in a phase of continuous changes provoking the acceleration of the social rhythm as a whole

Albert Paolini studied the connection of these different phases of capitalism and their repercussion for the Third World and then he elaborated different possible outcomes:

First alternative	Second alternative	Third alternative
Late Modernity obliterate the Third World which became an empty-place	The Third World does not be influenced by Late Modernity The Third World remain "archaic"	Late Modernity *enslave* the Third World through a new form of Imperialism
↓	↓	↓
Globalization is a process which discriminates the Third World	Globalization is a process which menaces the nnocence of the Third World	Globalization is the same as Imperialism

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