

Liberal Economics and a Liberal Education in Canada:

Leading Theorists, Apologists, and "imaginary expressions"¹ of Value

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¹ "In the expression 'value of labour', the concept of value is not only completely extinguished, but inverted, so that it becomes its contrary. It is an expression as imaginary as the value of the earth. These imaginary expressions arise, nevertheless, from the relations of production themselves. They are categories for the forms of appearance of essential relations" (*Capital*.I.677).

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Introduction

Political economy confuses, on principle, two different kinds of private property, one of which rests on the labour of the producer himself, and the other on the exploitation of the labour of others. It forgets that the latter is not only the direct antithesis of the former, but grows on the former's tomb and nowhere else.
Karl Marx, *Capital*. I. 931

One hundred and four years ago today Oscar Wilde extolled the virtues of lying. That was during the Decadence. Now it's 1997. Welcome to the Immanence. History is dead and the full weight of the present hovers over everyone. This is no slow disintegration from truth to beauty. We are in the rapid fire-line of information which erases whatever lies—whoever tells the truth—in its path. When exactly did history die? Paradoxically, that's a question for historians. Still, it is possible to provide various moments that might have been the instant when history ceased to matter: the coming down of the Berlin Wall; the end of the Cold War; the Persian Gulf Conflict; Ross Perot; the former Yugoslavia; O.J. Simpson. All of these signal the end of a linear transmission from fact, to witness, to you, the end of ideological struggle, and the beginning of mediation when the appearance/reality distinction fails to be a duality and becomes a complicity instead. Who knew? Historians, the people who took everything recorded in the past and rerecorded it for the present using new technology in order to change by controlling the future. The amount of data printed, broadcast, and performed at any one moment exceeds the total amount of all data printed about the past. It is an inverted pyramid widening at the top every second at an exponential rate. Existence is out of control. Now historians long for an apocalypse so they can call a halt to the velocity of change long enough to catch up. The rest of us know the end of the world is old news. Reality is speed. Only if you are there first can you create, instead of eat the bullshit. That's why CNN had the cameras on the Somalian beach before the marines landed ... Only those plugged into their machines at all times can move with the speed of information. Money is too slow. Make language intravenous. The fastest thing alive is the picture you are about to see. The image is light. The image is faster than the eye. Welcome to your mind. Eat my inscription. Some people deplore this state of affairs. Conspiracy theorists and lovers want to know what's really going on. The point is we are going on.... all the time. J.F.K was caught in a triangulation of fire. Pat Buchanan was on Crossfire. There is no lone gunman. There is no Lone Ranger. Fifty thousand women have been raped in the Balkans. The good guys won. The lies on lies on lies our freedom. We've got to surf on the waves of lies ... Poetry is a commodity, but consumers must stop being suspicious of the labels. The label is the labia. "Read my lips." You are what you eat. In *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield hates fakes, but we are all fake. Inherit the brave new world. Fade in and black out. Resistance is futile. What I don't understand. What I will never understand though.... is.... if history is dead why do things still happen? If there is no truth why do I bother lying? If fiction is real why do words never die? If reality is fiction why do bodies hurt? If memory can be erased how do I know it's you? If justice is a lie why do I

hope those bastards get caught? If history is dead that means it can haunt us.
Oh something, something very palpable my love inside my language, remnants
of you when we were safely human.

Swift Lazarus (Todd Swift), "History is Dead" from *Wired on Words: A
Millennium Cabaret*

It allowed the State to live on only in the pores of this society, as Epicurus
placed his gods in the pores of the world!

Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value* (63)

This dissertation is concerned with the impact that (neo)liberal ideas have on educational opportunity and academic values in the Canadian university, and the dangers and opportunities academic values confront from globalisation in a so-called knowledge economy. Canada is a young nation-state; yet, its mainly European Western cultural inheritance, while dominant, remains provisional. At no time in its history has the Western patrimony been uncontested by diverse marginalized social groups. Proof of this lies in the fact that, for some, the exclusionary descriptor "patrimony" itself sounds anachronistic in ways it never would have several decades ago. We no longer take for granted the repression encoded within its language. Liberal economics claims to meet the needs of social diversity, and society's need for equality of opportunity. In spite of liberalism's utilitarian claim, as Gerald Graff points out in "The Scholar in Society," neo-liberal political forces today exert tremendous pressure to reassert against the legitimate claims of disadvantaged groups for social justice the "common culture" and the "unitary truths" (347) that the Western tradition ostensibly embodies for all. Resistance by excluded minorities and hope for progressive, structural change grows even as a minority already privileged by liberal economics and liberal democracy uses every means available to it to further consolidate its political and economic power. For wealthy minorities the gap between economic power and political power has never been less; at the same time, for the disadvantaged the gap between the two has never been greater. Liberal education in Canada, the product of

such contradictions, can only benefit from the growing resistance of diverse contesting voices who reject the unilateral reduction of plurality and difference to the “common” and “unitary.” Liberal democracy’s homogenising elitism is not an unintended anomaly incidental to its functions; rather, difference maintained precisely for the purpose of exploitation is encoded in the core values of liberal democracy’s economic system. Exploitation is encoded in its concept of value. It is this dissertation’s purpose to expose the subterfuges and contradictions that are the essence of liberal economics, and hence liberal education historically and currently in Canada.

In order to make connections to Canadian developments and predicaments in a volatile context of globalisation, I attempt here a poststructuralist inflection of Marx. More specifically, this dissertation re-evaluates the continued importance to the contemporary of Marx’s critique of political economy’s version of value. I draw on the work of two contemporary Marxian critics and some of their most important precursors. In *Cultural Capital*, John Guillory exposes the historical separation of economic and aesthetic value in emerging political economy (Adam Smith). However, just as importantly for my work here, Guillory articulates a version of what Marx referred to as the “total or expanded form of value” (*Capital*.I.156). Gayatri Spivak demonstrates the continued relevance of value as a critical lever, particularly the analytical potentials of the expanded form of value. She also demonstrates the textuality of value in a deconstructive Marxist sense. Therefore, my work here emphasises the importance of language and conceptual structures to critical activity, and their importance for resisting the supposed inevitability of capital—with the help of important qualifications on language and figuration from Marx, as suggested by the footnote to this dissertation’s title. This poststructuralist emphasis on the textual nature of social experience has antecedents in Louis Althusser’s structuralism; however, this work also reconsiders the importance of Althusser’s analysis of structural cause as an effective strategy for

resisting neo-liberalism's strategically selective and inconsistent recognition of structural, or systemic causality. Theodor Adorno is important here as well for his canny articulation of dialectical process, and how it continues to function even in a radically decentred modernity in which discrete oppositions, between subject and object for example, can no longer be taken for granted. His analysis continues to be instructive and useful in a postmodern context. I read several important writers on academic value in Canada through the insights of these critics.

The structure of this dissertation is roughly three parts. Chapters one and two focus on the historical and current idea of higher education in Canada. Chapters three and four expand the scope, situating the Canadian university in the geo-political context of globalisation, globalisation's impact on labour generally, and intellectual labour specifically. Chapter four introduces theoretical debates within Marxism in order to formulate, in chapter five, a critical position better suited to resisting the political and ideological forces acting to reconstruct the Canadian university in the image of the globalised market.

Chapter One of this dissertation establishes historical context for the idea of a liberal education in the Canadian university, and the Massey Commission's (1951 *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*) articulation of that idea at a crucial historical juncture. This chapter aims to identify in this context the conceptual and socio-political contradictions expressed through the Massey Commission's nationalist goals. While essential to sustaining Canada's cultural diversity and cultural sovereignty, the commission's nationalist goals are compromised by Canada's neo-colonial status as a branch-plant economy in a world opening up to global markets even as it is divided between its "free" and Communist blocs. For better or worse, each bloc presented a counterweight to the other in an uneasy global balance of power. The collapse of the Communist bloc has cleared the field for the

triumph of the market. In the absence of any competitor, it is no longer as necessary for the “free world” to make any gesture in the direction of meaningful reform. The reform-liberalism¹ espoused by the Massey Commission, and its nationalist goals, are compromised further as a consequence. The Massey Commission’s effort to preserve a diverse, strong, and distinct Canadian national culture is, then, even more necessary today in the post-Cold War period.² However, what are the chances for meaningful change when a reformist gesture such as the Commission’s is compromised by the contradictions of neo-liberalism without competition?

A half-century later, we witness the growing power of market forces in the dissolution of the linkage between the private sector and the nation-state in today’s context of transnational corporatism and free trade. At the same time, powerful minorities, with all the means at their disposal, exert considerable energy to promote the privatisation of institutions such as public education, and call for greater connections between education and the market. This twin threat from unaccountable capital and privatisation has dramatic implications for the Canadian idea of public education, and Canadian education systems in practice. The Canadian idea of higher education owes a great deal to Matthew Arnold’s 1860’s articulation, in *Culture and Anarchy*, of the reformist compromise between “the nation in its collective and

¹ By reform liberalism I mean the *rapprochement* between labour and capital whose purpose historically has been to meliorate, or conceal, the destructive tendencies and social conflict produced by free-markets unfettered by social responsibility or national boundaries.

² Canadian born academic Michael Ignatieff recently noted that today “[o]ur sovereignty is on the table in ways that I don’t think it ever has been in our lifetime” (“We Must Wake Up.” *Macleans* 04 February 2002: 34-36). In the political realm, a widespread, uncritical acceptance of the continuing erosion of Canadian national independence is reflected in leader of the Conservative Party of Canada Joe Clark’s unfortunate haste following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York: “in the wake of these attacks, we are all threatened, we are all ‘Americans’ now” (Joe Clark. “to Canada and its allies.” e-mail to the author. 19 Sept 2001). It may be the case that in some qualified sense “we are all ‘Americans’ now.” Some may find the qualification reassuring. Placed into the context of Canada’s neo-colonial status, however, this gesture of reducing the national distinctiveness that constitutes the geographic space of North America to the generic universal “America” only confirms for others that what is “threatened” in fact is Canada’s ability to independently nurture a sovereign economic, social, cultural, and national future.

corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals” (83). Almost a century later, the Massey Commission sought such a resolution to social conflict in the harmonising influence of education, and the Western intellectual tradition. Assuring stable public funding for universities in the 1950’s required an uneasy alliance between mass culture and high culture, the public and private, and free-market individualism and the collective body of a post-war Canadian nation coming into its own. Today, the market representing itself as an inevitable, natural force increasingly displaces the pretence of such a compromise.

The fragility of the alliance between public and private, and the compromises they require, becomes evident in today’s context of globalisation. Liberal defenders of Canadian higher education continue to appeal to high culture and the Western tradition; however, as John Guillory points out, the “category of ‘literature’ [for example] names the cultural capital of the old bourgeoisie” (x). While the left and right continue to struggle over its value, this form of cultural capital no longer reflects the interests of a professional-managerial class now in the process of consolidating its social dominance (x). However, the declining importance of cultural categories such as literature occurs at the same time as greater emphasis is placed on knowledge production itself. That an increasing emphasis is placed on the connection between knowledge production and the importance of information technology to global “free” trade, is reflected in the concerted pressure exerted on universities today to create direct links between knowledge production and the global market. Universities are under tremendous pressure to shift their emphasis away from traditional disciplinary balances between the Arts and Sciences and toward an academic capitalism more directly accountable to the economic imperatives of liberalism and its fetishisation of technological objectivity and progress.

Chapter One moves from the Massey Commission to the 1999 *Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage: A Sense of Place, A Sense of Being* in order to gauge the latter's response to challenges that are to an extent similar to those faced by the Massey commissioners. However, the social and economic environment is very different today. Now more than ever, it is important for many Canadians that Canada re-assert its economic, national, and cultural sovereignty in order to distinguish itself from the globally dominant imperial power to the south. *A Sense of Place—A Sense of Being* re-articulates the Massey Commission's sense of urgency in this regard, and attempts to address the challenge of nurturing Canadian culture in a context in which virtually all forms of cultural production are today subordinated to the desires of supranational oligopolies, and the technologically empowered political and economic system designed to serve their interests before and above all others. While the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage report "endorses" the Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade's (SAGIT) recommendation that Canada insist on a "new international cultural instrument" (58), unfolding geo-political patterns of exploitation, as well as the duplicitous and undemocratic creation and implementation of recent "international" trade agreements, do not bode well for such recommendations. Will pressure to create an international cultural instrument necessary for protecting Canadian culture be sufficient to withstand the enormous pressure being exerted to create economic instruments with an even greater scope for *limiting* those very policies aiming to promote the public good?³

³ Critics of the MAI extension to the NAFTA do not exaggerate in raising alarms about its scope. As William Greider of *The Nation* points out, the MAI is only part of the larger program in the U.S. to "roll back the New Deal," as conservative law professor Richard Epstein expresses it in a paper presented to the neo-liberal Federalist Society. Epstein "galvanized" the right during the Reagan years providing it with a "radical" re-interpretation of the Fifth Amendment ("... nor shall private property be taken for public purpose without just compensation") that greatly expands its scope in concert with Chapter 11 of the NAFTA's already "expansive new definition of property rights": government "[r]egulations [Epstein argued] ... should be properly understood as 'takings' under the Fifth Amendment" (15 October, 2001; 22). "Regulatory takings theory," and regulatory takings policy, is part of a sweeping agenda aimed at

It is doubtful that the reformist compromise represented by the 1951 Massey Commission, reiterated in the 1999 *Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage*, is capable of meeting the threat to Canadian sovereignty and Canadian culture. Rather than such accommodationist gestures, social transformation might better begin with radical critique redirecting the social energies that are encoded into liberalism's concept of value, currently disfigured by contradiction and exploitation. Marx transformed the very concepts by which liberalism constructs itself into just such a critical tool. Christopher Arthur, in "Value, Labour and Negativity," captures this doubleness of value. At the same time, he states out front that class struggle is precisely what is at stake in these ongoing conflicts: "If class struggle is *ontologically constitutive* of capitalism then the labour theory of value is explanatory as well as critical" (34). Value is a foundational concept for liberalism. The contradictions that liberalism conceals are manifest in their preferred value-form. In a sense, as philosophical deconstruction would express it, the capitalist text deconstructs itself. In Marxist terms the seeds of capitalism's overcoming reside within its conceptual frame and inescapable dependencies on labour and growth. At the same time, the stance of the materialist critic towards this state of affairs is not a vulgar stoicism; rather, value

"restor[ing] the primacy of property against society's broader claims" (21). As Greider argues, "[t]o enshrine this radical new definition of property rights would provoke a grave governing crisis, from local zoning laws to the [Supreme] Court's own legitimacy" (23). Chapter 11 of NAFTA and regulatory takings policy are formulae designed to "shrink the reach of modern government and cripple the regulatory state—undermining long-established protections for social welfare and economic justice, environmental values and individual rights. Right-wing advocates frankly state that objective—restoring the primacy of property against society's broader claims. A tentative majority on the Supreme Court agrees in theory—the same five who selected George W. Bush as President" (22). (For a related reinterpretation of the U.S. Constitution, see note 5 chpt. 5 below and, supporter of regulatory takings policy, Attorney General John Ashcroft's "radical" interpretation of the Second Amendment.) The actual rewriting of constitutional law is in fact not really necessary. As Greider argues, "NAFTA's new investor protections [chapter 11 of NAFTA, the MAI, and the proposed FTAA] actually mimic a radical revision of constitutional law that the American right has been aggressively pushing for years" (22). What are the implications for Canada? Greider cites a former official in Ottawa: "I've seen the letters from the New York and DC law firms coming up to the Canadian government on virtually every new environmental regulation and proposition in the last five years. They involved dry-cleaning chemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, patent law. Virtually all of the new initiatives were targeted and most of them never saw the light of day" (28). The implications for Canada, and imperilled Canadian culture (culture in any of its senses), should be obvious.

provides the critic with an analytical tool for actively resisting the hegemony of liberal discourse, liberal policy, and the social consequences of liberal education.

There are several versions of value retooled for a contemporary context, and derived from a Marxist provenance, presented throughout these pages. There is Carol Biewener's "postmodern materialism," for example, and Gayatri Spivak's Marxist deconstruction. Biewener's postmodern materialism leans too heavily on postmodernist criticism's fatalism. As a consequence the materialist thread is neutralised. While Spivak to an extent reproduces deconstruction's political quietism, her reading of Marx's total or expanded form of value represents, for the purposes of this dissertation, a critical tool fit for the challenges of the contemporary context. This is a poststructuralist Marxism able to empower active resistance, and with a teleological thrust directed toward a tenable human future. A poststructuralist Marxism committed to demonstrating the continued relevance of value as a concept central to both liberalism and Marxism in the postmodern world, is relatively unexplored in a Canadian context.

These perspectives contrast with the postmodern perspective of Canadian critic Bill Readings who argues against Marxism's "metanarrative of redemption" (*The University in Ruins* 178), its teleological and "utopian" pretensions, arguing instead that the only reasonable critical stance is to "inhabit" the postmodern "university in ruins," enjoying the "cognitive dissonances" produced as it is transformed around us (129). This dissertation takes the position that such a critical stance will be disastrous for universities when massively invasive "international" trade agreements aimed at "restor[ing] the primacy of property against society's broader claims," as William Greider in "The Right and US Trade Law" points out (21), with considerable impact in Canada, are consciously applied with disastrous consequences for education, health, and social welfare. Fully conscious and deliberate policies directed toward harnessing

universities directly to the market must be met with deliberate resistance and progressive alternatives if Canadian universities are to meet the needs of diverse Canadian communities in a global context in which one model of globalisation occludes all competitive alternatives while threatening to obliterate communitarian values.

While chapter one demonstrates that the goals of the Massey Commission are threatened, then as now, by the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of liberalism itself, subsequent chapters explore the provenance of value in classical economics and Marxist thought, and its relevance to a contemporary context. The analysis of the history of value endeavours to make the necessary connections to higher education, understood as academic labour producing knowledge values in today's "new" knowledge economy. This connection is crucial because of the growing emphasis on the convergence of knowledge produced in universities with information technology and the new global "knowledge economy." Such convergences represent a context of considerable risk for universities. At the same time, the stress placed on these convergences today presents enormous opportunity for academic workers and universities—but only if the academic community is motivated by more than passive accommodation, or by more than academic hermeticism or indifference. If these are the responses of the academic community to the changes being intentionally imposed from without, then this opportunity will be lost.

To an extent the historical background introduced above on the 1950's and 1960's stages the epistemic transition from the modern to the contemporary postmodern. Chapter Two explores the work of two Canadian critics who write on postsecondary issues. Peter Emberley articulates a fairly traditional liberal perspective. Bill Readings' postmodernist position, on the other hand, in spite of his incisive analysis of the neo-liberal forces acting to transform the university, nevertheless serves to reinforce liberal ideology, liberal assumptions, and the tenacity of liberal institutions

(tenacity that accompanies an increased tendency toward monoculture and monopoly). This chapter aims to establish the similarities between a neo-liberal perspective and an ostensibly less conservative postmodernist perspective, and their collusion with the goals of liberalism. The former wholeheartedly promotes liberal values; the latter, in spite of its more radical pretences, nevertheless, fatalistically accepts the putative inevitability of capitalist liberalism. This collusion registers today's epistemic shift in the history of the value-form in classical liberal thought and liberal economics, a history that includes Marx's incisive critique of political economy, and his analysis of the value-form. Of course, definitions of value span a continuum from the qualitative to the quantitative.⁴ The historical trajectory of value from then to now carries with it this range of meaning and semiotic openness. The value form is, then, characterised by a crucial ambivalence, an inherent asymmetry between the qualitative and quantitative,

⁴ "value ... the worth, desirability, or utility of a thing, or the qualities on which these depend ... the amount of money or goods for which a thing can be exchanged in the open market ... *Physics & Chem.* the numerical measure of a quantity or a number denoting magnitude ... "(OED; 1597). Universities are under considerable pressure to be more efficient in translating inputs of money into greater magnitudes of less tangible outputs, into magnitudes of social value. This is expressed as the need to squeeze more "value for the money" out of universities (by Ontario's Harris government for one). The expression "value for the money," therefore, registers a bewildering range of ambiguity that encompasses the enormous trajectory of meaning from the purely quantitative to the highly qualitative, material worth to idealistic value. However, we need to ask what is included or excluded in fact in the mere repetition of this semantically open phrase? What is taken for granted in the repetition? Which end of the continuum of meaning is being privileged in a particular utterance? Complicating matters further, the money form itself is not purely quantitative either; rather, as Marx argues, the "price or money-form of commodities is, like their form of value generally, quite distinct from their ... real bodily form; it is therefore a purely ideal or notional form" (C 1; 189). As well, the expression "value for the money" registers a range of ambiguity in terms of what might be accomplished in translating thought into speech, and then speech into action. In his *Introduction to Value Theory*, American philosopher Nicholas Rescher notes that a value has a "Janus-headed disposition ... and we expect it to orient itself in two directions, that of discourse and that of overt action" (3). Of course the interval between thought, reflection, rationalisation and overt action is more than sufficient for shunting the idea of a quality, or value, into the *cul de sac* of hypocrisy in practice. However, the doubleness of value, as articulated by Rescher, is somewhat different from the duplicities of value in the lexicon of political economy and Marx where the doubleness of value is an expression of the internal conflict between use-value and exchange-value, and exploitation through the generation of surplus-value. Considering that Marx was a philosopher of history, a philosopher of economics, and a philosopher of sociology, it is noteworthy that the Marxist critique of political economy's values, and Marx's analysis of the value form, appear nowhere in American Rescher's philosophical introduction to axiology, or value theory—an example of Marx's observation that the "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways" (30), and predictably selective interpretation at that.

and this ambivalence is reproduced in the asymmetry and conflict between the individual and the collectivity, the concrete and the abstract, the social and the economic (Elson 156-59).

Emberley's privileging of traditional moral values (highly abstract and idealist in all senses and hence distanced from the material) over those of leftist "values education" with its emphasis on structural inequality and exploitation, gives voice to the structural ambivalence inherent in the value form. His *Zero Tolerance* is haunted by the conflict between moral values, qualitative values after all, and his suspicion of the instrumentalism of economic value expressed in quantitative magnitudes of the universal equivalent, money. Liberal economics, the dominant paradigm today, reduces virtually all value to magnitudes expressed through this universal equivalent. His philosophically idealist vision of a liberal education seeks to gild with cultural adornments, or qualities, the exploitative imperatives concealed within liberalism's economic system. Chapter Two seeks to demonstrate how it is that Emberley, as a contemporary defender of a liberal education and liberal values, nevertheless reproduces the ruses of economic liberalism. In concert with liberal thought and neo-liberal argument today, Emberley argues that social relations are conditioned by individual responsibility and individual choice. Emberley rejects the evidence that social relations are *also* conditioned by structural causation, because, of course, that would mean that inequality too is structural, or institutionalised. Such a conclusion would underscore the need for structural change directed toward substantive social transformation. The fact that social responsibility is selectively applied⁵ and distributed

⁵ Conservative and liberal politics are more than just a little suspicious of any suggestion that social responsibility, beyond the socially alienated individual, has any connection to structural cause as an explanation for institutionalised disfunction. For example, in the propaganda onslaught following the 11th of September tragedy in New York, Margaret Wentz, neo-liberal polemicist for the *Globe and Mail*, claimed that "It [terrorism] comes from their culture, not ours. The root causes are in their history, not ours" (*Globe and Mail* Saturday 22, 2001). This epigram tidily summarises the liberal position today. A

unequally is not incidental to liberal economics and its handmaiden liberal democracy, and both collude to produce disparity and inequality both locally and globally. History, culture, and responsibility mark sites of considerable sensitivity for an exploitive economic system intent on consolidating its global hegemony. It is important to note that Emberley's more accessible *Zero Tolerance* essentially covers the same ground as the somewhat earlier, and more densely theoretical, *Values Education and Technology*, and evidently represents the intention of encouraging the fear of "political correctness" among mainstream readers.

My chapter two also considers John Guillory's analysis of the origin of the value-form in political economy, and how this history is one of rationalising and justifying the instrumentalism of liberal thought. However, radical critique cannot stop with exposing liberalism's mystifications, but must confront the challenge of actively resisting liberalism's corrosive social consequences. Chapter five revisits Guillory's analysis of the canon debate in the U. S., and how that debate has been framed in terms of representation. A materialist perspective—either postmodern materialist, poststructuralist, or more orthodox variety—with an interest in translating theory into an activist politics from within the privileged confines of a university must carefully attend to the disjunction between representation in the political sense of representing a social

standard history text (Norton) tells us that in 1951 the CIA overthrew a popular nationalist government in Iran, for example, and divided 40% of its recently nationalised oil industry amongst four American oil companies. What followed was decades of torture and repression by U. S. "ally" the Shah of Iran (*World Civilisations*; vol.2. 1400). Does history matter? Is there a connection between who pays, who profits, and who does or does not take responsibility? Is there any connection between America's history and widespread anti-American feeling? There is no doubt that the answer is more complicated than this example might suggest, but the question is not answered at all by claiming that history and culture do not matter. More to the point, what exactly is implied by the claim that in a context of global economic and political interdependence—as we are told endlessly today—cultural difference is "their" responsibility, not ours? Of course, these are questions that Canadians need to ask of their own history. To say that the history and culture of those whom we exploit are irrelevant to our own immediate needs and desires is blatantly imperialistic. Is there any causal connection between America's racist history and its delegation walking out of the August 2001 conference on racism in Durban, South Africa the moment the spectre of responsibility appeared? The Canadian delegation, echoing U.S. geopolitical goals, was similarly reluctant to address questions of historical, cultural, and social responsibility.

constituency, and representation in the senses expressed in art and philosophy. For example, the word 'responsibility' is a key term for neo-liberal argument today, in the manner noted in the previous paragraph. For socially engaged intellectuals, social responsibility and social justice arise out of the disjunction between the two senses of representation, and exposes a challenge central to academic communities actively involved in cultural production and cultural study: the challenge of translating academic theory into social practice, or the challenge of opening up institutional walls to the outside.

Chapter Three seeks to establish a sense of the larger global context in which the Canadian university is situated, in order to show that labour practices in the larger social context are reproduced in the changing institutional practices of Canadian universities. Chapter three explores how it is that the critical practices of some Marxists "foreclose" on radical action and substantive change, and how the value-form can provide the occasion for, as well as the key to, activating a transformative politics. Such politics begins by recapturing and redirecting the concepts, assumptions, and energies through which societies construct their collective experience and institutions. Spivak's Marxist deconstruction provides a transparent account of the contradictory relationship of the critic to the social context within which he or she practices. Disparaged for its imprecision and deliberate inscrutability, her rhetorical strategy is more in the manner of unsettling disobedience and acting-up against academic civility than the complacency of much criticism today.

Of course, Spivak's critical strategies extend much further than a simple matter of style. My dissertation seeks to establish a distinction between a Marxism that would neutralise the teleological thrust of Marxism and Spivak's strategically unruly, activist methods. It may seem contradictory to appropriate Spivak, an Indian critic living and working in the United States, for the purpose of formulating a Canadian position on the

university in the information age, in the age of globalisation. However, her origins in the imperial margins, her theoretical stance, and rhetorical style conspire to include in productive ways those social groups whose only participation in the postmodern culture that Fredric Jameson writes about in *Postmodernism* is as reserves of cheap labour with limited access to higher education. (Spivak notes the World Trade Organization's rejection of education programs for the "developing" world as a waste of resources.) This is crucial for Canada for at least two historically related reasons: a demographic composition that includes aboriginal groups in the process of reconstructing cultures dismantled by centuries of repressive and exploitive European Canadian policies; and Canada's role in global power politics, strategically influential, yet strategically disempowered.

To an extent, Spivak's own subject position within the United States metonymically reproduces Canada's relationship with the U.S. Her analysis of global structures of exploitation, and her theorised awareness of her own privileged implication in such structures, suggest strategies important in our own national context as Canada passively accepts its renascent colonial status and substitutes for colonial subordination to Britain neo-colonial subordination to the United States. The fraught nature of Spivak's own academic subject position within the U.S. academic world parallels the position of the Canadian academic subject relative to the gravitational pull of a dominant American culture and scholarship. At the same time, the Canadian scholar, whatever his or her origins, is nevertheless privileged by profession relative to those social groups within Canada disadvantaged on the basis of ethnicity, class, and gender. Spivak's example is very useful for theorising a critical strategy more appropriate to Canada's demographic and geo-political situation than any liberal one could be.

Chapter Three also seeks to contextualise various positions on value and their value as critical tools in the larger context of momentous global change. These critical positions range from postmodernist postMarxism to Spivak's more trenchant Marxist deconstruction. There is a monotonous sameness to capitalist practices over time; at the same time, today we experience staggering epistemic change. However, this change is largely produced by technological advance and globalisation, as opposed to meaningful social transformation. This chapter explores the implications that the financialisation of the globe, "disembedding," and the subsequent emergence of a radically altered "global spatio-temporal regime"⁶ have for the continued importance of the value-form as a critical tool. The chapter looks at the damaging consequences for labour in Canada and the world. Chapter Three therefore provides context for, and introduces, the history of the debate within Marxist camps over the relevance, or complete irrelevance according to its critics, of value as a critical concept in a much-changed world.

Chapter Four explores this debate in detail, concentrating on the dispute between neo-Ricardian⁷ critics of the value-form, and its defenders. Chapter Five, then, reconsiders the value of value as an effective critical tool for dissolving the simplistic opposition between theory and practice. The challenge of translating theory into practice and the problematic connection between representation in its two senses, political and aesthetic, are the same problem. In order to meet the challenge of creating a free interchange between the insular spaces of institutionalised higher education and the social spaces outside the institutional enclave—if social transformation is in fact the goal—it is necessary to reconceptualise those relationships otherwise. In fact, a process of reconstructing universities to conform to an ideological

⁶ Elinor Altvater and Birgit Mahnkopf, "The World Market Unbound" (309).

⁷ Political economist David Ricardo (1772-1823).

conceptual framework is already well underway; universities are under enormous pressure to conform to the same conceptual imperatives that are, in the name of globalisation, in the process of rapidly reordering political, economic, and social structures on a global scale. To repeat, the dominant response today of the university community to such pressure is passive accommodation (Newson 305). This dissertation seeks to formulate a more effective strategy for countering the consciously applied ideological cant of liberal institutions and thinkers, one that acknowledges the complex interplay between theory and practice in a social context. The apparent success of the ideological struggle waged against any and all alternatives to the dominant model of social relations and social responsibilities attests to the need for such a strategy.

Chapter Five aims to formulate a strategy for resisting the discourse of inevitability that promotes monocultural and monopolitical globalisation. This dissertation instead works toward a strategy for recuperating globalisation “as a process that is and can be contoured by national, regional, and local variations,” as Canadian critic Janice Newson argues in her conclusion to *Universities and Globalization* (305). Newson and others emphasise the importance of the conceptual to any activist strategy intent on socially meaningful change. Louis Althusser’s articulation of theory as practice, or theoretical practice, represents a valuable reconfiguration of the facile opposition between theory and practice. This dissertation takes the view that theoretical practice is crucial to any strategy with political intervention as a goal.⁸ Spivak’s sensitivity to structures of global exploitation in their manifest particularity, and her sensitivity to the subterfuges of the privileged academic practitioner of oppositional

⁸ This dissertation looks to Marx as the primary exponent of theoretical practice. As well, my work draws on the writing of selected critics—Theodor Adorno, Louis Althusser, and Gayatri Spivak—critics who embody in their lives and work the ambiguities, duplicities, and progressive potentials of theoretical practice.

politics within academic walls, provides a corrective to the tendency of the Althusserian system to reduce the relationship between knowledge production and the material world to a “self-validating conceptual realm,” as Norman Geras describes it (17). Her perceptive exposure of the contradictions that arise out of the discord between centres of power (however decentred in dominance they may be) and the margins, points the way to a strategy for dissolving institutional barriers, a strategy that goes beyond the necessary one that Spivak describes as “the classroom as intervention.”

Absolutely necessary to such an emphasis on the conceptual is Marx’s own qualification of a purely language based strategy. Responding to Proudhon’s claim that the “value of labour is a figurative expression,” Marx himself cautioned against the “impotence” of an analysis that would resort to the “grammatical,” to metaphor, in order to explain, for example, the value of labour (*Capital*. I. 677. n 6). Existing societies are “founded on labour as a commodity,” not on “poetic licence, a figurative expression” (677). This distinction between theoretical practice grounded in actual social structures and relations, relations conditioned by structures of causation, and idealist theory isolated behind institutional walls must be understood and acted on if meaningful change is to take place. It is self-sequestering rhetoric that Marx resists, not the power of metaphor with a firm grounding in material conditions.

Figurative devices are crucial to Marx’s own rhetorical strategies; but, just as important, they are crucial to the ideological concealment of liberal idealism as realist pragmatism. Liberal doctrine and liberal technocrats, for their part, know very well the decisive connection between figurative discourse and structural cause and effect. For example, John Manley, when Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Chretien government, seeking to deflect any unease that the enormous reach of, and Canada’s role in, the “first war of the new century” might generate, recently claimed that the phrase “war on terrorism” is figurative language, just a “metaphor” (CBC *The House* Saturday 06

October, 01).⁹ Marx demonstrates how it is that the subjective, the conceptual or abstract, is connected to material conditions, and how both are mediated through and by language in the productive articulation of theory and practice as theoretical practice: “the expression ‘value of labour’ ... is ... an expression as imaginary as the value of the earth. These imaginary expressions arise, nevertheless, from the relations of production themselves. They are categories for the forms of appearance of essential relations” (*Capital*. I. 677). Althusser (and other critics noted above) rejects the

⁹ The unprecedented reach of the twenty-first century’s version of “the” Allies and “the” civilised world, North America and the European powers, is a consequence of its refusal to set any limits on the capabilities or goals of its “war on terrorism.” The enormous reach of this action proceeds from a refusal to set limits by defining any limits. To claim that the ambiguous scope of the “war on terrorism,” as stated, is simply metaphor cynically disguises its life and death consequences in the deceptions of ideology. Such a claim attempts to make attacks on democratic freedoms more palatable for populations already grown alarmingly accustomed to inroads on civil liberties. It is perhaps only today, after the collapse of the Soviet empire and the virtual capitulation of China, that liberal doctrine has the confidence to say out loud what has been true all along, that liberal values are metaphors for something else. And, of course, this “new” military instrument for protecting the interests of the developed world (U.S. unilateralism, hiding behind the shield of NATO, and its ideological support, the Doctrine of Collateral Damage) is only unprecedented in as much as the technology is unprecedented, as military alliances for protecting European global dominance are historically not unprecedented in the least. The connection between mass communication, the battle for hearts and minds, and military ordinance as a sign system is as old as history; however, in the postmodern context the boundaries between them have collapsed into the virtual instantaneity of digital technologies. Louis Lapham, in “Drums Along the Potomac,” points out that “we” should not feign surprise when the same “new systems of communication” that empower the powerful also empower their opponents who learn from “our” example: “Whoever organised the attack on the United States clearly understood not only the arcana of postmodern finance capitalism but also the idiom of the American news and entertainment media. The pictures of the World Trade Center collapsing in ruins ... were made to the model of a Hollywood disaster film; not a senseless act but cost-efficient and highly leveraged ... Why then ‘unbelievable,’ and from whom do we suppose the terrorists learned to appreciate the value of high explosives as a vivid form of speech if not from our own experiments with the genre in Iraq, Serbia, and Vietnam? Robert McNamara [secretary of defence 1969] ... explicitly defined the bombing raids that eventually murdered upwards of two million civilians north of Saigon as a means of communication. Bombs were metaphors ... American planes dropped what came to be known to the staff officers in the Pentagon as ‘bomb-o-grams.’ The NATO alliance adopted a similar approach to the bombardment of Belgrade ... the targets, both military and civilian, were chosen for rhetorical rather than tactical reasons...” (39). And of course, Madeline Albright summed up the intimate interrelation between the spoken word, the real-life destroying bomb-o-gram, and the economic with her imperial dismissal of the children of Iraq condemned to death by bombs and economic sanctions: “We think the price is worth it” (40). Here, the polysemic trajectory of value oscillates between the material and the symbolic, between the subjective nature of value and its presumed objectivity in the form of the universal equivalent, money, between moral condescension and the totalitarian pragmatism of the bottom line. The connection between figurative language, the semiotics of power, and their translation into the material policies and actions that determine who lives and who dies is a central thread in this dissertation. However, following in the footsteps of Marx, metaphor, logic, and the critical deconstruction of the conceptual structures of abusive power will be the only weapons of mass destruction endorsed in these pages. Precisely because “violence completes the partial mind” (A. More, *Flying Doesn’t Help*), we leave the semiotics of military ordinance to those who speak that language for lack of any other.

tendency of empiricist epistemological abstraction, and political economy, to retreat from the material foundations of social relations into idealism (*Reading Capital* 35-6, 171-2) and economic determinism.

In many ways the social, economic, and political context is today much changed from what it was; sadly, in many ways very little has changed. That is to say, the very same social, economic, and political technologies that rose to dominance in the nineteenth century continue to grind away essentially unchanged in the twenty-first century, but for an alarming monotony that differs only in velocity, magnitude, and impact. The Swift epigraph to this dissertation captures the postmodern tenor of the contemporary context. This spoken word piece at first appears to accept the perceived inevitabilities of postmodern technology's reconstruction of human experience. This reconstruction is determined by the convergence, or interpenetration, of information technology and language, and the cybernation of the human through digital and communication prostheses. However, the piece moves toward a decisive materialist exposure of the postmodern age's logical contradictions, and postmodernist criticism's neutralising relativism. Its dark dystopian conclusion is the marker of a cautionary tale that could be read as the movement from Marxism inhabiting but resisting the postmodern, to postmarxism and the "dissolution of ... [the] Jacobin imaginary" (2), as Laclau and Mouffe express it in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. In Swift's description, social transformation is trapped in the postmodern like an insect trapped in fossil amber registered as a non-transit from one abstraction to another: "no slow disintegration from truth to beauty." In contrast, history for Marxist socialism is, like Walter Benjamin's angel of history, oriented in the future anterior, facing toward disaster in the past even as it is blown, desiring "whole[ness]," backwards into the future propelled by the shock waves of disaster, and this "storm is what we call progress" (*Theses on the Philosophy of History* IX).

No mere legend of the fall, “progress,” as Benjamin expresses it, remains poised between “civilisation” and “barbarism,” irreducibly polysemic, but always positively charged with sudden and unexpected revolutionary potential. Past generations have a “claim” on the present (*Theses II*) that compels us to transform our world so that the continued survival of future generations on this fragile planet is brought back from the brink of catastrophe. Progress contains both the “documents of civilisation” and the “documents of barbarism” inextricably mixed; however, we lack the social technologies necessary for better controlling the disastrous potentials unleashed by each technological advance, and technology’s benefits therefore remain compromised and brutally exclusionary. Consequently, this dissertation values as necessary in the postmodern context what other critics disparage as Marxism’s “redemptive metanarrative,” or the “Jacobin imaginary.” My dissertation finds that the humane social optimism articulated in Marx’s critique of value is as essential to our situation as it was in Marx’s own day.

This dissertation’s goal, as a cautionary tale specifically oriented toward a Canadian reader, is to plot important details of this analytically available but residually elusive postmodern context, its transformations and its conceptual monotony over time, and to retool the concept-metaphor value to meet the challenges of the times in a Canadian context. Marx brackets Swift’s postmodern tale. The first epigraph presents the fact of capitalist exploitation in its simplest terms. The final epigraph of Marx expresses the threat that the “*laissez faire, laissez aller*” of emerging eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeois economic liberalism, and today’s neo-liberalism, represents for the Canadian nation-state subordinated to the imperatives of liberal economics: “allowed ... to live on only in the pores of this society, as Epicurus placed his gods in the pores of the world!” (*Theories of Surplus Value* 63). This much has not changed. In fact, Marx continues to have particular resonance for today’s Canada

when vested interests within Canada and without claim the nation-state is in decline, eclipsed by global economic and political "inevitable" that somehow transcend the regulatory and legislative capacities of democratic national governments.

Chapter One: The Idea of a Liberal Education in Canada

1. Canada's Massey Commission (1951): Liberal Culture Defends National Culture from the Materialism of Liberal Economics

The *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences* (1951)—usually referred to as the Massey Commission—is considered to be a watershed in the cultural growth of Canada as a nation. Paul Litt, in *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission*, notes, however, that laudatory claims about the “transforming effect” of the “Culture Commission” are “debatable” (245). Some of its recommendations were already on the government list of things to do, some were reversed, and many were not followed up until years after the tabling of the report. In Litt’s view “the real significance of the Massey Commission lies less in the fate of its major initiatives than in the general impact it had upon the attitudes of the public and the policies of the government” (247). Consequently, the general success of the commission in favourably raising the public profile of culture in the post-war period, at a time when the nation “come of age” was experiencing a buoyant sense of national accomplishment and independence, cannot be undervalued. It achieved this through a strategy of “associating high culture with national development” (248).

Another important achievement was the opportunity it presented for a “scattered ... cultural community” to find cohesion as “a purposeful lobby” (248). However, Litt argues, the “culture lobby’s” habitual reduction of the complexities of cultural activity to a simple “conflict between higher culture and mass culture” (251) represented a “wilful

resistance” to the changes taking place in Canadian patterns of cultural consumption, and just as important, a reluctance to acknowledge the transformation of high culture itself:

Cultural modernism could not serve the political and social ends that the commissioners demanded of high culture. Instead of fostering, as Matthew Arnold had hoped, a free yet cohesive society, modern high culture was itself degenerating into chaos, undermining their vision of coherent social order based on liberal humanist values derived from traditional high culture. (253)

The commissioners’ indifference to modernist culture is in part a reflection of their interest in harmonious nation building: the Royal Commission’s project was underwritten by Matthew Arnold’s ideas on the conciliating role of culture and education, and modernism was by nature socially disruptive. Arnold’s idealism represented for the commissioners a therapeutic counterweight to the threats of mass culture, cultural influence from the U.S. culture industries (perhaps including modernist cultural trends), the distrust of the provinces for the federal government, and the distrust or grudging respect that many ordinary Canadians continue to have for high culture.¹ Hilda Neatby declared that Arnold was “startlingly modern” (Litt 99). Because Arnold continues to be looked to as a model for the contemporary Canadian university, it is worthwhile to reflect for a moment on his conception of culture and education.

The commissioners shared much with Arnold: the sense that culture—high culture—has the ability to effect change in the world of ordinary affairs; the social importance of the poet and the critic; and the positive social potentials of education. However, as Chris Baldick notes, for a perspective that makes claims for the practical utility of criticism and culture, Arnold and his academic successors set themselves against controversy, against partisan activism, and against criticism as an active force

¹ Terry Eagleton argues that the commodity is an “anarchic ... force which mocks the obsessive rankings of traditional [bourgeois] culture even as it ... depends upon them to secure the stable conditions for its own operations” (374). As a consequence of this contradiction, “[b]ourgeois society rates culture extremely highly and [on the other hand] has no time for it whatsoever” (375). This is discussed in more detail shortly.

in the practical world. Arnold declares, “the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere” (Arnold 599). The commissioners, for their part, shared Arnold’s sense that the economic, political, and social values of “middle-class liberalism” were not enough to prevent the social anarchy that, for Arnold, “worship of freedom in and of itself” produces (Arnold 84)—that is the “doing as one likes” he identified as the most destructive impulse in British democracy. For Arnold, [s]ocial disintegration” encouraged by class self-interest and faction is “counteract[ed]” by culture that leads us—through education—to social “unity” and “harmony” (99). Culture also leads us to “the much wanted principle ... of authority” (89):

... by our *best self* we are united, impersonal, at harmony.... and this is the very self which culture ... seeks to develop in us.... We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes ... culture suggests the idea of *the State*. We find no basis for a firm State-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our *best self* (99; emphasis in original).

Equally confident in the role that culture fostered within academic cloisters has to bring about social harmony the commissioners argued, “[c]ulture is that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste” (7), and “true [national] unity belongs to the realm of ideas” (5).

As Chris Baldick demonstrates, for Arnold it is through a “process of internalization” (213) that “the state becomes the sole external counterpart and guarantor of the Best Self, above and beyond classes” (47). However, for the Commission the challenge was to raise the profile of culture and to strengthen the nation by making culture available to the greatest number of Canadians without it seeming to be forced on them by a cultural elite, or by the state. In Arnold’s performative formulation, the seemingly disinterested State is discovered in a revelation by Culture personified, and discovered to be the site of restorative authority without the necessity that authority assert itself in any of its cruder, more coercive

forms. Somewhat like Foucault's (overused) formulation, culture is coextensive with the state, and the individual on his or her "best" behaviour is the "effect and object" (*Discipline and Punish* 192) in a pervasive field of authority. At any rate, forty-nine years after the report's publication the nation-state is, it is claimed,² in decline—not disappearing, but certainly its agency in a number of spheres is being significantly undermined in order to facilitate the currently accelerated redistribution of economic wealth from poor to rich, and underdeveloped south to developed north. And, we need to determine what the role of culture will be in this new paradigm, or even if the "new" paradigm is as new as is claimed.

In their preamble, the commissioners identify where responsibility for education—formal as well as non-formal—lies. They give a carefully nuanced endorsement of the primacy of the individual followed in importance by the family, then the beneficent state with a "*supplementary* but essential ... interest in the education of the individual" (7; emphasis added). In accord with Arnold, the overt agency of the state is de-emphasized. Where Arnold addresses anarchy arising out of class faction made worse by crass materialism, the Massey commission gingerly negotiates the tensions arising out of the proprietorial interest of the provinces (particularly Quebec) in protecting their control over "formal education" from the encroachments of the federal government. In this way the individual is sublimated in the state's function as guardian of the totality of "intellectual and moral purpose" (8):

If the Federal Government is to renounce its right to associate itself with other social groups, public and private, in the general education of Canadian citizens, it denies its intellectual and moral purpose, the *complete conception of the common good* is lost, and Canada, as such, becomes a materialistic society. (8; emphasis added)

² Bill Readings, in "For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics: The University, Culture, and the State," for example, argues "the decline of the nation-state that accompanies the globalization of the world economy means that the notion of culture no longer matters to modernity" (169). This dissertation argues that this overstates the case.

In part this is a rhetorical strategy calculated to convince its readers; nevertheless, in keeping with its politics, the report takes care to emphasize the freedom of the individual, while moral authority clearly resides in the state. Both are subject to the dangers of materialism. The Commission's liberal-democratic emphasis on individual freedom seeks support from Lord Keynes' description of the artist provided with "courage" and "opportunity" by the state, but not interfered with. Rather, the "individual" artist "free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled.... leads the rest of us ... enlarging our sensibility and purifying our instincts" (375). The emphasis is on moral growth with anarchy, in the person of the free individual artist, contained and enlisted in the interests of social purity. However, this passage primarily underscores for the report's purposes that the intention of state patronage for the arts is not "to socialize this side of social behaviour" (375). In this conception, the state itself is described as though it is just one more freely associating individual; however, society is purged of all disruption and conflict through the agency of a totalising transcendental abstraction: "the complete conception of the common good." The agency of the individual, who, according to the report, only "becomes entirely himself as" a social being (7), is in fact eclipsed by the expansive moral plenitude of the idealized state.

The Massey Commission proposed that "culture mediate" between individualism and nationalism (Litt 210), "defending civilization" from the twin threats of communist tyranny and American mass culture in this Cold War period: "we must strengthen those *permanent instruments* which give meaning to our unity and make us conscious of the best in our national life" (Royal Commission 274; emphasis added). Even though the commissioners acknowledge Canadian "complexities and diversities" (4), these "permanent instruments" are defined in the homogenizing, exclusionary terms of "a common set of beliefs," "fidelity to an historic tradition" (4), and a "complete conception of the common good" (8) achieved under the aegis of culture. The report

rhetorically enlists culture in the general condition of Cold war crisis and mobilization: “Our military defences must be made secure; but our cultural defences equally demand national attention; the two *cannot be separated*” (275; emphasis added).

The individual through the civilizing influences of culture and education achieves “a balanced development of all his powers ... fully realize[s] his human possibilities” (6), and attains an idealized plenitude that matches that of the nation-state very like Arnold’s Oxford and State “endow[ed] ... with an impossible permanence and serenity” (Litt 47)—and ultimately untroubled by difference or disparity. The commissioners’ rhetorical de-emphasis of the (“supplementary”) state notwithstanding, the individual’s relationship to the nation in the Massey formulation, with its timely appeal to “moral” growth and “thought and emotion” in a moment of national crisis, closely resembles the relationship between Arnold’s Best Self and the state in its emphasis on the importance of the psychological. Chris Baldick notes Arnold’s conflation of the “social and psychological” (Baldick 213). In this “present crisis,”³ the Massey Report distinguishes between “the superficial short-term methods of propaganda” and the enduring “spiritual weapons” that “make us conscious of the best in our national life” (274). In Arnold’s words, “culture suggests the idea of *the State*.” Inseparable, national defence and cultural defence are internalised by the individual in much the same way envisioned by Arnold—as described by Baldick:

The principle of regulating conduct according to a conscience or Best Self requires an elimination of all external ‘machinery’ to allow a single exalted model to emerge capable of attracting the Best Self upwards towards it, out of the morass of self-will and class feeling ... where the state becomes the sole

³Western liberal-democracies maintain a permanent condition of crisis. The energy crisis of 2001, for example, in the United States (produced by the liberal economic privatisation of public utilities in California) created the demand to drill for oil in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Reserve. Critics argue that the potential reserves of the ANWR could be more than made up through conservation and alternative sources of energy (*Globe and Mail*, Saturday, 04 August 2001). Canada’s colonial dependence, structurally linked through trade agreements such as NAFTA, ensures that Canada’s ability to have an energy policy independent of U.S. interests is highly unlikely. Similar developments in health care, education, finance, and social spending have accompanied the political drift to the right in Canada since the 1980’s.

external counterpart and guarantor of the Best Self, above and beyond classes. (47)

In this way the individual, apparently free from state interference, internalises responsibility for the conservation of the system idealized in the state.

In keeping with their liberal-democratic, or liberal-humanist vision, the commissioners were very careful from the outset not to present themselves as coercive arbiters “suggesting standards in taste from some cultural stratosphere” (5). They understated the state’s active interference in culture, instead strategically emphasizing “free choice,” and the importance of high culture (acquired in an academic or non-academic context) in “forming the national tradition of the future” (4): “the appetite grows by eating. The best must be made available to those who wish it” (5). They saw this developing tradition threatened by a “tidal wave of technology” (272), an enervating emphasis on “material achievements,” and a “permanent dependence” on the “general cultural pattern of the United States” (41) “passively accepted” and likely to “weaken critical faculties” (18). Of course these are not unreasonable concerns for many Canadians today.

It was the task of the commissioners to convince Canadians of the necessity of “state intervention” in order to “restore ... the balance between the ... material ... and ... the other less tangible but more enduring parts of civilization” (272). However, then as now, it is never a simple matter of deploring materialistic popular culture as such. Theodor Adorno, a contemporary writing shortly after the publication of the Massey report (1951), provides a materialist corrective to the culture lobby’s distrust of materialism:

Whenever cultural criticism complains of ‘materialism’, it furthers the belief that the sin lies in man’s desire for consumer goods, and not in the organization of the whole which withholds these goods from man: for the cultural critic, the sin is satiety, not hunger. (1035)

In a context of systemic inequality access to cultural capital is distributed unequally, and the Massey Commission's simple equation of high culture and national culture endeavours to conceal this fact. Litt points out that the optimism of the culture lobby in "[e]quality of opportunity" for all demanded that it repress "[f]actors such as economic status, social conditioning, ethnic origins, and simple predilections in taste" (252). Similarly, as Baldick argues, the "practical aim of [I.A.] Richards' cultural mission [inspired by Arnold] is therefore to correct the taste of the masses while leaving commercial institutions unchallenged" (140). This is, of course, also Liberal democracy's functional impulse to reform with the aim of maintaining the social system and its ideology intact.

As is the case with such appeals for intellectual or disciplinary neutrality, Arnold's (anti) critical stance, "to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications" in favour of a "disinterested free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake" (Arnold 35), is ultimately not so practically disinterested as is claimed. His conflation of the "social and psychological" (Baldick 213), his "reduction of social to moral tendencies" naturalizes and "dissolv[es] ... all social problems" (36)—particularly for Arnold problems arising out of class conflict. This avoidance of the "question of social relations" is demonstrated in the reasonable intonations of Arnold's essay on "Equality":

But a community having humane manners is a community of equals, and in such a community great *social inequalities have really no meaning*, while they are at the same time a menace and an embarrassment to perfect ease of social intercourse. (223; emphasis added)

For Arnold, practical engagement is no solution in the face of social inequality; nor is social inequality merely an embarrassing impediment to a general "spirit" of social civility. "[D]isinterestedness," Arnold's practical strategy for social change, which, as Baldick notes, includes a strategy of "postponement" ("Our ideas will, in the end, shape

the world all the better for maturing a little”) coheres both with a Christian conception of renunciation (“sacrifice now ensures a repayment at a later date”) and “economic arguments for incomes policy” (23): “Our present social organisation ... will and must endure until our middle class is provided with some better ideal of life than it has now” (Arnold 237). This inter-relationship between the religious and economic is significant in the context of first-wave capitalism, and in part accounts for the tenacious grip that Arnold’s strategy for normalising the social and economic contradictions of liberal democracies has had on the minds of academics and policy makers into the present.

Arnold’s notion of “best self,” and the function of “the best that is known and thought in the world” (Arnold 597), continues to compel, and is still offered by many as the pre-eminent model for the contemporary Canadian University. A recent example serves to contextualize the disingenuousness of Arnoidean “*disinterestedness*,” and the way in which its claim to exist outside of political activism works in actual practice. In an editorial (December 99), Wayne Eyre, then editor of the University of Saskatchewan’s *On Campus News*, deplores Justice Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond’s call that the university “adapt” to the needs of the Native community and Native students. Eyre argues that such policies “will compromise [the institution’s] best self” and its “key function ... to teach our brightest youth the best that has been thought, written, and formulated.” For these (already privileged by Eyre as the “brightest”) students, the disciplines, “like entreaured vaults,” sit idealized and, it is alleged, politically aloof, “impervious to social engineering efforts.” For Eyre, equality of access is already “freely there for the taking,” ensured by “real-world—and real academic—standards” that exist serenely above “one’s ethnic roots” and the messy world of local despair and geopolitical dispossession. Higher education is equally “accessible to any particular group of students” just as it is accessible to “anyone else” in spite of ethnic diversity, socio-economic exclusions, systemic discrimination, and the historical destruction of

Native cultures in Canada and around the world. This cultural destruction has been *in fact* “social[ly] engineer[ed]” (Eyre’s ostensible anathema) from the beginning by successive Canadian governments, inheritors of the imperialist project in North America.

In a province where 11 percent of the population is of aboriginal descent, in which the aboriginal demographic fact is more fairly represented in the province’s jails than in its universities, Eyre considers debatable (“moot”) the claim that the University has a responsibility to “rais[e] the profile of indigenous people’s issues in North and South America.” Without doubt universities are free to “raise the profile” of “issues” somehow, somewhere. If not they will become increasingly irrelevant as their walls become increasingly closed to the outside world. Arguably, nothing can be properly studied in isolation, and is not the profile of any issue raised as soon as it is studied in a publicly funded institution, whether the channels to the outside are opened or not? Who decides then which “issues,” or channels, are worth opening with the outside world in the interest of fruitful interchange? The fact is that Aboriginal issues are very much matters of discussion, and Aboriginal issues are very much matters of practical action as well, outside the walls of universities. What are the consequences of Eyre’s claim for the quality of institutional relevance? If “relevant” is what would-be reformers demand that higher education be, then we need to ask: if not relevant exploration here and now in this very context, then where and when?

For critics of higher education,⁴ such troublesome political and social realities are subordinated to the university’s “real-world” “reputation and purpose” underwritten by Matthew Arnold and guaranteed by the intellectual and cultural bulldozer of “*world-wide* standards in the arts, sciences, and humanities” (emphasis added). Such claims take for granted the supposed superiority of European culture, they repress the history

⁴ Carleton University’s Peter Emberley takes such a position, as will be seen further on here.

of how it is these “world-wide standards” come to exist, how they are maintained and resisted, and they repress any questioning that might expose how such standards historically serve certain elite interests. The equality argument lays bare the perennial Canadian contradiction between social diversity fairly empowered on the one hand and assimilation as usual on the other. John Guillory, approaching the problem of access in a less idealizing fashion, argues that the “largest context for analyzing the school as an institution is therefore the *reproduction* of the social order, with all of its various inequities” (ix; emphasis in original).

It was necessary for the Massey Commission to portray mass culture “not as a popular choice, but as a repressive force,” in order to predispose Canadians to “seek self-improvement by emulating the culture lobby and embracing traditional high culture” (Litt 252). However, as Litt points out, the role for high culture envisioned by the commission also repressed significant cultural and social tendencies. It ignored the fact that Modernism and successive waves of avant-garde critique were undermining the assumptions of a monolithic Western Culture. High culture had for some time been in a process of transformation, and its apparent homogeneity continued to be contested by insistent voices from its margins. Nevertheless, even as “modern high culture was itself degenerating into chaos” from these and other directions, there remained the problem of persuading mainstream Canadians of the superior value of high culture without further exacerbating a mainstream distrust of high culture as elitist.

Again, Adorno exposes the disguised violence of such a notion of a “pure autonomous culture” (1037):

[T]he greatest fetish of cultural criticism is the notion of culture as such. For no authentic work of art and no true philosophy, according to their very meaning, has ever exhausted itself in itself alone, in its being-in-itself. They have always stood in relation to the actual life-process of society from which they distinguished themselves. (1035)

And such is the dilemma faced by the Massey Commission. In its efforts to privilege a therapeutic high culture in the face of mass consumption of popular culture, it was necessary to mask the taint of class elitism implicit within a “liberal humanist formulation of cultural nationalism” (Litt 254), even as this formulation levelled social diversity and economic and political inequality with the empty promise of equality—in theory idealistic, but in practice repressive. This formula of equality as the great leveller has been revived in Reform/Alliance party strategies aimed at maintaining the status quo and conserving systemic disparity. Unequal access to cultural capital will continue as long as it is a functional component of an economic system designed to maximize—or at least manage—social inequality. The Massey Commission deserves due credit for having the integrity to seek uniquely Canadian solutions to uniquely Canadian challenges; however, we need to ask what the effectiveness of such a stance is today against the crushing fatalism that accompanies the ideology of globalisation and its anthem of inevitability—an ideology helped along by an anodyne discourse of social value in the arts and education.

The Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Being*, forty years after the Massey Commission inherits the challenges that faced the commissioners in the early 1950's. Beyond the many practical recommendations it does make, at the heart of *A Sense of Place—A Sense of Being*, is the challenge presented by the now familiar triad of inevitabilities: globalisation, new technology, and the rapid pace of change. More specifically, this challenge is focussed in the familiar conflict between two views on culture: the market driven view that “cultural materials ... are goods and services just like any other” and the less economically grounded view that “cultural materials and services are outside conventional trading rules because of their importance to national identity and ... should be exempt from rules regulating world trade practices” (58). An expression of

the structural rupture between the cultural and the economic in liberal democratic contexts, both views manifest the internal conflict that characterised the Massey Commission's cultural nationalism. Quite simply, protecting national culture from mass culture imported or imposed from outside (the United States) contradicts the anti-protectionist, free-market ideology of liberal economics.

A Sense of Place never openly acknowledges the current opinion (cf. Bill Readings in Chapter Two) that the autonomy of nation states is in significant decline relative to the burgeoning power of global capital. On the other hand, neither does this report look to high culture as an antidote to mass culture in order to protect national values. Nevertheless, *A Sense of Place* shares this contradiction that constitutes liberal ideology; however, it stops short of the Massey Commission's attempts to resolve the disjunction between culture and the economy. It settles instead for preserving it intact. *A Sense of Place* in fact leaves it open to "Canadians" to choose, sometime in the future, between "defin[ing] themselves as producers and consumers of tradeable cultural goods ... or ... prepar[ing] to affirm the value of their cultural diversity and their right to ensure that their creative expression is accessible" (58). In practical terms the report follows the Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade in recommending the implementation of "a new international cultural instrument that would acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity and address cultural policies designed to promote and protect that diversity" (58). The referential ambiguity of "a new cultural instrument" is reproduced in the Committee's support for "Centres of Excellence" ("cooperative" efforts involving the private sector, university researchers and graduate students) as a "pragmatic" research and development solution to the challenge presented by new media such as multimedia technologies and the Internet (cf. Bill Readings on the referential vacuity of "excellence"; Chapter Two). Whether or not this recommendation represents more than lip service to an ideal depends on the relative health of social

democratic values. No matter how often a truly cooperative social movement is evoked merely by saying the words, if international trade agreements (NAFTA, FTAA) are any indication, then “cooperation” between the private sector and any other sector, including the autonomous university, is not promising. The meaningfulness of such a recommendation depends on the extent to which the private sector is willing to make concessions in the name of the cooperative, and in the name of common cultural and social space not subject to the profit motive. Whether such a recommendation is to have any substantial meaning at all depends on a national government’s willingness to do more than merely “affirm the value of ... cultural diversity” (58), and to set aside common public, cultural space free of the market. The Canadian Heritage report draws a parallel between “biodiversity” and cultural and linguistic diversity. While this is indeed an appropriate parallel, it is an unfortunate one considering the current corporate tendency to reduce biodiversity to monoculture.

Litt argues that the culture lobby’s “worst fears about mass culture failed to materialize” (253). In the decades since Massey, mass culture, “rehabilitated as popular culture,” is seen less as a repressive force, and “celebrated” more as the vehicle for the expression of “regional and ethnic traditions in a tolerant and pluralistic fashion” (253). Certainly the relative values of terms such as “popular” and “tolerant” depend on who is speaking. As well, how this rehabilitation has actually played itself out down to the present in Canada is very much open to argument as the U.S. culture industry aggressively pursues an ever-increasing global market share of culture consumed in the form of mass “entertainment.” It depends on how one views public broadcasting’s success as the medium of regional expression relative to the uneven, even token, gestures of private broadcasters to speak to the regions. In light of more recent political and economic developments, the ability of such a rehabilitation to promote Canadian diversity depends on how one measures the success of public and

private broadcasters to serve national and regional interests—and, as Arnold teaches us, the political and economic always inextricably include culture. For example, the NAFTA formulators expressly stated that water and culture were not included within its provisions. However, what is said and what is done are very different in practice as the NAFTA quite clearly includes water and culture. And film distribution in Canada continues to be dominated by American distributors and American cultural products at the expense of Canada's own high quality films. The fact that Canada is a net importer of cultural commodities is not merely an emotive problem, or just a problem of national independence; it is an economic problem as well.

Litt observes that the “liberal democratic consciences” of the Massey Commission “ensured that their elitist dream of edifying the masses would never be realized” (253). His account of how this elitist vision failed to be realized, and the nature of the impasse we find art and culture facing in the contemporary are worth looking at in more detail. The modernist critique of the “rule of reason,” of “established conventions,” and of a monolithic and harmonious Western culture would see “the traditional high culture championed by the Massey Commission as part of the problem rather than part of the solution” (254). On the other hand, the Canadian state, for its part, continues to look to the traditions of high culture for legitimation, and the “liberal humanist formulation of cultural nationalism [presented by the Massey Commission] ... continued to appeal ... because it proffered a national identity that justified the existence of Canada as an independent nation” (254). Again, if culture, as Litt argues, continues to enjoy “increasing ... affluen[ce]” since the Massey Commission then it is very much a matter of relative affluence considering that culture—and the universities that provide it with significant intellectual and imaginative support—have fallen prey to the fiscal conservatism that accompanies the dramatic shift to the political right since the seventies. At the same time, Canadian society is marked by ambivalence toward

culture, and that ambivalence has its roots firmly set in political and economic policies and practices.

This ambivalence exists in the mainstream where ordinary people—often in the same individual—both respect and resent high culture. The commissioners' distrust of mass culture, and the distrust in the mainstream for high culture, are two sides of the same coin as both participate in the reproduction of the social structure: "[b]elief in a cultural hierarchy was not ... exclusive to the cultural lobby: widespread public suspicions of high culture demonstrated that it was a convention accepted throughout Canadian society" (251). It may be that there is "still room" for the Massey Commission's "brand of cultural nationalism" (254), even as the artistic descendants of modernism continue to engage in "critical assessments of society moulded by materialism, technology, and mass media" (254). However, as Litt points out, as "indifferen[t]" as the commissioners were to the trends of culture transformed by modernism (of course underway for some time), the same cultural apparatus the Massey Commission "helped create" continues to support much of this critical assessment. Terry Eagleton observes that the modernist critique at its arguably most revolutionary stage, high modernism, was even then shadowed by "the institutionalization of modernism" (372-3)—that is to say by the re-absorption of its own disruptive energies by the social order it resisted.

The drama of modernism's resistance and re-absorption, and the Massey Commission's liberal humanism in tension with "widespread public suspicion of high culture," (251) reflect more fundamental contradictions in capitalist societies, specifically the contradiction between the "capitalist economy and bourgeois culture" (373). Terry Eagleton shows that as capitalism has developed it is no longer possible to simply counterpose "the realm of appetite, utility and instrumental reason" (373) over and against culture as the Massey Commission attempted to do. Eagleton argues that

the development from early to late capitalism finds “consumer capitalism ... aestheticized”:

In its early stages, capitalism had sharply severed the symbolic from the economic; now the two spheres are incongruously reunited, as the economic penetrates deeply into the symbolic realm itself, and the libidinal body is harnessed to the imperatives of profit. (373)

Postmodernism in effect represents the “latest iconoclastic upsurge of the avant garde,” and for Eagleton this latest wave is “both radical and conservative” (373) at one and the same time. On the one hand, in its “confounding of hierarchies, its self-reflexive subversions of ideological closure, its populist debunking of intellectualism and elitism” it is more radical; however, “postmodernism’s consumerist hedonism and philistine anti-historicism, its wholesale abandonment of critique and commitment, its cynical erasure of truth, meaning and subjectivity ... its reified technologism” find it truly conservative (373) on the other.

The Massey Commission’s goal of fortifying the cultural “bulwarks” of the nation in order to reconcile social tensions was belated to the extent that the commissioners stood strategically aloof from modernism’s impact. Nevertheless, the Royal Commission’s liberal humanist strategy inaugurates Canada’s cultural strategy as it comes to encounter both the postmodern cultural dynamic and the “consumer capitalism” which has become “pervasively aestheticized” such that the “economic penetrates” into the cultural realm of the symbolic (373). The high culture that the commissioners advocated and the mass culture they placed in opposition to it were already implicated in this aestheticization of “the entire culture of late capital, with its fetishism of style and surface, its cult of hedonism and technique, its reifying of the signifier and displacement of discursive meaning with random intensities” (373). In this sense the commissioners were responding in timely fashion to this fundamental contradiction arising over time out of the incongruity between the economic system and

cultural superstructure. “[T]he ‘base’ of capitalist society begins to enter into embarrassing contradiction with its ‘superstructure’” (374), with intriguing consequences. The assumptions of the “mandarin culture of the high bourgeois epoch,” the episteme to which the Massey Commission belongs, “are called into question by the later evolution of that very system” (374). Nevertheless, the assumptions of the former remain necessary to late capitalism, “partly because the commodity is incapable of generating a sufficiently legitimating ideology of its own” (375). In simple terms, “Discourses of God, freedom and family, of the unique spiritual essence of the individual, [all values enshrined in the Massey report] retain much of their traditional force, but come also to have something of an implausible ring to them, in a social order where the highest empirical value is clearly profit” (375).

At the most basic level of exchange, the “commodity ... is transgressive, promiscuous, polymorphous; in its sublime self-expansiveness, its levelling passion to exchange with another of its kind, it offers paradoxically to bring low the very finely nuanced superstructure—call it ‘culture’—which serves in part to protect and promote it” (374). Because the commodity “integrates high and low” and “mocks the obsessive rankings of traditional culture” (374), in this way its own anarchic and subversive operations threaten to dispossess bourgeois culture of its “traditional legitimating forms” (375). Here we can situate the commodity of higher education, cultural capital concentrated in universities, in the historical context that finds heredity as the source of social legitimacy swept away by the discourses of utility and merit. This is a subterfuge that disguises hierarchy as democratic accessibility ensured through the supposed individual freedom to choose and limited only by merit. In the university as described by A.H. Halsey, democracy and the “technological impulse” sharpen the conflict in 1950’s Britain between traditional forms of higher education, “aristocratic rather than egalitarian, detached rather than participatory, and ... ‘exalting a sterile scholarship

rather than [the] ... frankly occupational and utilitarian” (49). The antagonism between traditional forms of elitist privilege and supposedly more egalitarian utility, reflect the levelling operations of the commodity itself “integrating high and low.” Nevertheless, the commodity continued to enlist the legitimating assumptions of traditional bourgeois culture to support its needs.

Paradoxically, student disaffection and revolt in the decade following the Massey Commission demonstrates the persistent lure of the cultural capital of the old bourgeoisie. Large numbers of students found themselves faced with a dilemma arising out of the changing nature of the universities role as gatekeeper, and the provisional nature of the students’ class status. While many students were highly critical of the assumptions that accompanied the legitimating function of traditional cultural forms, at the same time, the class mobility that “mastery” of this knowledge conferred was in the process of being undermined by social and economic change, as Cyril Levitt argues in *Children of Privilege*. Students in the 50’s and 60’s were caught at the historical moment at which the cultural capital of the old bourgeoisie was, in a sense, giving way to the legitimating needs of a new professional-managerial class in the coming age of hyper-capitalism, that is globalisation. I say in a sense because, as Eagleton argues (above), the levelling processes of the commodity ensured that the cultural capital of the old bourgeoisie had been little more than a chimera, a legitimating ideology, for quite some time prior to the sixties. To an extent then, students at this time were only experiencing the long-standing contradiction between culture and the economic inherent to a capitalist system. On the other hand, in the shift from the modern to the postmodern, technology in time would ensure that changes in the nature of capital produced by globalisation would continue the epistemic shift experienced by these students, and, as we shall see, have dramatic consequences for

value as a concept both “explanatory and critical” (Arthur 34). And, as Arthur argues, class struggle continues to be very much at issue in this historical shift.

2. Mass Access and Mass Disaffection: Student Revolt in the 1960's

Cyril Levitt epitomises the problem of student resistance in the sixties in Canada as relatively privileged middle-class students attempt to recapture or improve their class fortunes: “the student movement was a revolt of privilege against privilege” (4). Levitt maintains that the authenticity of student revolt in the sixties “was predicated upon its inherent ambivalence; the substance of the movement was elitist, the form radical-democratic” (62). However, according to Levitt, the movement made no attempt to “*mask* its elitism by means of a radical-democratic ideology” (62; emphasis added). The fifties and sixties see huge increases in “capital expenditures on universities”⁵ and proportionally dramatic increases in the numbers of “middle class youth attending university” (31). The “internal consolidation [of capital] ... and its multinationalization” resulted in a “capture of large sections of the formerly ‘independent’ middle class” (29), and the change in the “character of economic conditions” finds the universities representing “the only secure means of maintaining class position or of advancing up the social ladder” (29). The demands of industry, commerce, and government for intellectual labourers—organizers, planners, and managers—results in the “unprecedented growth of the class of [these] mediate producers” (20). At the same time, while the “power of capital” is “attribut[ed]” to the mediate producers, the “active power in society” remains concentrated elsewhere “outside” them (21). The “growing dependence of the middle-class was ameliorated by [this] ... *apparent* ‘democratization’

⁵The increase is dramatic: 15 million dollars of funding in 1951, at the time the Massey Commission’s report was published, increased from 88 million in 1960 to 340 million in 1968 (31). Of course, decreases in funding for education at all levels in the 1990’s have been crippling (see note 1 chpt 2).

of capital" (21; emphasis added). In fact the social mobility of the middle class became "more limited."⁶

Even as universities underwent this process of "massification," their roles as gate-keepers of social mobility increased (28), and students quickly perceived that the promise was "bankrupt" (34). The promise held out to middle class students in the sixties, according to Levitt, was twofold: "students were promised entry into the old intellectual elite by way of the university; and they were promised that the values of liberal democracy would be realized" (34). Instead students discovered that "future positions ... promised to them were losing their exclusivity" (34) as a result of the "devaluation of the university degree ... and ... the relative deterioration in the conditions of intellectual labour in society" (35). This, in Levitt's view, is the "material" ground of student revolt in the sixties, and the grounds for his claim that this represents a "revolt of privilege against privilege": students "were calling society to task for breaking the promise" (45). In this description we can discern the complexities of the levelling operations of the commodity in a liberal-democratic context, and the attempts of a young middle-class, the new professional-managerial class, to reassert its privilege in a transformed economic reality in which older forms of privilege give way to utility and merit—that is to say older forms give way to new hierarchies nevertheless legitimated by traditional liberal-humanist forms of social and cultural value conferred through higher education.

In spite of its suspicion of materialism, the Massey Commission did not foresee that a betrayal of entitlement felt by the future young middle-class could be driven by their exclusion from the privileges conferred by a traditional culture, a cultural tradition increasingly eclipsed by newer cultural values. The Commission responded instead to

⁶ For example, in Canada there were significant declines in the "goods," or primary industries, and large increases in the service sector. Social mobility was more and more limited to "low-key bureaucratic jobs for the newly educated 'masses,' not high-power positions of authority and responsibility" (208)

the challenge of proving to Canadians the “practical” relevance of those “less tangible,” “spiritual” resources to a people more accustomed to place greatest value on material “physical resources.” The Commission faced the dilemma of proving the objective social value of subjective culture to a Canadian culture that increasingly placed greatest value on material reward. In order to improve the fortunes of culture, the commissioners exploited the national psychic condition of ideological mobilization in the Cold War period through the conversion of “a nation’s [subjective] devotion” into “a people’s [objective] action” (4) in a moment of (indefinitely prolonged) crisis. They appealed to a “common background,” “spiritual heritage,” and “fidelity to an historic tradition” as the “quickening forces” that inspire a nation’s devotion, and give the nation its “essential character” (4). The forces of tradition and belief form the spiritual ground—as written on the page here “essential[ly]” white European French Canadian and United Empire Loyalist—that precedes “diversity” and from this spiritual ground is nurtured the growing “national tradition of the future” (4).⁷

This transformation of the immaterial elements of culture into the objective force of national action proceeds without reference whatever to its imbrications in the economic system that forms its material foundations—except, that is, for the coded

⁷Tradition in itself is not being rejected here. Eagleton convincingly argues for the importance of tradition, and the importance of a critical positioning within tradition. Crucial to his argument is his claim that critique does not exist in isolation, somehow outside of “traditional legitimating forms.” Eagleton, like Peter Burger, demonstrates the importance of tradition to a “[d]ialectical criticism ... [that] proceeds immanently” (Burger liv). Burger argues that necessary to criticism is the recognition that “[m]ental objectifications do not have the status of facts; they are mediated by traditions” (4). Also necessary to criticism is a practice that includes the “relationship between interpreter and literary work to be thematized. Only a theory that fulfils this requirement is capable of making the social function of even one’s own action the object of its scientific activity” (4). Self-reflection on the radical imbrication of both the critic and critical activity itself within the field of social conflict is indispensable. In the words of Walter Benjamin, the stance of the critic to history, or tradition, is one that is aware that “cultural treasures ... owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also the anonymous toil of their contemporaries” (Benjamin 256). For Benjamin, the stance of the historical materialist to the “document of civilization” is one of “detachment”; the critic “dissociates” her or himself from the “manner” of transmission (256). The emphasis here on the critics’ inescapable implication in social conflict marks the difference between Benjamin’s strategic, practical detachment, Burger’s immanent critique, and Arnold’s “disinterestedness.” This emphasis also marks the difference between a materialist critique and the reifying liberalism of the Massey Commission.

obeisances to classical liberal individualism and liberalism's idealised state. The liberal state is idealised in the sense that it is ideologically omnicompetent; at the same time it is remote and as powerless as possible where necessary. Pierre Bourdieu observes, "one cannot fully understand cultural practices unless 'culture', in the restricted, normative sense of ordinary usage, is brought back into 'culture' in the anthropological sense, and the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food" (1). Here we have not only the range of experience suggested by the word 'culture,' but more importantly Bourdieu demonstrates the inextricable interdependence of higher order judgment with taste of a more basic and humble nature within this productive social axis. Elementary material conditions cannot be written out if we are to have a complete understanding of the betrayal of entitlement felt by a generation of middle-class students—and especially not if we are to understand where today's students stand, those allowed access to higher education, and if we are to better understand the social role of the university in the post-Cold War present.

The dilemma, for advocates of culture and higher education, is represented, for example, by the socially wide-spread notion that immaterial, subjective knowledge and objective knowledge are somehow radically separate and antagonistic categories; the dilemma is further complicated by the assumption that one form of knowledge (practiced exclusively in certain disciplines) translates directly into social benefits, and the latter form (practiced in the humanities) is derivative and dispensable. The Canadian university is a socially situated institution; at the same time it is an enclave relatively isolated from external society. There is much more about this culture within a culture that could be regarded as objectively relevant precisely because the university is located within what is ordinarily claimed to be the realm of the real. Eyre's claim that equality of access to education is guaranteed by "real-world—and real academic—

standards” appears at first sight to acknowledge the university’s irreducibly social nature. However, the relevance of universities, in their role as dispensers of accreditation, is only ensured through the imprimatur of standards presumed to be universal and objective. Such standards are designed to appear purged of all contest, or resistance, but they scrupulously ignore systemic inequality. Crucial to this reductive, and homogenising, gesture is the attempt to bridge the divide between the real objective world, so-called, and the realm of subjective intellectual activity. This assumption that subjective knowledge and so-called objective knowledge are separate entities connected only by antagonism, and the resulting appeals to the real, objective, and material, lie behind charges that universities need to be more accountable and more relevant. Nevertheless, such encouraged assumptions, and the fallacious conclusions drawn from them, have neither been univocal nor monolithic. In fact historically, as Paul Axelrod in *Scholars and Dollars* demonstrates, there have been surprising ironies—found in unexpected quarters—with respect to assumptions about the social value and relevance of subjective knowledge and the disciplines with which it is associated.

The widespread perception, in the 50’s and 60’s, that “Universities [were] ... a crucial element in the process of generating and accumulating wealth” (214) has been substantially displaced today by a suspicion of universities throughout society. This suspicion is accompanied by what David Solway describes, for example, as “the low status of the teacher” (CBC *Ideas*, date and title unavailable). This shift in perception is driven by social and political forces, consciously manipulated, and by less easily identifiable social processes as well. Solway, discussing the attributes of the “true teacher,” points out “teachers have lost self-respect because they do not have the respect of the community around them” (CBC *Ideas*). However abstract a quality “respect” may be, as Solway points out, tangibles such as wages and promotions are

material demonstrations of both the regard of society conferred and the self-respect and “dignity” enjoyed by the teacher. The subjective valuations levelled at teachers, intellectual labour, and universities are often made on the basis of some perceived lack of objective relevance, or connection to the “real” external world. The decline of esteem for teachers and post-secondary education is a dramatic one, as A.H Halsey (writing about a similar British context) notes in *The Decline of Donnish Dominion*:

[T]he prestige of academic people in the eyes of both the politician and populace has plummeted.... The autonomy of institutions has declined, salaries have fallen, chances of promotion have decreased. The dignity of academic people and their universities ... has been assailed from without by government and from within by the corrosion of bureaucracy. (268-9)

Not surprisingly, then, the rapid expansion of Canadian universities in the 50’s and 60’s was motivated by the perception of a more or less direct correlation between higher education and the generation of material wealth. One would expect that, then as now, the private sector would instead value specialised training as having most utility. In fact, surprisingly, “[i]n virtually every major industry and commercial enterprise, businessmen were firm in their conviction that intensive student exposure to the liberal arts was as vital to the well-being of the economy as was specific professional training” (Axelrod; 106). Axelrod finds that from 1958-1965 “business saw no contradiction between the potential value of practical and non-practical training” (106). Furthermore, the private sector was very much interested in what E.D. Hirsch disparages (CBC *Ideas*) as “process.” Hirsch instead privileges “content”: in contrast, the president of Bell Telephone declared that “[e]ducation—should be primarily concerned with teaching *how to learn*” (107; emphasis added). Historically, then, the autonomy of universities and academic freedom have been underwritten by the perception that intellectual skills have precedence over specific content. Today, on the other hand, while lip service is still paid to the importance of critical thinking, creativity, imagination, and the intellectual flexibility necessary to meet new social challenges, the corporate

sector in Canada is more likely to materially support them within the narrow disciplinary confines of a college of Commerce. Support for the humanities, where it exists, is tied to their role as handmaid to more specialised training in a select number of professions. More importantly, today demands for 'utility' and 'relevance' from universities have been extended far beyond the mere national or local to conscript them into the ideological service of globalisation.

3. The Idea of the Autonomous University: from Academic Autonomy to Economic Accountability

Axelrod finds that corporations and private sector donors in the 50's and 60's generally supported the autonomy of universities—however this is autonomy with a not-unexpected inflection. *The Corporate Case for Giving to Higher Education, 1957*, demonstrates that the autonomy of universities and knowledge production was generally seen to reflect a structural symmetry with the dominant economic system: “free enterprise in education is a natural corollary of free enterprise in industry and commerce” (38). Knowledge was equated with capital to such an extent that it was seen by some as the “only real capital today” (109). While the corporate world saw knowledge as a “capital investment,” an “overhead cost,” it was, however, satisfied to leave the content of arts courses to the institutions themselves (109). At the same time it viewed such courses “as essential” to managerial skills (109). Except for some occasional “strong statements ... delivered on the need for schools and universities to teach the value and superiority of free-enterprise ideology” (109), businessmen were satisfied that while there was an apparent “demand for educated citizens,” and as long as those citizens were apparently “more productive,” then content was the prerogative of the schools (110). However, by the beginning of the 70's “economists adjusted their models” to reflect the reality of high inflation and growing unemployment (216); governments and corporate donors on their part responded with fiscal restraint, and society generally began to question the escalating costs of education. The idea of the autonomous university would soon be superseded by calls for accountability, relevance, practicality, and a more direct connection to the market.

Current demands that there be a direct connection between universities and the market are predicated on the cynical claim that the market in all its aspects is a

concrete, objective fact, when in fact the market infiltrates the full range of human experience from the most basic concrete necessity to the highest order cognitive activities that produce abstractions. It is from the cognitive realm of ideas that the ideologically motivated claim about the concreteness of the market is promulgated. In liberal democracies the prevalent assumption that economic forces are an objective fact, is an assumption that results from confusing “economics” as a structured system of ideas with the effects those ideas have in real social interactions—and, it is necessary to add, the effects those ideas have in conflict with competing ideas and alternatives is often left out. This system of ideas called “economic forces” is in effect a culture in its own right, the culture of economics and business, and is therefore a part of the superstructure itself built on the economic base. At that latter level, as Eagleton reminds us, “the commodity is incapable of generating a sufficiently legitimating ideology of its own” (375). Therefore, this culture is an indispensable component of those legitimating ideological elements the commodity retains from high bourgeois culture, and one that is abstracted away from the material economic foundation.

However, this does not mean that the category of ‘economic forces’ is dismissed or simply rejected somehow because it is concrete and not abstract. It is not rejected because it is perceived to be objective fact in opposition to a supposedly incorrect notion that the economic is purely abstract. Marx rejects neither category in favour of the other, but rather conceives of the dialectical relationship between the two and the crucial importance of perception itself in this dynamic interchange. In the preface to the *Grundrisse*, Marx clarifies the subtle relationship between the concrete and the abstract. Peter Burger notes an important distinction Marx establishes between the validity of abstract categories, “valid ... for all epochs’ and the *perception* of this general validity” (Burger, 16; *Grundrisse*, 105). The validity of abstract categories does not reside in these categories in themselves, but rather in the objectifications of

thought. “[A]bstract definitions lead to a reproduction of the concrete in the course of thinking. Hegel thus fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the result of thought concentrated and absorbed in itself ... whereas the method of mounting from the abstract to the concrete is only that whereby thought appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete,” Marx argues (385). The object and subject are not discrete categories produced in solipsistic isolation; rather the relationship between the concrete and abstract, mediated through perception, is the “product of historical conditions” (390): “It is Marx’s contention that conditions must have unfolded historically for that perception to become possible” (Burger 16). In Marx’s words:

This example of labour strikingly illustrates how even the most abstract categories, in spite of their validity for all epochs—because of their abstract nature—are yet in the precise terms of this abstraction themselves as much the product of historical conditions and possess their full validity in respect of and within these conditions (390).

The aforementioned “confusion” reproduces a paradox in capital itself as noted by Marx: “it was a great advance when the manufacturing or commercial system located the source of wealth not in the object but in subjective activity—commerce and manufacture—while nevertheless still conceiving this activity, in a limited way, as money-making” (388). That is to say, bourgeois economics located wealth in subjective activity at the same time as it placed “wealth quite objectively outside itself in money” (388). In this way the false dichotomy of subject and object, the abstract and concrete, represents an opportunity for change arising out of the conflict between labour as subjective activity and the objectification of that labour “so that it becomes a product alien to” the labourer; in other words, “labour-power, in the form of a subjective source of wealth which is abstract, exists merely in the physical body of the worker, and is separated from its own means of objectification and realization” (*Capital*. I. 716). In terms of higher education debates, this conflict is manifest in the realm of appearances in the falsely conceived opposition between subjective and objective knowledge. A

false dichotomy between subject and object is complicated by capital's appropriation of labour-power from its "means of objectification," the subjective activity of the worker, and by the alienation of labour from labour: "labour ... appropriated by the capitalist, and incorporated with capital, it now, in the course of the process, constantly objectifies itself so that it becomes a product alien to him" (716).

Christopher J. Arthur, in "Value, Labour and Negativity," notes that the process of exploitation "depends on a process of inversion" of subject and object such that "the real subject of the process [becomes] ... capital" (25; *Capital*, 425). In this way, potential energy for change builds in the "repressed subjectivity of the workers [which] remains a threat to capital's purposes" (30). For Arthur, the exploitation of labour is less a matter of "labour creating something *positive*, namely value," which is subsequently appropriated to the purposes of capital accumulation. Rather, it is a "process of *negation*" that lies "behind the positivity of value" (31): "capital is the subject of production, producing above all itself, while labour is negatively posited as its sublated foundation" (35). Arthur's "labour theory of value as a dialectic of negativity" in effect represents a negation of a negation as capital "accumulation realises itself only by negating that which resists the valorisation process, labour as 'not-value'" (31). Spivak empowers the Hegelian dialectical moment of sublation (negation of negation), such as Arthur's here, deconstructively in order to exploit the indeterminacies such moments generate. This poststructuralist strategy, ultimately an appeal to the analytical importance of what Marx referred to as the total or expanded form of value, is discussed at various points in this dissertation (for example, Chpt. 4.1.192 and Conclusion, 331).

It is no wonder there came to be so much distrust outside of university walls for educational institutions that by definition, at least historically, are social locations in which ideas are produced, circulated, and, all too often, hoarded. And it is no wonder that this distrust is grounded in the encouraged assumption that intellectual labour is

always directly convertible into specific employment, and that there is, or should be, an identifiably direct causal link between any given unit of intellectual activity—usually produced in some kind of disciplinary isolation—and some measurable unit of economic wealth. However, if Canadians in the 50's generally assumed that universities were crucial engines for “generating ... wealth,” nevertheless, the mechanisms and connections between academic processes and external economic forces were poorly understood. Axelrod demonstrates that regulating post-secondary expansion according to market forces, “the market force of social demand or enrolment pressure,” essentially failed as a consequence of such a lack of understanding: “[t]he ... problem was the inability of universities in ‘free enterprise’ economies to respond to the vicissitudes of the market itself” (216). And governments too failed to provide sufficient direction. Axelrod notes, for example, the federal government’s “refusal to ... establish an industrial strategy” in Canada, and the government of Ontario’s failure to “assert authority” over the “extradepartmental agencies” established, after all, as a way for government to appear limited and non-interventionist in a “free-enterprise society” (217). Even so, in our social context where economic speculations, and speculators, increasingly influence our lives, effective achievement of such divination is, for this reason alone, dubious at best. Halsey, writing about a British experience, exposes the poverty of such strategies: the “[c]ontemporary enthusiasm for the use of the market disguises a politics which [otherwise] permits a wide range of alternatives” (264). One proven alternative, noted by one of Axelrod’s sources, is the “‘massive educational planning’” such as that exercised by Sweden and France (217).

Axelrod’s observation that the (relative) “autonomy” of the schools was assumed to be commensurate with the free-enterprise economy outside the academy walls, would seem to preclude the kind of state interference—that is the kind of centralised state planning noted above—that would be necessary to meet calls for

“accountability” and “relevance.” Such interference would appear to represent an encroachment on that autonomy, and would therefore be inconsistent with and antithetical to, one would assume, the ideology of classical liberalism—as Axelrod suggests (217). For Axelrod, then, the “dilemma” of the universities is a consequence of the tension—the contradiction—between classical liberalism’s desire for “limited government” and unfettered individualism on the one hand, and the need for the government intervention through state planning necessary to anticipate and meet projected labour requirements on the other (218). This is the same paradox facing the Massey Commission as well, as it attempted to improve the fortunes of high culture and the universities—ironically by “pitt[ing] itself against business and technology ... [in favour of] the humanistic values of high culture” (Litt 249). The conflict between the desire of institutions for autonomy and calls from without (and often from within) for universities to be accountable remains a central one in debates focused on universities in Canada today.

4. Canada and Britain: Class Conflict, Mass Education, and the “Proletarianization” of Knowledge Workers

Arguably, one of the more important of Axelrod's claims is that the social structure in Canada is defined by class disparity and that universities are moulded by this fact even as they play in their turn a crucial role in maintaining and reinforcing class structure:

[A] class-divided society continues to perpetuate elitism in the university; an unstable economy removes any guarantee of productive employment for graduates; and a consumerist, essentially anti-intellectual culture, fed by the mass media and shaped by capitalist values, has sullied the quality of higher education itself. (218)

Many Canadians are accustomed to believe that their society is classless despite the evidence that, for one, education in the 1990s continues to shift toward greater exclusivity and reduced access for lower income groups. This diminishing access has kept in step with the massive transfer of wealth in recent decades from the lower, more populous economic social strata up to an increasingly wealthy minority; the consequence is a society increasingly under stress. For example, the federal government has in recent years relinquished a considerable amount of its responsibility for student loans to the banks. Recently (2000) the government of Canada, at the behest of banks, implemented rigorous credit checks on first-time applicants to the Federal Student Loan program, thereby seriously undermining universality and accessibility in turn.

At the same time, Canadians take for granted that Britain is a class-structured society. Yet this assumption is belied—to some extent—by the fact that there has been a partial dissolving of class barriers in Britain in the realm of higher education. Halsey notes the movement of higher education through the twentieth century from “elitist through mass to universal higher education” (19). However, while this movement

continues, “its momentum faltered” as the “post-war period ended” (19)—this observation is an important one in a Canadian context as a similar movement and hiatus has occurred in this country as well, and for similar reasons. However, Halsey also reminds us that, even as the movement toward more egalitarian access to higher education (toward an apparently utopian “universal education”) is threatened, at the same time structural disparity undermines the educational system’s functional role in an elaborate and very important compromise. Education, Halsey argues, has played a vital functional role in masking the tendency of an industrial-technological society toward greater disparity even as education reinforces and maintains that very disparity:

After the 1980s the nightmare of an educationally polarized society has become more vivid. It must be dispersed if the social order is to remain viable. Western industrial society did not break under the weight of the polarization of ownership of material capital. It was saved in part by the widening of educational opportunity. High-technology or post-capitalist society now threatens a new polarization in the ownership of cultural capital. Again education cannot be the sole antidote: but a widely inclusive educational policy seems more than ever necessary to ensure an integrated society. The question then arises of the position of the university in a vast system of higher education which maintains and extends an intellectually powerful culture and is the main agent of occupational and social placement of individuals in each new generation. (19)

While Halsey’s account clearly identifies a critical point at which class conflict occurs, and the role that education plays in defusing those conflicts, he nevertheless suspends the possibility that the sudden social transformation alluded to here—transformation produced by the “nightmare” crisis of “polarization”—could very well be socially beneficial after all. Compromise can be beguiling in any use of the term. On the positive side it represents mutual concession in the interest of resolving conflict. Nevertheless, on the negative side compromise can simply represent the conservation of disparity and conflict in the guise of reconciliation, in this case class conflict due to massive disparity. Halsey also leaves open, as suggestion only, the fact that the fragile liberal-democratic compromise between populist and elitist propositions in education, is not the only alternative for “ensur[ing] an integrated society” (19). The compromise

described here plays a crucial role in disguising the conflict necessary to liberal-democratic societies. This description not only presents an important instance of this unstable homeostasis, but Halsey also demonstrates its renewed importance in the recent shift from “material” to “cultural capital”—cultural capital as that which is crucially at stake in this allegedly post-industrial, information age.

For John Guillory, as he rethinks the debate over canon formation, cultural capital not only “presupposes the concept of capital,” but it also “foregrounds the category of class” (6). For Guillory, the problem of canon formation is “a problem of access to the means of literary production and consumption” (ix); that is to say, it is primarily a problem of “the distribution of cultural capital” (6). More importantly, it is the school (rather than canonical authors) that plays the largest role in “the reproduction of the social order” (ix). “[T]he distribution of cultural capital in such an institution as the school reproduces the structure of social relations, a structure of complex and ramifying inequality” (6). Guillory seeks “to make visible the relative absence of class as a working category of analysis” (viii). He presents a nuanced account of the role of class as it “determines ... access to the means of literary production, and the system regulating such access” (ix).

If for Halsey the necessity of “a widely inclusive educational policy” (19) is clear, the details of its realisation in the contemporary context, even as capital seeks for maximum global economic penetration and “ownership of cultural capital” (19), are not clear at all. There is, however, Halsey’s suggestive reference to an imagined, egalitarian “universal education.” Given that the homeostasis described above—the liberal-democratic compromise—is not stable and is intent on refusing such a proposal, then it would appear that Halsey is placing the compromise between elitism and populism itself in brackets. In Halsey’s analysis, the details of an alternative are merely suggested by an imagined “universal education” in which “‘the key profession’ of

academics” is not so much a discrete entity isolated within “the context of universal education” (19), but rather a social space itself radically opened up to interpenetration across classes and fluid interchange between its institutions with education as the catalyst⁸:

The traditional and familiar face of the university could vanish under the manifold forms of a *learning society*. But the essential idea of a university will remain and find new expressions ... *with new structures* ... (19; emphasis added)

Again, the details of how a “learning society” might come about, and what form “new structures” might take are not developed here, and we need to determine what the “essential idea of a university” is in today’s dynamic world. The (virtual?) computer revolution and Internet certainly suggest a technological answer to the question of how a learning society might come about. The notion of a “widely inclusive educational policy” extrapolated to the radical extent of a “universal higher education” would seem to imply a socialist paradigm; yet Halsey is dismissive of “Marxism which [since the collapse of the East bloc] leaves liberal capitalist ideologies in at least temporary command of the field of political argument” (248). The problem is not simply that Marxists are “preoccup[ied] ... with the role of intellectuals in class conflict”; rather Halsey rejects the “idea that intellectuals themselves form a class” at all (249).

In fact, it turns out that “a learning society,” as it appears to be unfolding, does not imply a more egalitarian society without disparity or elites at all. Expansion has been, in Britain as it is in Canada, driven by the perception that “higher learning produced technological advance” (107). Technological advance in industrial society has resulted in the “extending [of] knowledge, or at least its use, throughout society” (260), and a concomitant loss to the universities of their monopoly over education. In Halsey’s description, expansion in fact refers to the necessity for mass education in a

⁸ See Antonio Gramsci on the organic intellectual, capillary intellectual, hegemony etc in *Selections from Cultural Writings*.

technological society characterised by the greater mobility of the transmitters and users of knowledge, and an expanded circulation of knowledge outside the walls of the universities. He draws on Ernest Gellner's affirmation of the indispensability of "a modern national education system" to a technological society that

requires both a mobile division of labour ... and precise communication between strangers [...] The level of literacy and technical competence ... required of members of this society, if they are to be properly employable and enjoy full and effective moral citizenship, is so high that it simply cannot be provided by the kin or local units (259).

The importance of mobility, hence interchangeability or replaceability of labour, applies to the academy as it does to other social institutions: "[s]ome very great teachers and researchers may perhaps be unique and irreplaceable but the average professor ... can be replaced from outside the teaching profession ... with little, if any loss" (261). Universities are indispensable because they have become gatekeepers controlling access to "higher occupational positions" (261), yet dispensable in a context in which "cognitive activity" is more widely dispersed. The importance of the university and the highly educated specialist/expert to a complex technological society results in the irony that the "academic becomes both indispensable and also deprived of his [or her] former privileged position" (261). As Halsey shows, the manner in which this expansion has unfolded has resulted in a "proletarianization" of knowledge workers in universities.

Expansion has meant "graduates and cognitive activity are dispersed to all the other institutions of society--business enterprise, recreational organisations, social administration, even the family and local social groups" (261). Therefore, that which Halsey refers to as a "learning society" is nothing more than the proletarianization of knowledge workers throughout the spaces of a liberal-democratic society (in which 'democracy' and 'capitalist economics' are erroneously deployed as synonyms for each other). And it means that the universities lose their apparent monopoly over cognitive activity and cultural capital. In such a context "the university ... has become the

gatekeeper to the higher occupational positions in a complex society in which new technical elites *reshape* the class structure” (261; emphasis added)—even as the institutions themselves are being “reshaped” to maximise that process.

Halsey’s statistical analysis supports Gellner’s claim that the expansion of higher education produces privileged academic elites even as lower level knowledge workers inside the academy become proletarianised. Not surprisingly, even as “political pressure for more democratic access led to expansion of university provision,” one “paradoxical outcome has been a more elaborate pyramid of prestige with Oxford and Cambridge never more securely placed at the apex on the basis of academic merit but retaining the inheritance of ... superior social connections” (269). And not surprisingly at the same time they have been allowed to retain their “democratic,” “syndicalist” autonomy (269). The expansion of higher education follows the motions of a technological-industrial society as it forms new social hierarchies. These new hierarchies are legitimated nonetheless by a very traditional economic system empowered by new technology. At the same time, the “populist reaction” to the crucial role of universities as gatekeepers “is to demand greater ‘equality’, usually meaning educational expansion, as a defence against social exclusion” (261). Perhaps a distinction should be made between ‘the demand for greater equality’ as an incipient egalitarianism on the one hand, and self-interest on a mass scale on the other. Nevertheless, this conflict between an egalitarian tendency and a systemic self-correcting tendency toward social disparity is not unrelated to the dilemma noted by Axelrod: the contradictory tension represented by classical liberalism’s desire for “‘limited government’” and individualism on the one hand, and the need for the state planning necessary to divine and meet projected labour requirements on the other (218).

While Halsey is sceptical of a Marxist egalitarianism, he is also critical of claims that privilege the power of the market to determine the organisation, priorities, and needs of the educational system. He rejects Douglas Hague's call for "the extensive, indeed exclusive, use of the market" (261) as the instrument of reform for higher education in order to break what Hague sees as the university "monopoly" of research resources such as libraries or laboratories, and a university monopoly over certification. Such calls for the privatisation and *extending* of the proprietorial functions of universities, functions such as accreditation, to "any other 'knowledge business'" are often presented in a populist guise, but they are just as often accompanied by a rejection of greater access through affirmative action--and in fact Hague considers universities to be "too egalitarian" (266).

Expanding the education system, under whatever auspices, has found new life in Britain in the interest of "competitive advantage" as the country moves towards "integration with continental Europe" (109). However, expansion thus far finds Britain with a hierarchical system increasingly like that of the USA. Institutions are split between "the upper part in a hierarchy of prestige ... more fully based on arcane knowledge, more involved in peer judgement, more independent of clientele demands, and related market forces. The bottom half ... is committed to introductory materials that many can teach, [and is] more dependent on student reaction than peer approval, and [is] heavily driven by market demands" (267). This split between a consumer model of academics tied to market demands and an elite knowledge for its own sake, is the form that proletarianisation has taken. In Britain, Oxford and Cambridge hold positions of primacy over the redbricks and polytechnics. Whereas in Canada unionisation and standardised pay scales perhaps help to hold such a split in abeyance, there nevertheless exists a hierarchy, for example, between several large provincial universities in Ontario, with the University of Toronto maintaining imperial

primacy among those, and the rest of the nation. As Halsey's source, Burton Clark, points out, this represents a tension between "a system of higher education that simultaneously seeks to function under a populist definition of equality, where all are admitted, and also tries to serve the [exclusive] gods of excellence in the creation and transmission of all rarefied bodies of knowledge" (267). More than that, this is also a struggle between the desire of governments to maintain what is in effect a fiction of equality of access and the tendency toward exclusivity in the name of excellence. To be fair to governments, it is not as necessary for the private sector or corporate sponsors and donors to maintain such appearances of fairness.

Halsey rightly argues that the "demand for expansion ... is legitimate socially because modern citizenship requires access on fair terms to the cultural inheritance; and ... legitimate economically because a viable modern economy requires a labour force ... equipped to use advanced technology" (269) (that is if we reduce cognitive activity and cultural capital to the merely technological). Beyond the question of what constitutes a cultural heritage and what institutions and cultural practices (formal or otherwise) outside of universities might transmit such a range of knowledges, the question of "access on *fair terms*" is very much at issue; however, these considerations are not unrelated, and class remains a primary factor determining access to higher education in class structured societies. Yet Halsey claims, "intellectuals, academic or other, are not a class" (256); nevertheless he finds that they are "overwhelmingly State employees" (256). This suggests that they are, if nothing else, overwhelmingly members of the professional-managerial class even if they are "far too differentiated by salary and political opinion to act together" (256). The problem of class is an important one in Marxist thought, one often claimed to be under-theorised in Marx. Nevertheless, according to Marx this "act[ing] together" is one of the requirements that constitutes a class.

Access to higher education is more open to members of the middle-class than the “manual” class: “[f]or social classes the general tendency for inequality of educational attainment to persist in relative terms is well documented” (102). Halsey’s research suggests that prestigious universities in France, the USA, and Japan “have actually narrowed their recruitment on to the upper echelons of the professional, managerial, and bourgeois classes” (102). On the other hand, in Britain, data reveals that proportionally “those entering higher education from manual working families have *relatively* increased by comparison with those from the professional and managerial classes” (102; emphasis in original). However, while “evidence of polarization so far is inconclusive,” Halsey plausibly suggests that the shift from grants to loans and the “logic of education as a positional good might well produce greater class inequality in British higher education in the future” (103). Again, the fact remains that there exists in Britain a “pyramid of prestige, with Oxford and Cambridge never more securely placed at the apex” (269). However, the British system increasingly emulates an American model with an increasing shift in this direction in Canada as well.

Ultimately, for Halsey, the problem at its foundations is one of democracy and more or less egalitarian access in an environment of contest between forces of “exclusion” on the one side, and the “demand [for] greater ‘equality’” from other quarters. To Raymond Williams’ radical claim that “‘art and thought ... belong ... *to the people as a whole*’” (251; emphasis in original), Halsey responds by asking: “[t]his is the problem—ideas by whom? In whose interest is high intellectual work carried on?” (251). This is an important qualification; yet he is not entirely pessimistic about Williams’ claim. However, an “intelligentsia for the people” is only possible if just one formidable “condition” is met: “that the democratic state [itself] is for ‘the people as a whole’” (257). Halsey optimistically suggests that, while expansion takes place in the context of these competing forces, the present “unfinished program of expansion in

higher education may turn out to be a vital foundation for such a society” (257). Again, the expansion toward a “learning society,” or a “universal education,” has very different implications and tendencies in the new technological world.

Another factor that Halsey believes might bring about Williams’ “intelligentsia for the people” is that of a “completely meritocratic tendency” (256). He finds that “high professors in 1976 and 1989, though disproportionately drawn from the suburban classes, are also meritocrats” (253). At the more optimistic end of matters, this reflects an egalitarian tendency depending on the extent to which the “suburban classes” include lower social strata. At the less sanguine end it represents the enervation, or containment, of an educated, socially engaged analysis and critique, its ghettoization within enclaves of academic privilege. Guillory’s claim bears repeating here: a primary function of the school is “regulating access” to cultural capital, and consequently the “largest context for analysing the school as an institution is ... the *reproduction* of the social order, with all of its various inequities” (ix; emphasis in original). Therefore, academic institutions deploy merit in the processes that generally regulate access unequally; also universities are enlisted in such regulation. While, it is argued, merit represents the vehicle by which the lower socio-economic strata gain access to learning institutions, nevertheless, on the other hand, it also represents the tool by which access is regulated in the interests of reasserting systemic inequality. Institutions of higher learning are located at this very sensitive position in the social structure at this crucial historical juncture, and class continues to determine access to higher education in a hierarchal society stratified by disparity.⁹ This class that is “not a

⁹ Erik White, in “Wealthy better educated than poor, report shows,” cites Statistics Canada figures clearly demonstrating that postsecondary school attendance splits along class lines: “[y]oung people from low-income families are 2.5 times less likely to get a postsecondary education than those whose families are better off” (*Globe and Mail* 08 Dec. 2001, Saturday: A15). At universities the income gap is wider “with only 16.3 per cent of low-income students attending, compared with 26.1 per cent among those from middle-income families, and 39.6 per cent of students from high-income families.”

class,” as Ernst Fischer would have it, exists within that dynamic stratum that Marx identifies in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* as a “transition class.”

In “A Postmodern Encounter,” Carole Biewener, advancing a “postmodern materialist position” (71), argues, “class is a discursive category” (77). She resists the reduction of the entire diverse Marxist tradition to its modernist stream, and the subsequent rejection by some feminist critics of what they see as an Enlightenment project that “offers languages of laws and systemic dynamics, of teleologies and inevitabilities, of totalising narratives” (76). Biewener’s postmodern materialism instead “recognizes the contextuality of truth, that does not begin with structural ontologies from which agency and/or systemic dynamics are inferred or deduced, and that is not economic” (76). Class here is “not a stable universal, or unitary relation; nor is it an ontologically pregiven category or relation. Rather, class is a discursive category with multiple meanings, constructions, and embodiments” (77). That Marx himself did not conceive of class as stable, unitary, or universal can be seen in his analysis of the problem of class following the failed revolution of 1848. Biewener’s “postmodern or poststructuralist” position seeks to correct “traditional” Marxism’s “Cartesian notion of subjectivity in which agents have a unitary and given class identity” (87). The problem is that “other subject positions and identities are subsumed to it” (87).

According to Biewener, modernist Marxism, as an enlightenment project, “reduce[s] human subjectivity to that of labouring subjects” narrowly defined (77). Biewener advocates a decentering of class categories in order to open class up to include, for example, gendered work not valued by Marxist discourse. However valuable this might appear, there are unfortunate consequences. The claim for decentering class is not inordinate in and of itself: “questions of subjectivity and agency remain open, contingent, and contextual ... [with] subjects ... understood as having multiple, fragmented, and contradictory identities that may be constituted by class

processes in many different ways” (87). However, the problem arises out of what may be termed the question of structural causation. Biewener suggests that her “thin’ definition of class ... does *not* presume that there are any consistent or *necessary connections* between class processes and groups or subjects” (37; emphasis added). Therefore, “Leftists do not have to insist that effective class politics is linked to the agency of any one well-defined group, such as ‘the working class.’ Struggle over class is not seen ... as the privileged domain of the proletariat” (81). Biewener’s claim that class struggle can be engaged through, and at, a “variety of class modalities and sites” (81) seems more than reasonable as well. On the other hand, are all class positions, however fragmentary and multiple they may be, created equal? Clearly not. Why does Marx locate the revolutionary class with the proletariat? The more obvious answer is of course suggested by Biewener’s use of the word “privileged” to describe a class that is defined by the very fact that it is deprived in almost every sense. A deprived condition is not a natural fact for an underclass in highly technological societies, but arises out of structures of exploitation.

Marx may at some level of philosophical analysis reduce the human to a transcendental essence, the labouring subject. Nevertheless, he expends considerable critical energy displacing any unitary origin.¹⁰ His analysis of the failed French revolution of 1848 suggests that he reduces class fractions (to bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and proletariat) more for the purposes of analysis than a failure to imagine something more complex, as the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* clearly demonstrates. His analysis of the way in which class antagonisms are mediated

¹⁰ Marx explicitly rejects appeals to ultimate origins in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*: “We must avoid repeating the mistake of the political economist, who bases his explanations on some imaginary primordial condition” (323). Marx describes human social experience and its relationship with natural necessity conditioned by historical development, the “productive activity of man, through which his metabolic interchange with nature is mediated” (*Capital*. III. 955). This represents a continuum with a “realm of necessity” at one pole, and a “realm of freedom” at the other (959). Spivak demonstrates that this model of human potential open at both ends, as Marx conceives it, also resists unitary, final, or fixed origins (*CPR* 328).

through the volatile and mercurial interfaces between class fractions is, after all is said and done, less reductive than Biewener's own alternative to Marx, or Marxism's, supposed totalising capitalism: "capitalism' is not conceived of as a systemic, totalising entity, but rather as local, dispersed, partial, and uncentered" (Biewener 81. See footnote eleven below for David Byrne's description of how unstable, permeable, and decentred class demarcations are in today's "postmodern" context, and the continued relevance of Marx's analysis.) Biewener's claim for the local, dispersed, and decentred is, as with all of liberalism's treats and preferments, distributed unequally. Class mobility is much more fluid and achievable for certain classes than for others for whom class mobility is far more static, as Byrne demonstrates. Such disparities are much more glaring when extended to include the global context. Tellingly, Biewener makes no mention of global factors.

Biewener introduces the example of Pam, a woman "living and working" in Australia. In her description Pam is presumably free to do so. However, according to this account, Pam is a married woman race and class neutral, and, marked only by gender: "Pam is not depicted [by researcher Jenny Cameron] as a victimized subject who is exploited and dominated, but as a 'subject who is activated and enabled through doing domestic work'" (89). If, instead of Pam, we consider a poor immigrant woman of colour locked up—literally—for sixteen to eighteen hours a day in a clothing factory in California or Montreal, then perhaps we move much closer to a class position that may be legitimately referred to as "unitary and given" in the sense that class boundaries for its members are very much less permeable, and class mobility much more restricted than for the postindustrial service class described by Byrne. Biewener's search for an approach in which there "are no villains and no victims" (89) concurs with today's right wing backlash against victimhood; however, the materialism in her postmodern-materialism is undermined as a consequence. At the same time,

Biewener's postmodern suspicion of what Readings refers to as a "metaphysics of redemption," or Marxism's revolutionary teleology, is betrayed in an unfortunate choice of language as well. While she claims an interest in "social transformation," in polite company a euphemism for revolution, she is more interested in a "perspective ... clearly more *modest* with respect to the knowledges, powers, and politics it comes out of" (90; emphasis added). The word repeated again, this perspective is "partial and nonhegemonic ... in its decentred modesty" (90). Given the history of the word 'modesty' in the western patriarchal tradition, we can assume that Biewener's use of it is strategically subversive; however, this strategy undermines a poststructuralism somewhat too Austenean in its articulation. A moderate, restrained, or diffident materialism certainly does not work that well either.

This enervation of Marxism's vigorous activism is betrayed in the claim that Pam is less the victim of exploitation than one who is "activated and enabled through doing domestic work" (89). This orthodox, yet valuable, feminist claim that socially marginalised work gendered female is the work of an empowered agent is not advanced in any way by the postmodern inflection. Biewener favourably cites Baudrillard's criticism of Marxism's reduction of "human subjectivity to that of labouring subjects" (77); however, her perspective on exploitation, hence radical materialism, begins to sound more like Baudrillard's claim that in the "changed" postmodern episteme "the fundamental law of ... society is not the law of exploitation, but the *code of normality*" (121). As a consequence Biewener's perspective has far more of postmodernism's bourgeois equanimity to it than materialist radicalism. In contrast, I have chosen Spivak in part because of her immodest approach to a deconstructive Marxist argument. More importantly, she advances many of the claims Biewener argues for without eliding the fact of exploitation in both the local and global division of labour, as Biewener does. Spivak does this without disempowering the subaltern

female gendered subject, and, unlike Biewener, she always factors into her analysis her own contradictory situation in the academic world: as a high profile academic in the West whose origins are nevertheless in the cultural margins, her situation is both marginal and privileged; at the same time, her position is privileged within the marginal culture she comes from and writes about. In fact, her articulation of the total or expanded form of value extends the critical utility of value in ways that Biewener's postmodernism will not.

Ernst Fischer paraphrases Marx on the petty bourgeoisie as "the 'transition' class which wants to reconcile the irreconcilable, which has one foot on one side of the fence and one on the other, a class which is contradiction incarnate—in short a class which has ceased to be one" (82; *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, 122). However, it is not the case at all that a transitional class has ceased to be one; rather, the critical point is what a transitional class at a time of crisis has the potential to become, and has the potential to achieve. The explanatory power of even the primary texts of Marxism is not lost in the contemporary "postmodern," nor is Marxism irrelevant in representing the paradoxical situation of the academic class within this context of crisis (let alone the multitude of subsequent thinkers that have extended the implications of Marx's analysis to speak to their own times and contexts). Fischer notes that for Marx, while "the crystalization of classes, [yields] highly resistant and effective social formations" (81), nevertheless they are characteristically heterogeneous and in a state of flux. As Marx argues, "the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here [19th century Britain] obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere" (*Capital III*. 1959. 862-3). It may be that intellectuals are not a class unto themselves, particularly if class stratification is seen to be discretely layered in vertical fashion from top to bottom; nevertheless, if class strata are seen in greater complexity on more than one axis, then even today academics and intellectuals are associated

with mercurial transition classes. Marx makes the distinction between a “class in itself,” and a “class for itself” (Fischer 83; *Eighteenth Brumaire, Selected Works* 170-71), that is to say, groups “capable of enforcing their class interest in their own name” (*Eighteenth Brumaire* 171). Knowledge workers are uniquely situated at a crucial time and space where “social placement” is either negotiated deliberately, or worked through at deeper levels of social impulse. There may be a sense in which knowledge workers may be “too differentiated ... to act together,” as Halsey argues; however, evidence suggests that they are in fact members of a class for itself. He may very well underestimate their ability to act together.¹¹ There are other elements in Marx’s analysis of what constitutes a class that can be applied to academics in addition to what Halsey isolates here. More importantly, Marx’s analysis is open-ended precisely

¹¹ David Byrne, in “Class, tax and spending,” concurs that the new post-industrial upper class in Britain is highly differentiated; however there is “considerable intersection” between the bourgeois and upper-service class elements of this class, and there is more overlap between sub-categories such as between “grand and petit elements,” and between public and private. For example, the “public sector upper service class is more discrete but there is some movement between it and all of the private sector upper service class and the petit and grand bourgeoisie. Here intersection means that there are people who belong to both groups—partners in firms of solicitors, accountants, surveyors etc. are both higher service and petit-bourgeois. Movement means that individuals can change position—University Vice Chancellors and retired senior Civil Servants become Chairs or Directors of large corporations—local authority planners go to work for property companies” (162). And as Byrne argues, these class fractions are not just incidentally similar, but rather “increasingly they are a class for itself and ‘New Labour’ is their prime political agent” (162). This new class “not so much emerging as emerged ... mix socially, send their children to the same schools and Universities, and ... move fairly seamlessly from the public to the private sector whilst engaging to a considerable degree in collapsing the boundaries between those sectors” (163). Who loses in this “reconstitut[ion]” of class lines are “the old petit bourgeoisie who remain essentially business operatives,” and the old industrial working class whose political space is absorbed by the “comprador service classes ... [who are] key agents in the continued dispossession and exploitation of that class and its successors” (163). Of course, this hegemonic transition has a global dimension as well. As Byrne notes, class restructuring is in part a case of managing definitions, or is facilitated by language management. The term “middle-income” is used, as it is in Canada, to describe “people who are enormously affluent”; at the same time the tax burden for the lower quintiles have “increased considerably” (164). This example demonstrates the fluidity of class demarcations, and exposes some implications for knowledge workers in this country where there is increased pressure to blur the lines between public and private. While class structures are dynamic and plastic, the category of class continues to have descriptive power particularly in a context in which certain privileged groups with fluid class mobility have the ability to occupy intersecting positions. At the same time, this contrasts considerably with those groups for whom class position is static, and mobility of any kind is virtually impossible. Byrne’s description suggests that, even as capital empowered by technology reorganises class structure, universities continue to facilitate access and class mobility for the privileged.

in order not to foreclose on the complexities of a dynamic social class structure with great potential for change arising out of contradiction.

David Fernbach's 1979 translation of *Capital III* does not convey the sense of ambiguity and the dynamic fluidity of class demarcations quite as dramatically as the much earlier Moore and Aveling translation of 1906 does (1959 edition). Fernbach reads thus: "this class articulation does not emerge in pure form. Here, too, middle and transitional levels always conceal the boundaries" (*Capital III*. 1025). The Moore and Aveling translation¹² better captures the sense of fluid unpredictability, and more importantly the charge of revolutionary content mediated through the contradictory ambiguities of the petty bourgeoisie as a transitional class in a context of dramatic class struggle. In the *Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx locates the failure of the 1848 revolution in large part in the alliance between the "democratic claims of the petty bourgeoisie" and the "social demands" of a revolutionary proletariat in the formation of a social democratic program (119). In this way the "revolutionary point" of the proletariat is broken, neutralised, even as the "political form" of the petty bourgeoisie is given a "socialist ... thrust"; however, instead of "doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labour," the social democratic compromise only "weaken[s] their antagonism" in the attempt to "transform ... it into harmony" (119). In this way social transformation is kept within the "bounds of the petty bourgeoisie" (119). Ultimately, working-class demands are subordinated to the aims of middle-class liberalism as the bourgeoisie proper moved to eliminate this social democratic compromise, their interests being better served by liberal authoritarianism guaranteed by the bourgeois emperor, Louis Bonaparte. The determining factor, Marx argues, lies in the distinction between a class "capable of enforcing their class interests in their own name" and one that "must be

¹² Marx, Karl. *Capital: a Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*. Trans Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Ed Frederick Engels. Volume Three. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959.

represented" (171). Importantly, in the drama of 1848, what determines this problem of representation is not just "material interest and social position" (120). While the individual representatives of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie likely vary considerably in terms of education and social position, what they do share still does not enable them to transcend the material conditions of the transition class they represent. The charge of revolutionary content embodied in social and political contradiction is paralleled in the challenge of translating theory into practice; and here, in terms of the relationship between the represented and their representatives, Marx places the emphasis on education:

According to their education and individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the *political* and *literary representatives* of a class and the class they represent (emphasis in original; 120).

The *Eighteenth Brumaire* works an extended analogy between language and the translation of theory into revolutionary practice (particularly its tendentious possibilities, and even through the higher aesthetic functions of language, "literary" and "poet[ic]"). Revolution, just as a newly learned language when finally internalised needs no translation back into the mother tongue (96), must transcend earlier historical forms; its "phrase" and "poetry" grasps the conditions of its own context in order to "arrive at its own [contemporary] content" (98). In the well known passage, "[e]arlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase" (98). For Marx, at moments of explosive social and political turmoil, in which the contradictions between the forces of reaction

and the forces of social transformation—the “two extremes, capital and wage labour”—are most vulnerable and dynamic, the literary and poetic functions of language are crucial tools for exploiting the provisional and shifting nature of class demarcation. However, this in turn depends on the material conditions and educational preparedness of the revolutionary classes. At the point of greatest potential, the February days of 1848, there “was thus indicated the general content of the modern revolution, a content which was in most singular contradiction to everything that, with the material available, with the degree of education attained by the masses, under the given circumstances and relations, could be immediately realised in practice” (101). The productive indeterminacy that exists between the study of aesthetic representation inside universities and the problem of translating that study into political representation outside the walls of universities is discussed further in Chapter Five, part five as well as in the conclusion to this dissertation.

Intellectuals, as Halsey finds them, are predominantly from these transitional class formations, and the bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie in Marx’s analysis is a revolutionising force that “cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production” to the extent of revolutionising “the whole relations of society” (“Communist Manifesto,” *Selected Works* 38). During heightened revolutionary periods “a portion of the bourgeoisie ideologists” goes over to the revolutionary class (44). The fact that class formations are characterised by dynamic instability and the potential for radical change—“All that is solid melts into air” (38)—destabilises appeals to transcendental absolutes or foundationalist arguments. The teleological unfolding of history aside, such a conception strikingly resonates with “postmodern” descriptions of the contemporary. However, Biewener’s example demonstrates the tendency that certain postmodernist

criticism, working poststructuralist strategies, has to enervate a radical Marxist materialism devoted to substantial social transformation.

Given that we do in fact inhabit societies hierarchically structured by class, to ask whether or not academic workers constitute a class is a non-starter. That is to say, the question is incidental to the manifest ambiguity and dynamic provisionality of class formations, particularly at those vulnerable “middle and intermediate strata [that] ... obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere,” and particularly in a context of momentous, even catastrophic, environmental and social change. As contradiction and crisis builds everywhere around us, and finds a focus in universities as producers of marketable knowledge, the productive instability of what Marx refers to as transitional classes also carries a charge of revolutionary content at a historical moment when progressive social transformation is desperately needed. Consequently, the more important question is what are the *shifting* characteristics of the class to which knowledge workers belong? How do class characteristics condition the crucial role that academics play as gatekeepers between those whom merit empowers through access to knowledge, and those that merit disempowers through all the discriminating mechanisms of institutionalised access?

Chapter Two: Higher Education in Canada: Redemptive Politics and Its Canadian Critics

Hegel thus fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the result of thought concentrated and absorbed in itself, itself its own motive power, whereas the method of mounting from the abstract to the concrete is only that whereby thought appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete. In no way the genesis of the concrete itself. (*Grundrisse*; 101)

In the history of the revolutions of a science, every upheaval in the theoretical practice is correlated with a transformation in the definition of the object, and therefore with a difference which can be assigned to the *object* of the theory itself. Louis Althusser (*Reading Capital*; 155)

[H]istory is larger than personal goodwill, and we must learn to be responsible as we must study to be political. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*CPR*; 378)

1. Academic Value: “Transvaluing” National, Cultural, And Social Space

Forty-six years after the Massey Commission assured stable funding for higher education, the inter-relationship between cultural production, social policy, and the university is again subject to radical restructuring.¹ Peter Emberley’s charge that the

¹ This restructuring is multidimensional. However, the \$3 billion Canadian governments slashed from higher education between 1993 and 1998 is one of the more dramatic indicators of its magnitude (*Maclean’s* 13 Mar 00). Predictably, given the political climate, restructuring will disadvantage the Humanities (in my province at least). SSHRC recently established funding for a significant number of special research chairs to be distributed nationally. Of the 39 allotted to Saskatchewan’s two universities, 5 of these will be *split* between the social sciences and the humanities. If this can be taken as symptomatic, then this represents a deprivileging of an enormous segment of human intellectual endeavour by disproportionately privileging another. This reflects a partiality for knowledge presumed to be objective and therefore socially relevant, and a suspicion of subjective knowledge generally presumed to be discrete from the objective and therefore useless. What social forces drive such notions, and whose interests are being served? What are we to make of, program officer for SSHRC, Craig McNaughton’s response to a “peripheral slam against” the Council: “council members and council staff ... make very sure that ‘personal and ideological backscratching’ have nothing at all to do with the research grants awarded” (“No mere façade.” *Globe and Mail* 15 March, 2002, A14). Does this represent a cool draft

Canadian public does not appreciate the “massive” social implications of such “re-engineering” underscores the need to investigate this change. From the rarefied and specialised deployments of conceptions of value in academic discourses, to the demands of “client” students for “learner satisfaction,” to the pronouncements of politicians in the public sphere who promise to deliver “value for the money” (the former Harris Government of Ontario), social constructions of value frame debate and seek to legitimate the forces seeking to remodel the Canadian university.

This chapter investigates currently circulating concepts of “value,” and considers ‘culture’ precisely because it remains a crucial element in the “production, exchange, [and] distribution” of symbolic capital, what John Guillory follows Pierre Bourdieu in calling “cultural capital” (viii). I address the declining market value and social value of intellectual labour as practised in the Canadian university in a context of transnational corporatism. The late Bill Readings argues, “the decline of the nation-state that accompanies the globalization of the world economy means that the notion of culture no longer matters” (169). That is to say, the notion of culture no longer functions as the “symbolic and political counterpart to the project of economic integration pursued by the capitalist nation-state ... Economic integration no longer needs to run along channels hollowed out by national culture” (169); furthermore, the “nation-state no longer exists as the cultural form in which the ... subject might find him or herself authoritatively reflected” (172). Consequently, Readings calls for “a rethinking of the question of value” (127).

According to Readings, the idea of culture as the ideological core of the university is being replaced by the non-referential, “dereferentializing,” idea of “excellence.” Consequently the University “is losing its need to make transcendental

blowing through the cozy halls of “scholarly integrity”? That depends on how ideology is defined, who is defining it, and under what kind of pressure.

claims" (168). The discourse of excellence "brackets the question of value in favour of measurement" (119), that is, it "replaces questions of accountability or responsibility with accounting solutions" (119). "[E]xcellence names a non-referential principle that allows the maximum of uninterrupted internal administration" (120). Readings argues that in this context it is futile to hearken back nostalgically to the liberal idea of culture. However, as we shall see, Readings' is in a significant sense a liberal argument. He rejects Robert Young's deconstructive proposal that the university is both "inside and outside of the market economy ... 'a surplus that the economy cannot comprehend'" (182). Simply substituting a new philosopheme, the "idea of the supplement," Readings argues, cannot compete with the utility of excellence as an "integrating" principle between the economy and the university; for example, excellence seductively accommodates "'diversity' ... without threatening the unity of the system" (173). However, Readings' conception of a "community of dissensus" as part of a resistant strategy to "transvalue the process of dereferentialization" (490) simply reinstates a transcendental, idealist conception, and one unfortunately detached from lived social experience, as I will show.

Readings' term, "dereferentializing," has considerable explanatory utility in describing the forces that are acting on the University today. Although "excellence" is no more "dereferentializing" than any number of coded and contested ideological abstractions circulated in debates about education today—equality, access, merit, accountability, relevance, and of course value—this term, and Readings' description, precisely locates the mechanism of ideology at work in debates about higher education. Yet Readings rejects the notion that "excellence" is ideological at all: "the University [itself] is no longer primarily an ideological arm of the nation-state but an autonomous bureaucratic corporation" (40); one possible future for the University, the

“University of Excellence,” must be understood as a “*bureaucratic system* rather than as the ideological apparatus that the left has traditionally considered it” (41).

The idea of culture “arises with the nation-state” (89). With the decline of the nation-state, the “notion of culture becomes effectively unthinkable” (89-90), argues Readings. The University is drifting away from its “social mission ... linked to the project of realizing a national identity” (90) and toward the possible future University of Excellence. The latter, Readings rightly insists, should be resisted. However, he rejects as well what he sees as futile attempts to revive the social mission of the University by either “reaffirming” (the conservative option) or “reinvent[ing] cultural identity” (multiculturalism) inclining instead to “abandon” the idea that the University has a social mission linked to national cultural identity. As expressed here, this “is tantamount to ceas[ing] to think the social articulation of research and teaching in terms of a *mission*” (90). In such a context, “remobilizing the critical function of the University” (170) too is futile. However, what Readings is most interested in discrediting here is not “critical function” so much as ideology-critique,² that is to say “pietistic leftism,” and ultimately Cultural Studies. The rise of Cultural Studies, with its claimed interest in “redemptive” political engagement, in his view, is proportional to the political impotence of its institutional practitioners primarily because the University “is no longer linked to the destiny of the nation-state by virtue of its role as producer, protector, and inculcator of an idea of national culture” (3).

I agree with Readings that the “dereferralization” of the technological university “opens a space” for resistance, and provides an opportunity for thinking academic practice “differently.” Of course, what that means exactly is another matter again. However, it is necessary to his argument that he overstates the complete and

² (Readings; 197-8n)

uncontested demise of the nation-state³—either as an idea or in fact—in order to mark the demise of “culture as a national ideology” (120). For the purpose of undermining the object of analysis of Cultural Studies, and its supposed pretensions to political engagement, he prefaces his argument with Theodor Adorno’s exposure of the “complicity of cultural criticism with culture” (170), and with strategic ventriloquism uses Adorno, a Marxist critic, to authorize his own claim that “the notion of culture” (Adorno 1035) be “abandon[ed]” (“For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics” 169).

Readings’ strategic appropriation of Adorno is worth looking at briefly. Adorno, in “Cultural Criticism and Society,” nowhere claims that the notion of culture be abandoned. Rather, he argues that, “the *greatest fetish* of cultural criticism is the notion of culture *as such*” (1035; emphasis added). Furthermore, he is more interested in rethinking the possibilities *for* a cultural criticism in a greatly changed modernity, and exposing the blindness of certain critical positions. Complicity is not merely a moralistic judgment levelled by Adorno at the collusion of cultural critics, but rather his essay describes instead the fundamental implication of the critical subject in an economic system that has profoundly transformed the nature of human experience itself, necessarily producing a “divorce between mental and physical work” (1035). Analysis of what is today called the information age suggests that the divide between mental and physical work has collapsed again within the space/time of global capital. This collapse is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, part 1 and in Chapter Four, part 2. The historical analogy to this separation, to be discussed shortly, is described by Guillory as the “mutual forgetting” by aesthetic discourse and political economy of their own simultaneous origin in 18th and 19th century political economy.

³ Paul Stewart and Philip Garrahan, in “Globalization, the Company and the Workplace,” argue that we “should not ignore the extent to which today’s globalization is authored by states and is primarily about *reorganizing, rather than bypassing, states*” (citing Panitch; 223).

Adorno analyses two forms of “cultural criticism”: a transcendent and an immanent criticism. However, what disappears in Readings’ argument, is that these stand relative to a third kind of critique: in Adorno’s words, “[w]hat distinguishes *dialectical* from cultural criticism is that it heightens cultural criticism until the notion of culture is itself negated, fulfilled and surmounted in one” (1037; emphasis added). What Readings reads as “abandon[ment],” Adorno writes as “negation.” That is of course negation in a certain productive sense, not annihilation. The complicity described by Adorno precludes any notion that culture be abandoned as a category.

Readings uses Adorno’s articulation here of a “negative dialectic” to authorize his claim that the notion of culture be abandoned, the culture that Adorno describes thus: “To accept culture as a whole is to deprive it of the *ferment* which is its very truth—negation” (1039 emphasis added). Rather, Adorno is most interested in the relation of cultural critics to the “actual life-process of society from which they distinguish themselves” (1034). The sense in which culture is “negated, fulfilled and surmounted” is through the dynamics of a dialectic that moves beyond “the Hegelian identity of subject and object” (1039). However, this re-inflection does not represent the abandonment of either the notion of culture or of ideology: for cultural criticism, “what is decisive ... [is] the role of ideology in social conflict” (1037). So the emphasis is on establishing a particular critical stance relative to culture at a very specific historical juncture, one characterized by “fragmentation,” “antagonism,” and the disappearance of “spontaneous” experience as the market reaches maximum penetration in every aspect of life.⁴ In this context of alienation—in the “separation of the idea from its

⁴ Nor is Adorno squeamish about using the term ‘class’ as Readings suggests the early formulators of Cultural Studies—such as Raymond Williams—supposedly were. Adorno is also unafraid of a strategic appeal to “truth,” whereas Readings is constrained by his Lyotardian suspicion of transcendentalisms (see Gerald Graff’s “Response to Bill Readings”; *New Literary History* 26:3 (1995): 493-97. pg.495).

object" (1035)—traditional distinctions between subject and object become highly problematic.

It is precisely such poststructuralist resonances in Adorno that Readings appropriates in his conception of a contemporary situation in which "the grand narrative of the University, centred on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject is no longer available to us" (9).⁵ For Adorno, a conflicted modernity, in which more and more "[un]mediated" experience is "modelled after the act of exchange" and "all difference degenerates to a nuance in the monotony of supply" (1034), leads him to observe that the products of the "exchange-relationship"—reification and ideology—are both pervasive but decentred: "ideology is not simply reducible to a partial interest. It is, as it were, equally near the centre in all its pieces" (1038). With this Readings supports his claim that today "the critique of culture as an ideology becomes obsolete, since there is no outside to cultural ideology. Culture no longer hides anything; there is nothing behind culture for ideology critique to find" (120). According to Readings, the problem then for Cultural Studies is the familiar one of containment: "its analyses of culture do have an effect, but as sites for further investment by a system that is no longer cultural in the traditional sense" (121).

⁵ As the reference to grand narratives shows, Readings' analysis is also indebted to Jean-François Lyotard as Gerald Graff notes. Another committed observer of post-secondary education in transition, Peter Emberley, in *Values Education and Technology*, looks to Jean Baudrillard for a description of the postmodern—an irony of sorts considering Emberley's antipathy toward the effects of "postmodern" theory on university culture. This is in fact not such an irony for either of these critics. Readings' articulation of the way in which excellence is dereferentialised, and is dereferentialising, has considerable affinity with Baudrillard's notion of "referential loss," and the idea that "capital as a *mode of domination*" no longer has a referent (100). In fact, for Baudrillard, labour, value, and social production, for example, are "absorbed without a trace ... into the signs that surround us" (100). As a consequence we witness "today" the "end of production," and the utter futility of class struggle and social transformation (123). Class struggle and the emancipation of labour are subject to the "symbolic violence everywhere inscribed in signs"; as a consequence, in a general context of crisis in which there "is no more referential agency" (115), there is then no need for a politics of "redemption" as Readings calls it. So in this sense, both Readings and Emberley concur with Baudrillard in their rejection of futile "redemptive metanarrative[s]" (Readings 178), in other words systemic change, and both share Baudrillard's antipathy to Marxism.

It is worth comparing Readings on excellence and Marx on value. An originary concept-metaphor of classical liberal economics is the value-form, what Marx refers to as “the ‘simple contentless form’” (Spivak 412; *Capital* 90). As Spivak argues, *Capital* begins its analysis with this concept that is “contentless yet not pure form” (*OTM* 12), and Marx’s analysis begins with this concept “before it gets fully coded into an economic system of equivalences and entailed social relations” (62). The semantic openness of value, that which lies behind its socialised “form of appearance” (*Capital*.I.128) as exchange value, Spivak argues, presents the possibility for re-coding, “reversing, displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value-coding” (63). Ben Fowkes translates this phrase⁶ as “very simple and slight in content” (90). Len Findlay, in “Composing Value: Valuing Composition,” demonstrates that Spivak’s translation, in reducing “content” to the singular and asserting an absolute absence rather than a relative absence of content (*sehr inhaltslos*), in fact “suppress[es] plurality, relationality, and difference” (“Composing Value” 15). The nuance is important. While Spivak is very much interested in advocating for difference (exposing “systemic appropriations of the unacknowledged social production of a *differential*” 63), her language betrays deconstruction’s political disengagement; whereas, Findlay argues, Marx “affirms a relative relation between plenitude and emptiness” (16). The productive indeterminacy in the translation of the “ordinary, sensuous thing,” the commodity as a use-value, into its social form of appearance, exchange-value, “a thing which transcends sensuousness” (162), opens up a space into which radical critique can insert itself and recode the social text. This opportunity arises out of the relational and differential nature of value. For this reason, we can see that Readings exaggerates the non-referential, “dereferentializing,” idea of “excellence.” On the other hand, Readings’ own gesture of disconnecting the academic commodity from history and culture threatens to

⁶ “Die Wert-form, deren fertige Gestalt die Geldform, ist sehr inhaltslos und einfach”

reinstates a transcendental, idealist conception. None of the coded and contested ideological abstractions circulating in education debates today—equality, access, merit, accountability, relevance, value—are any more referentless than the academic commodity itself, for example, is homogeneous, singular, or devoid of all content. Nevertheless, the dereferentializing that *Readings* so deftly exposes has a history and a relationship to the value-form that, as Gayatri Spivak observes, even a supposed radical critique today eschews as “not theoretically viable” (412). However, anything so ostentatiously repressed and denied is sure to mark the scene of a haunting worth re-exposing. In terms of Spivak’s deconstructive Marxism, the value-form and its subterfuges are “disclosed in effacement” just as “justice is disclosed in law, even as its own effacement” (427).

It is precisely within this context of social crisis that Adorno, writing 40 years earlier, sees the necessity of a culture critique; however, it is a critique suspicious of a false opposition between “knowledge which penetrates from without [transcendent criticism] and that which bores from within [immanent criticism]” (1040). Hence “the dialectical critic of culture must both participate in culture and not participate” (1040). *Readings* argues that “if culture is everything, then it has no center, no referent outside itself—and facing up to this dereferentialization seems ... to be the task incumbent upon Cultural Studies” (118), and intellectual workers in Universities. As for a strategic way forward, he evokes Adorno (or perhaps REM): “Change comes neither from within nor without, but from the difficult space, neither inside nor outside, where one is” (“For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics” 185). *Readings* appropriates Adorno’s sense of the monological (“monotony of supply”) at work in the contemporary, but purged of Adorno’s sense of “the irreconcilability of the ... moments ... its aporias” (1039). For example, while Adorno argues that a clear distinction between subject and object can

no longer be “presumed,” subjectivity decentred as it were, the more necessary it is that dialectical method “is obliged to be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039).

Adorno, in *Cultural Criticism and Society*, notes that “bourgeois social science” has assimilated “the Marxian notion of ideology and diluted it to universal relativism” (1038). The dialectical “relation between action and contemplation” is thus neutralized and real change is reabsorbed into “prevailing ... power.” In response, Adorno inverts Marx’s “11th Thesis on Feuerbach”⁷ to re-empower “contemplation” over “change”; however, the essay closes by challenging critical intelligence to do more than “confine itself to self-satisfied contemplation” (1040). This is not mere fence-sitting or glib reversal; rather, Adorno’s essay is a carefully nuanced articulation of the modern dissolution of autonomous subjectivity, subjectivity that is profoundly implicated in a context in which “ideologies become ... increasingly abstract” and “equally near the centre.”

In effect, what seems like prevarication, a “neither” “nor,” is the enactment in thought of Adorno’s dialectical method in its active engagement with modern experience deformed by monological capitalism. Consequently, a clear distinction between subject and object can no longer be “presumed”; therefore, given the nature of the contemporary, the more necessary it is that dialectical method “is obliged to be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039). Readings, on the other hand, appropriates the sense of “no centre,” but purges Adorno’s dialectic of its carefully nuanced articulation of “action” within the constraints of the modern—as tenuous as that may seem in Adorno. Readings’ blurring of the articulation (*la brisure*) of these moments can be found elsewhere in postmodern thought. Gayatri Spivak calls Fredric Jameson to account for “domestication of the dialectic” with his claim that “Marx ...

⁷ “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it” (*Selected Works* 30).

urges us to do the impossible, namely, to think this [technological, postmodern capitalism] ... positively *and* negatively at once” (326). Spivak argues, the “dynamics of the dialectic, as the ... *Grundrisse* show[s], will not allow the work of the negative to stand still ‘within a single thought’” (326). Spivak, on the other hand, endorses an “affirmative deconstruction” that would engage a “critical intimacy—rather than the usual critical distance” (425). Spivak argues for a distinction between an early Derridean deconstruction that “produces an unrestricted economy of same and other” and a “relatively restricted dialectic of negation and sublation” (424). At the risk of blurring the distinction between the two positions, I would argue that Spivak’s “critical intimacy” owes as much to Adorno as it does to Derrida. We will explore in more detail Spivak’s deconstructive-Marxism in Chapter Three. For now we will simply ask: in what ways does Readings’ “difficult space” differ from Spivak’s “critical intimacy,” or Adorno’s dialectical method?

Exactly how change is effected is, for Readings, limited to this “difficult space”; however, his argument prevents any recourse to the “redemptive metanarrative” (178) that he sees as the chief “alibi” of “pietistic leftism”—that is to say, the “story of exclusion” (103) and its redress. Today, we are told, we witness the “end” of exclusion, “not because racism, sexism, and class” have ended, but because “*there is no longer any culture to be excluded from*” (103; emphasis in original). Within this paradigm, “particular cultural struggles” and “particular exclusions” must be resisted; however, “‘culture’ no longer names a metadiscursive project with both historical extension and critical contemporaneity to be excluded from” (103). What, we might ask, happens when culture, in any sense, is *the* factor? Does a cultural constituency need a “metadiscursive” perspective to match its experience? What is the relation between the metadiscursive and real experience? Do we witness the end of metadiscursive projects, or are previous metadiscursive projects involved in some process of

hegemonic transformation? What exactly is the significance of such a claim for any marginal group interested in strategically improving its social situation?

Readings rejects any transcendent notion of universal community governed by consensus; instead “difference” would be accommodated within a “community of dissensus” (187). However, his version of the end of the universal subject, the “peripheral singularity,” begins to sound like the liberal compromise between individual right and the multitude that at its worse disguises the totalitarian claim that in the present state of systemic disparity everyone is equal.⁸ For example, “[t]o preserve the status of the social bond as a question is to tolerate difference without recourse to an *idea of identity*” (187; emphasis added). It seems to me that appeals to identity do not automatically reconstitute a universal subject, nor do we need look far for examples where both culture and identity are crucial.⁹ Ken Noskiye, in his editorial “A disillusioning time for Natives,” refers to the imposition of the PST on Saskatchewan reserves as the breaking of a sacred trust: “a treaty is a reason to go on, a sense of continuity.” Despair, prompted by the “investigation into the deaths of those First Nations men by the Queen Elizabeth power station,” is meliorated by continuity and culture: “At times it is one of the proudest things a person can realize: cultural pride. And, also at times, it is one of the hardest things I have to live with” (*Saskatoon Sun* 09 Apr 00). What is “dissensus”—so bereft of critical force—if not liberalism? This narrative of the end of the “historical development ... of national culture” (6) begins to

⁸ Compare a neo-relativist, left-liberal critic such as Joanna Russ: “there can be ... no single center of value and hence no absolute standards. That does not mean that assignment of values must be arbitrary or self-serving.... It does mean that for the linear hierarchy of good and bad it becomes necessary to substitute a multitude of centers of value, each with its own periphery, some closer to each other, some farther apart” (in Guillory 281-282).

⁹ Judith Butler’s is a subtler—and more inclusive in the final instance—expression of how identity might work: “The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated” (148). Spivak argues that questioning the assumptions that attend the universal subject is precisely the point: “all the so-called poststructuralists, at their most theoretical, situate subjecting rather than kill the subject or pronounce it dead. Humanism names man (at best the human being) as the master of an unexamined subjective agency. To question this conviction is not to “kill the subject” (*CPR*; n 15, pg. 322).

sound like current-wave liberalism in which such disillusion is merely responsive to a self-regulating system at the end of history (much like Francis Fukuyama's).¹⁰ This poignant example clearly demonstrates that "recourse to ... identity," cultural identity in fact, does have "critical contemporaneity" and that lived experience is very much conditioned by history. This is not meant to suggest that Readings is indifferent to such examples. However, his strained attempt, in this context of profound dereferentialization, to reconcile plurality and difference with the interests of individual agents, marks Readings' argument as liberal pluralism. Any acts of resistance made from a position of strategic essentialism, actions that appeal to culture, are compromise in Readings' notion of the "peripheral singularity." I support the critical value of a strategic essentialism, and, as with Spivak's position on the universal subject, the more effective strategy is to "question ... the assumptions ... of an unexamined subjective agency" (*CPR*; n 15, pg. 322; note 14 here) rather than to leave those with the greater stake in social justice without the tools of effective resistance.

Noskiye's disillusionment also coincides with Reform/Alliance MP Jim Pankiw's ongoing attacks against the University of Saskatchewan's affirmative-action hiring policy, another source of Noskiye's disillusion. Readings is acutely aware of the

¹⁰ For Readings, excellence, or the dereferentialization of culture, functions like the poll—as synecdoche as it were—for capital: "global capital no longer requires a cultural content ... to interpellate and manage subjects, as the rise of polling suggests. The statistical poll performs the work of normalization indifferently to the content of the information ... its hegemony is thus *administrative* rather than *ideological*" (103). What could be more functionally self-regulating than that which "manages" at the same time as it claims to be without content in any of its aspects? What could be more ideological? Slavoj Žižek suggests one sense in which Readings' own opposition is ideological. Socialism having disintegrated, and the West seemingly triumphant, "democracy-capitalism was experienced as deliverance from the constraints of ideology—however, was not this very experience of 'deliverance' in the course of which political parties and the market economy were perceived as 'non-ideological', as the 'natural state of things', ideological *par excellence*? ... there is no ideology that does not assert itself by means of delimiting itself from another 'mere ideology' (19). Demonstrating the field in which such a denial functions, Guillory argues that "aesthetic discourse is capable of being subjected to critique to the extent that it, like economic discourse or any discourse, is the vehicle of ideology, that is to say, an arena of social struggle" (282).

[Žižek: "'Ideology' can designate anything from a contemplative attitude that misrecognizes its dependence on social reality to an action-orientated set of beliefs, from the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas which legitimate a dominant political power" (4)]

problem of access, and, his antipathy to redemptive narratives aside, his description of how excellence functions—“nam[ing] a non-referential principle that allows the maximum of uninterrupted internal administration” (120)—is incisive in exposing how “access to tertiary education is bracketed ... if perceived as a consumer durable” (472). Readings clearly shows that the consequence of “affordability or value for the money becom[ing] one category among others [that] influenc[es] choice” is that “heterogeneous categories of ranking” are subsumed into a “single ‘excellence quotient’” (472).¹¹ Rephrasing Adorno, we can say that, “difference [or access and choice] degenerate into nuances in the monotony of supply” (1035).

The fiction of choice disguises the erosion of access at a time when, ironically, enrolments in Canadian universities are expected to increase significantly, because, of course, the fiction of choice plays concurrently with a discourse of scarcity calculated to disguise the escalating expropriation of unimaginable wealth from the majority to the minority. This is the true nature of liberal utilitarianism in the age of globalisation.¹² The “process of dereferentialization” (489) allows “increasing integration of all activities into a generalized market” (472), and for the subsequent displacement of social value by “value for the money” (472).¹³ The “difficult space” described here by Readings is conditioned by the aporia within what Barbara Herrnstein Smith calls the “double discourse of value” (Guillory 296), between the cultural and the material, the aesthetic and the economic. And for Readings, only by “raising value as a question of judgment” (119) can the discourse of excellence be resisted.

¹¹ “excellence ... functions ... as the unit of value in terms of which the university describes itself to itself, [and] achieves the self-consciousness that is supposed to guarantee intellectual autonomy in modernity.... Excellence responds very well to the needs of technological capitalism in the production and processing of information, in that it allows for the increasing integration of all activities into a generalized market, while permitting a large degree of flexibility and innovation at the local level” (472).

¹² And because Readings’ is a response to globalisation, this has a global dimension. Access to education in the wealthier parts of the world is enhanced and ensured by the lack of access in the vastly larger quarters in poverty, “in a world which denies the mass of human beings the authentic experience of intellectual phenomena by making genuine education a privilege” (Adorno 1035).

¹³ Accountability for accounting (Readings; 131-134).

However, the vagueness of this appeal to value—to “transvalue the process of dereferentialization” (490)¹⁴—follows from his rejection of any unifying metanarrative of culture, and follows from the notion that the ruined spaces of the institution we now inhabit, “like inhabitants of some Italian city,” have been “willed” to us by a “history whose temporality we no longer inhabit” (129). “[L]earning from and enjoying the cognitive dissonances that enclosed piazzas and non-signifying *campanile* induce” (129) does not compensate for the vagueness that results from ignoring the historical “origin of the value-concept in the struggle to distinguish the work of art from the commodity” (Guillory xiii), a history that John Guillory exposes in *Cultural Capital*.

Although judgment predates political economy, a particular kind of “aesthetic disposition” emerges simultaneously with a “relatively autonomous” civil society in the 17th and 18th centuries. Political economy (19th cent.) transforms this aesthetic disposition from a “problem of taste or aesthetic judgment into the problem of aesthetic *value*” (316). Only after “political economy’s discourse of exchange value” appears, does it become necessary that aesthetic theory “rephrase ... the problem of aesthetic judgment as the problem of a peculiar kind of ‘value’” (316-17). Initially aesthetics and

¹⁴ This verb is suggestive. However, what it might mean to “transvalue” dereferentialization in practice is difficult to determine here. Spivak argues for the potentials of “transcoding.” As an intrinsic mechanism of the value-form itself, transcoding therefore presents the teacher with a critical tool for intervention (*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* and *Outside in the Teaching Machine*). Similarly, in *CPR*, Spivak discusses Freud’s focus on “determinate representations” rather than “deliberate or deliberate(d) cause” in the dream-work: the “*quality* of the images in the dream-text is determined *otherwise* “by two independent moments”” (218). She argues for the strategic utility of determinate representations. The two moments mark “the site of a desire similar to ours: the desire to hold in *one* thought something like a wish *and* an economy” (219). Freud writes of the possibility of “express[ing] this condition” in a “single formula” that would account for the “transvaluation of all psychic value” (219). It seems that Spivak, speaking for the concept-metaphor of the “transvaluation of all psychic value’ in this otherwise determination,” might contradict her critique of Jameson’s reduction of the moments of the dialectic (“hold in *one* thought”). Nevertheless, because the heterogeneous nature of value on a continuum from subjective to material represents a paradox in theory and contradiction in practice, the notion of a “determination otherwise” has considerable explanatory utility and practical value. Transvaluation is constituted as two moments, “a wish *and* an economy,” that frame the dynamic between the affective and the material “whose ground is itself a figuration: a “determination otherwise” (219). Again, the two moments are not reducible to a simple equivalence either for the decentred postmodern subject, or for “a simple theory of a text as expression, where the cause of the expression is the fully self-present deliberative consciousness of the subject” (218).

political economy are convergent discourses: “the harmony of the economic order could be analogized to the beauty of the work of art” (317). At this point the “*aesthetic disposition itself* [is] the motor of the economy” (311). One discourse in Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the discourses of aesthetics and political economy are “separated at birth,” as Guillory describes it, in Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (303). There are clearly detectable reasons for this separation that have less to do with “cognitive dissonance,” and are more material and ideological than “non-signifying.”

In an economy organized by this aesthetic disposition everything comes to “resemble the ... ‘beauty’ of the commodity,” and “everything aspires to the condition of being ‘fit’ to the end of satisfying desire” (311). According to Howard Caygill, Smith “invent[s] ... political economy as the discourse describing the ‘proportion of production and consumption,’ a harmony between the realm of production and the realm of need or desire” (Guillory; 312). Situating the “stimulus to production in the realm of consumption” (312), and “attributing to all productive labor the motive of a consumption modelled on the reception of the fine arts rather than on the real motive of wage-labor, the motive of survival” served to disguise, or “relegate from civil society,” what Caygill refers to as the “violence of production”: that is, “the goods on which the virtuous circulation of civil society depends cost effort to produce, and were the source of [social] conflict” (Guillory; 312).

The increased “qualitative distinction” between the fine arts and manufactured commodities “could be coordinated with class distinction as the difference between taste and lack of it” (313), but “the surplus beauty over use [of commodities] failed to yield a formula for the determination of ... their exchange value” (314). Consequently, political economy “shifts its analysis to ... production, and ... ‘the labor theory of value’” (314). No longer is an explicit and foundational alliance with aesthetics necessary once political economy “invents the concept of ‘use value,’ on the *analogy* of ‘exchange

value.” That is to say, an “anthropology of needs,” or use value,¹⁵ displaces the “aesthetic ... as the motor of production, as the engine of social life” (315). Thereafter “it becomes ... necessary to reconceive aesthetic judgment by *analogy to exchange value*” (317).

The “mutual forgetting [that] constitutes aesthetics and political economy as antithetical discourses” (317), and the “logic of equivalence” (313),¹⁶ frame what Guillory refers to as, the “largest aporia of social analysis: the problem of the relation between the economic and the cultural” (316). Guillory demonstrates that “aesthetics ... reasserted, against the universality of economic commensurability, a theory of the incommensurability of aesthetic and economic values, on the basis of the inutility of the aesthetic object” (317). Given the historical origins of the value-form, Readings’ rejection of the idea of culture is, then, a rejection—a forgetting—thrice removed. Yearning after a transcendental signified in the form of a hypertemporal present emptied of history and culture, betrays, in this case, postmodernism’s philosophical idealism. A kind of surreptitious hankering after the transcendental that the postmodern would otherwise eschew, this represents the desire to “transvalue” the dereferentialized ruins of the university haunted, as Readings conceives it, by the repressed referents of both history and culture.

¹⁵ “The utility of a thing makes it a use-value.... This property of a commodity is ... independent of the amount of labor required.... Use-values ... constitute the substance of all wealth.... they are ... the material depositories of exchange values.... As use-values, commodities are ... of different qualities, but as exchange-values they are merely different quantities” (*Capital*.I.36-38). In political economy “an anthropology of needs” also includes a reconception of Smith’s “invisible hand,” that places much more emphasis on self-interest as the motor of production (Guillory 314). (For a contemporary liberal-pluralist version of this see Guillory; 288. See also Guillory’s observation on Marx’s adherence to the concept of use-value—*vis a vis* Baudrillard)

¹⁶ Baudrillard uses the phrase “logic of equivalence” to describe the exchange relation: “the labor expended in the production of an object was supposed to be exchanged for an equal quantum of objectified labor, through the medium of the universal equivalent, money” (Guillory 313). Also political economy “defen[ds] ... the rationality of the social order ... in the form usually of ‘equilibrium’ theory” (316), “the supposed tendency of the system toward ‘equilibrium’” (319).

For Guillory, one cost that political economy paid for its dependence on “an implicit anthropology of needs” was the loss of the aesthetic analogy—although “never *more than an analogy*”—that “always implied that the relation between production and consumption had to be conceived as a fully social relation” (325); his use of Bourdieu’s term ‘cultural capital’ attempts to reclaim more of this completeness.¹⁷ This originary rupture has profound consequences for the contemporary, not least of which is the loss of a perspective that at least conceived the experience of social beings in its completeness. And this is a contemporary context in which the cultural industries have never before generated so much profit, and yet ironically at the same time the power of the cultural has been marginalized through the fetishization of leisure and a ritualization of consumption (inflected by global relations of glaring disparity) presumed to be in its essence democratic. Within the academy itself culture is exalted beyond practical agency even as it is marginalized as either elitist or radically activist. In this sense Guillory’s observation that the analogy was “never *more than an analogy*” is not a simple qualification, but nor is it a dismissal of the power of analogy. In a significant sense the power of this analogy in its ideological function of legitimising the “logic of equivalence” is not diminished by its being mere analogy, and its spectacular subordination of the cultural attests to this fact. This originary repression also has profound consequences for the educational institution and its role in reproducing social structures: “[t]he largest context for analyzing the school as an institution is ... the *reproduction* of the social order, with all of its various iniquities ... in this system of reproduction ... the larger role belongs to the school ... which regulates access to literary production by regulating access to literacy.... The production and distribution of

¹⁷ To the charge that the notion of cultural capital “reduces the cultural field to a reflection of the economic,” Guillory cites Bourdieu’s claim that “‘there is no ‘universal equivalent’ for the adequation of cultural and material capital when the latter is *already* the order of the universal equivalent. The conversion of cultural into material capital (or vice versa) is precisely the condition of the commensuration of the incommensurable, an irresolvable social contradiction” (326).

cultural works as cultural capital cannot be explained by making *no distinction* between cultural and material capital" (ix-xiv). Consequently, access to cultural capital is not made more equitable by writing culture out.

2. Liberalism Defends the School from Postmodernism: A Canadian Journey Toward Sweetness and Light

Peter Emberley, a dedicated defender of liberal education, is apparently much less sanguine than Readings about the effects of postmodernism within Canadian universities, finding it to be a “potent” contributor to social strife that makes “the university a fertile ground for the forces fragmenting society in general” (Zero Tolerance; 99). Nevertheless, it is postmodernism’s narrative of the contemporary that Emberley looks to for an account of the deleterious effects of technology on the social fabric. In Zero Tolerance, Emberley apparently rejects classical economics, that is the economics of the “beneficent ‘invisible hand,’” and its fallacious pretence to produce “humanitarian values through the action of free-market forces” (172). Yet, it is the theorists of postmodernism that he uses to support his claim that “[a]ggregating information ... takes precedence over profit and extraction of surplus value” to such an extent that the “law of the market is no longer ... decisive” (Values Education; 220). Emberley rejects Marshal McLuhan’s “enthusiasm for the ... transfigurative effect” of technology and its ability to “transcend the ambiguities ... of everyday reality” (220). However, in terms of the market he finds that technology is productive of transcendent effects nonetheless. The presumed disempowerment of the market is the consequence of technology’s tendency in an electronic, information age (McLuhan’s utopic global village) to outstrip utility, to “produce ... novel procedures and solutions for which there is as yet no problem or use” (220). Emberley refers favourably to Jean Baudrillard as “a social thinker of the first rank” (220), and Baudrillard’s postmodernist perspective—particularly his speculations on the end of production and the “neutralization [of] ... use value/exchange value” (“The End of Production”; 107)—provides crucial support for

Emberley's claim that the instrumental law of the market has been transcended by technology's power to outstrip everyday human experience. Perhaps more important, his strategic appropriation of this key premise of postmodern logic actively enables his construction of a binary opposition between "traditional" virtue and a certain value emptied of virtue by the moral relativism of postmodernism. Consequently, "[p]erfectibility and transcendence" (ZT; 272) are positive concepts as well for Emberley in the sense of spiritual powers outside of temporal experience (a sense, however, which he and Baudrillard would likely not share).

Baudrillard's description serves to support Emberley's sense of the decline of spirituality and moral purpose, and his sense of how a pervasive postmodern ethos stifles the "ideas of autonomy, individual responsibility, and personal merit" (VET; 193)—the philosophical and ideological pillars of his liberal perspective. However, where Baudrillard embraces such transformation, Emberley idealizes liberal education as a bulwark against the social disintegration caused by postmodernism: "a more traditional moral education, would furnish unconditional limits to technology" (225). More importantly, a "traditional liberal education" forms the one true countervailing force to balance the reductive "narrowing forces of the market" (194). Emberley's fraught reliance on postmodernism for the most fatalistic description of social decline possible is once again a strategic ambivalence only, for postmodernism is ultimately "corrosive" in its relativism and antirationalism (ZT; 273). For Emberley, postmodernism's value as a "sceptical corrective to the presumptions of our age" (273) is no longer of use and its retirement is long overdue so that the "competing paradigms" of the "Western inheritance" can once again be made available to students (273).

While Readings inhabits the ruined, dereferentialized spaces of the postmodern, enjoying with equanimity the "cognitive dissonances" of the "non-

signifying,” Emberley, in contrast, seeks to re-referentialize “this uncanny place where our values reverence nothing, represent nothing, and signify nothing” (VE; 224). The uncanny social space and its universities will be re-referentialized with the “rich diversity of forms of human perfectibility” (ZT; 272) that flow—granted more freely to some than others—from the brimming cornucopia of Western patrimony. Of course, historically Western culture’s horn of plenty has done double-duty as meat grinder and bullhorn for privilege and power. Both Readings and Emberley are very much aware of this fact, and each in his way confronts this history of inequity and human tragedy in order to formulate a strategy for the Canadian university in transition. These strategies are meant to operate in a cultural context in which, as each eloquently demonstrates, the Western tradition is an endangered species becoming daily consumed as rapidly as rainforest by the sterility and emptiness of the Best Western tradition. Readings seeks to accommodate difference and disparity in the notions of “dissensus” and the “peripheral singularity.” Emberley, for his part, seeks to accommodate difference and disparity in the “true inclusivity” of “essential experience,” and “genuine universality, which the scholarly culture extends to everyone courageous enough to ask questions” (273). Of course, any one of the multitudes of shameful and sad narratives of dispossession, abuse, and exploitation intertwined, like the double helix of DNA, with the achievements of the Western Tradition are denied by this small but powerful constellation of ritual abstractions. And any one of a multitude of scholarly studies, and personal accounts—indeed the “document[s] of civilization” themselves as Walter Benjamin pointedly reveals (256)—demonstrate how these mesmerizing incantations have been used to enforce and reproduce with deliberate and calculated intention the very results Emberley decries. The sad and shameful abuses of power are inextricably mixed with the collective achievements of the Western tradition. Consequently, we are

not absolved of the need to judge,¹⁸ as Emberley in fact argues. However, it also means that we are not absolved of collective responsibility, which he rejects. Emberley is more liberally disposed to individual responsibility, particularly with respect to questions of systemic inequality.

If Readings and Emberley differ in their relative comfort or discomfort with postmodern culture and its theory, what they do share is the same strong antipathy to the “narrative of redemption,” as Readings terms it, and what Emberley refers to as “the project of empowerment” and its “focusing an individual’s attention on rights and entitlements, rather than on responsibilities” (272). To this extent the writing of these two Canadian critics demonstrates the close affinity, even symbiosis, which postmodern thought has with liberalism. In Zero Tolerance, Emberley apparently takes a plague on both their houses stance toward the “cultural-left”¹⁹ which seeks to transform the university into “a social welfare agency and change agent” (201-2), as well as the corporate right which seeks to “re-engineer” the university as an “engine of economic growth” and a “business enterprise” (200) functioning on a full cost-recovery basis.²⁰

The fault of the cultural-left, with its origins in 1960’s permissiveness and radicalism, is its tendency to encourage in students “unrealistic expectations of social reform” (45-6) in the absence of appropriate outlets for “spiritual hunger.” In concert with a neoconservative hostility of late to what it has identified as “judicial activism,” that is the perceived independence of the Canadian judiciary from democratic process,

¹⁸ Compare Guillory on the devaluing of aesthetic judgment as a consequence of the historical separation at birth of the aesthetic and economic, and today by liberal pluralist critics in canon debates (xiv).

¹⁹ The term “cultural left” is in contrast to a romanticized “old left” that fought on “behalf of equality and social justice”; the “new” cultural left is different from its “noble” parents in that it has fled the field of battle in “society at large” and is now reduced to “new battles ... within the university campus itself” (200-201). The cultural left has hijacked a “proud new feminism,” for example, as part of its unholy alliance with postmodernism and its relativist notions of language and culture.

²⁰ Here too Emberley’s liberalism demonstrates a close affinity with a certain postmodernism (or postmodernism demonstrates its liberalism): for Lyotard “neither the narrative of social justice (Marx), nor the narrative of development (capital), provides legitimation” (Spivak 368).

Emberley argues that human rights jurisprudence “leaves open a huge window of opportunity for ... ‘social technology’—using the judicial apparatus to socially remanufacture human relations” (242). Again, social activism of this sort is driven by the left in its “persistent efforts to use the university for social engineering” (242). The fault of the latter is not business *per se*, but the corporate right’s “parsimony” relative to the university; as well, the “isolation and selfishness the market reinforces, combined with its reduction of quality to what can be ranked and commodified, cheapens our human potential” (172). The corporate right’s interest in isolation and selfishness is not simply calculating, but—paradoxically, at a time when corporate dominance has never reached so deeply into every sphere of human experience—it fails to understand the “distinct virtues” of a “moral education” (182-3). It is here in the domain of virtue that the right and left conspire to “abandon the complex work of shaping moral attitudes” (245). Emberley’s apparently non-partisan stance is somewhat disingenuous considering that he is clearly better disposed toward the economic engine of liberalism than the “misplaced” activism of the left with its interest in systemic change (rather than simple fine-tuning of the grinding machine that leaves the social and economic structure intact in the interest of disguising the spectacular failure of an ideology of functionalist equilibrium,²¹ or its success if one is a beneficiary).

Emberley seeks to reclaim moral value from the non-reverential, the non-signifying, and the “nihilistic”; however, such a recuperation is incomplete if it fails to recontextualise the notion of value and its repressions and subterfuges. What is the history of this distinction between virtue and value, and what are the consequences of this history for the relations between the affective realm of value and the material realm? Or, is it simply that Emberley has a nostalgia for a pretence that the corporate

²¹ Political economy “defen[ds] ... the rationality of the social order ... in the form usually of ‘equilibrium’ theory” (Guillory 316), “the supposed tendency of the system toward [functional] ‘equilibrium’” (319).

right has largely abandoned, or certainly wears differently? Ostentatious displays of a moral code that predates the transformation of traditional morality by the industrial revolution are now as unnecessary to economic liberalism as are the imposing classical facades of turn of the century Canadian Imperial banks. This is not to say that the market is amoral (something akin to saying that culture no longer has a referent, where it is more accurate to find that the referent has become both the victim and the beneficiary of a globalising metamorphosis, or a globalising metaphor with very real consequences in the everyday), but that its values have a history. The transformation, as Emberley correctly argues, is one marked by the shift in terminology from that of 'moral' to that of 'value.'

The complexities of this social conflict—marked by this imposed rupture between the material and affective—can be seen in Emberley's discussion of calls from the right, seconded by the liberal government, for the implementation of income-contingent loan programs (ICLP) as a solution to the increasing costs of post-secondary education. This proposal²² shifts greater responsibility for the costs of higher education onto students who, it is supposed, benefit the most from post-secondary education. Emberley considers this claim to be "justifiable," citing *The Economist's* "cogent ... argument" that "[t]he higher the stage of education, the more the benefits accrue to the individual rather than society at large—not least because one of the main functions of universities is to screen people for elite positions" (176). And in fact Statistics Canada studies support the claim that individual incomes are higher for university graduates. However, the *Economist* authors emphasize individual reward and ignore the unquantifiable, indeed incalculable social benefits of higher education as a community enterprise, and the whole ignores entirely the benefits of maximizing

²² ICLP has since been implemented in a typically compromised fashion, and is presently in the process of being decommissioned as the banks reconsider the return on investment and the costs of defaults.

accessibility as a counterbalance to the disparity that results from education's purpose of supplying elites.

Emberley, nevertheless, believes very strongly in the value of the university as a "community" with the ability, in an Arnoldean fashion, to heal the larger social community of "discord and fragmentation" (229). In spite of an ostensible aversion to "naked self-interest," his liberal conception of individual responsibility accords well with other thinkers of the right. His aversion to any notion of responsibility for social disparity or any form of social change targeting anything with the labels "systemic," or "structural" attached to them harmonises just as well with the concerns of neoconservatives as it does with the reform-liberalism that he claims to espouse.²³ Emberley provides an excellent sampling of arguments for and against ICLP that includes the hard costs of student loan programs up to the present, the justifications of its advocates, as well as the incisive criticisms of students and student organizations of the "regressive direction" of ICLP. Advocates argue that the program "will give students more clout to assess the performance of the university and give power to their desire for innovation and efficiency" (178). ICPL provides choice to discriminating consumers in a "free-market." However, Emberley points out that ICLP "continues the abandonment of national and provincial direction, giving these over to the ... instrumental logic of the market" (178). On the other hand, the Canadian Federation of Students argues incisively that the plan is regressive and would threaten accessibility because "poorer students would pay a greater cost of borrowing, since they would take the longest to repay the loan" (178). Considering its implementation, Lloyd Axworthy claimed that because "a disproportionate number of wealthier students go to university, and ... their projected lifetime income ... will be much higher than ... other Canadians,

²³ Compare Heather Murray's discussion of structural cause in Working in English: History, Institution, Resources. Chpt. 8-9 (147).

it is fairer that they, rather than the general public of ... lower-income families, should be paying" (179). Again, this of course merely begs the question of accessibility. And, Emberley rightly asks, "Will universities continue to be accessible?" (179).

The CFS warned of the threat not only to accessibility for less advantaged students to higher education, but the threat to an already impoverished academic inquiry itself if "students in sectors which have a higher rate of unemployment such as arts and social sciences ... [are] rejected for loan requests, while students in high tech ... [are] accepted" (ZT 180). The more knowledge is subjected to the logic of the market the more we see the proportional decline of entire areas of knowledge and disciplines presumed useless—for example Classics and Philosophy. As Emberley points out, the threats to the fullest range of academic intellectual endeavour are very real:

What will prevent banks from making assessments of the link between defaults and field of academic study? And as universities rush to the market to sell themselves, what incentive will they have to maintain programs that do not enjoy the market's idea of payoff? (180)

On this question, as with others, Emberley's is a defence of liberal values and the moral development that he sees as the primary function of a liberal education. His spirited defence notwithstanding, the language it is expressed in is the very language that since at least the nineteenth century has justified and formed the ideological adornment of the very market and marketeering he sees as a danger. Although the language of moral development and good character—words such as "prudence," "patience," "charity," "thrift," and "industry"—certainly predates the industrial revolution, and this history is important, this language is in tone and conception that of Shaftsbury, the Smith of The Theory of Moral Sentiments, and Matthew Arnold:

Morality is always a bitter pill to swallow. Whatever else ICLP achieves, it is also a form of moral education. Since *there ain't no such thing as a free lunch*, the additional costs students will have to bear come with the benefit of teaching thrift and industry. ICLP may achieve what many baby-boomer parents did not

teach their children: that one will have more respect for things for which one has oneself worked than for what one receives without work. The twists of the ICLP that may have higher earners paying a surcharge on their own debt to accommodate lower-income borrowers ... are worthwhile lessons in charity. ICLP may also have the effect of instilling moderation and prudence, not to say patience ... reining in wants and forming reasonable expectations ... the lessons ICLP will offer cannot come early enough. (182)

Again, this is the very language that the market for the past two centuries has used to market the market. Clinging consistently to his theme of a supposed middle-path between the divisiveness of the “politics ... of the corporate right and the cultural left” (256), Emberley exposes the dangers of ICLP only to resoundingly re-assert the value of ICLP as a moral lesson to students in thrift, industry, and charity. Evidently, the instrumental market itself is the schoolmaster administering the moral lesson here. Nevertheless, he is correct in arguing that private capital is divesting itself of the adornments of such language of late. As the market strives for maximum penetration into every aspect of social life, it is quite clear that less and less there exists a detached, contemplative moral sphere (students should acquire “a moral attitude of detachment and impartiality” 264) independent of free-market economics. In this sense, the difference between the contemporary context and that of Matthew Arnold, or the New Critics somewhat later, is more a matter of degree than of essence.

Emberley rejects “value-added auditing,” but then extols the “cost effectiveness” of privatisation (265)²⁴ and the benefits of not only those “virtues needed to live in a money economy” (265), but more importantly those value-added virtues that are inculcated by habitual practice in a “scholarly culture” uninfected by the “project of empowerment,” and postmodernism. These virtues of “justice, impartiality, and good judgement” provide moral correctives to the “parsimony and ruthless ambition” (182-3)

²⁴ Emberley suggests the privatisation of professional programs on a “cost recovery basis” would generate surpluses that would help fund non-professional programs (268). Of course this places non-professional programs (the arts and humanities) in a position as wards and objects of charity for the professional disciplines.

of the free-market (corporate right), and protect “charity” from being hijacked by “resentment or moralistic righteousness” (cultural left). It is not that the market is intrinsically bad, but more to the point for Emberley the free-marketeers in their haste to rationalize education do not take sufficient care of the moral benefits that the market itself can confer on the universities by way of such economic “lessons.” That is to say, “moral development,” according to Emberley, is the value-added dividend of a “moral education [that] ... is not ... understood by the corporate right” (183).

This strange pirouette between the (apparently) material fact of the economy and its fraught entanglements with the necessarily abstract experience of the affective and conceptual can only be a space of contradiction and overdetermination for liberal critics, and liberalism generally, as it strives to resolve social conflict by positing a space that serenely “transcends our personal and social lives” (254). This contradiction represents a considerable embarrassment for institutions struggling to be materially accountable at the same time as they struggle to meet the needs of a fully rounded human experience that includes so much more than the merely marketable. This represents an attempt to transcend that which is already a transcendent abstraction when, as Gayatri Spivak argues, the “economic is the last instance in the sense that it is the most abstract” (*CPR* 104). Ironically, this transcendent, abstract realm of “civil society,” “Morality,” or scholarly detachment is depoliticised in order to nurture “an informed political citizenry ... *guardians* of Canada’s cultural heritage” (*ZT* 180; emphasis added). Presumably an impartial, informed citizenry would be a more placid citizenry than one that suffers the full coercive powers of the state for the crime of peaceful public protest, or a native citizenry that defies the OPP and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans at Burnt Church, or a citizenry that lives in the streets of the

Lower East Side in Vancouver, B.C., with or without protest.²⁵ In effect, then, such a conception re-enacts the originary separation of the economic and the cultural in positing this transcendent moral realm. Is it this rupture that in reality operates the structural disconnect between the protests of those without access to the benefit of academic detachment (whatever their “gifts”) and, for example, Carleton University’s College of the Humanities which, under Emberley’s directorship, offers a core curriculum in the liberal arts to gifted undergraduates? Emberley’s conception of the “crisis” of the humanities, and a postsecondary system under siege, is reproduced in a significant institutional response to external pressures.

This overdetermination is disguised in such notions as ‘impartiality’²⁶ and ‘virtue’—the value contained in virtue is the lesson learned from material economic value, a lesson (in self-interest after all) from which virtue/culture must nevertheless protect itself. This drama of self-preservation from self-interest takes place in the transcendental crèche (the impartial, detached academy), expropriated and enclosed for the purpose of “moral development.” This chain of consequence places Emberley’s conception in a lineal descent from the classical tradition that he acknowledges (Plato and Aristotle), to Matthew Arnold, to I. A. Richards, on down to Canada’s Massey

²⁵ The dramatic social struggle between power and poverty, between wealth and the dispossessed marginal has a long history. Today it produces the cynical shibboleth that such actions are “illegal”—and this in a context of technologically empowered systemic injustice. Recent examples abound: Oka; the massive application of state coercion at Gustafson Lake, British Columbia; and the APEC assault against democracy for but a few examples. This is played out in the pathos of *Henry the Sixth* by crude mechanics (soon to become blue collar workers at the mercy of union-busting global finance and a decaying aristocracy soon to be displaced by the bourgeois capitalist) as Europe stands on the threshold of global Empire and incipient Capitalism:

Butch. They are all in order, and march toward us.

Cade. But then are we in order when we are most out of order. Come, march! forward!

(IV.II.171-3)

The supposed irrationalism of the illegitimate mob meets the rational application of state power backed by judicial authority.

²⁶ Impartiality is associated here with the deep suspicion that Emberley shares with neoconservatives for the perceived activism of the judiciary, the supposed antidemocratic implications of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms court challenges, and “extralegal mechanisms” (232) such as affirmative action policies aimed at redressing systemic inequality. Neoconservatism is notably silent when such mechanisms spectacularly protect their interests—for example Reformer Stephen Harper’s well financed resistance to election reform.

commission. Guillory's account of moral philosophy's suppression of the cultural at the birth of political economy is instructive here, detailing as it does the history of academically nurtured culture in a capitalist economy in which morality has been relegated (a ceremonial sinecure) to culture even as its more vital function is to provide ideological, moral justification for economic expropriation. The resort to a transcendent moral realm as an anodyne for the corrosive effects of a ruthless market also reflects a certain perspective on what constitutes knowledge and intellectual activity—this impartiality and this detachment belong to a tradition.

In *Reading Capital*, Louis Althusser discusses the implications and tendencies of a certain "conception of knowledge" (117). Such "theoretical pragmatism" is founded in an "empiricist misunderstanding" that confuses the abstract object of knowledge with the "concrete" real (117). "Empiricist abstraction" functions to "separate, in the object, the two parts which exist in it, the essential and the inessential—by special procedures whose aim is to *eliminate the inessential real ... and to leave the knowing subject only the second part of the real which is its essence, itself real. Which gives us a second result: the abstraction operation[s] ... are merely procedures to purge and eliminate one part of the real in order to isolate the other*" (36). An empiricist conception of knowledge then tends to privilege the "real," or "everyday," but then predictably, as a consequence of the logic of this process of abstraction, finds in "the concrete and life ... [a] pretext" for claims about "the concrete's surplus of transcendence" (117).

Althusser alerts us to the subterfuge practised by an empiricist conception "which identifies the real object with the object of knowledge" (40). Emberley credits the classical philosophical tradition with the notion that "the everyday holds within itself a structure which moves us towards the mystery of our being through images of ... perfection" (58). In this way Emberley participates in the empiricist "problematic of classical philosophy" (40) which reduces "the difference between two objects: the

object of knowledge and the real object, to a mere distinction between the parts of a single object: the real object” (40). One consequence of this “fraudulent unity” is to detach intellectual activity from the context in which it is produced: “When Marx tells us that the production process of knowledge, and hence that of its object, as distinct from the real object ... takes place entirely in knowledge ... he is not ... falling into an idealism of consciousness ... for the *‘thought’* we are discussing here is not a faculty of a transcendental subject.... [Rather, this] ... thought is the historically constituted system of an *apparatus of thought*, founded on and articulated to natural and social reality” (41). The reduction of the object of knowledge to essence—one aspect of the real—forms the epistemological ground for political economy’s repression of the aesthetic analogy. And again, as Guillory incisively argues, political economy’s repression of the aesthetic analogy, in favour of the invisible hand, comes at a high cost: the aesthetic analogy at the very least “implied that the relation between production and consumption had to be conceived as a *fully social relation*” (325; emphasis added). Just as an empiricist conception of knowledge subordinates the inessential to essence in reducing intellectual activity to one aspect of the real, political economy’s discourse of value subordinates the aesthetic and cultural to the law of the market, that is the “violence of production” instantiated in the “logic of equivalence.” Liberalism’s claim to protect knowledge (culture) from the instrumentality of the market is disingenuous when at the same time it confers on material capital the status of universal equivalent.

For Emberley, another benefit of the ability of such a market solution to the “perception problem” (256)²⁷ of the universities is that ICLP would (naturally) select those for whom the university is the “appropriate vehicle” for developing such virtues,

²⁷ Emberley argues that the so-called “crisis” in education is more a matter of the right and left colluding to manufacture a climate conducive to “social-engineering” of either a fiscal-conservative nature, or left-egalitarian nature.

and those for whom it is not. For Emberley the university is clearly the place in which to best develop the “moral attitude ... at the core of intellectual life and political citizenry”, and ICLP would weed out those whose “distinctive virtues” would be best “tapped” elsewhere (182). ICLP would not only bring Canada’s moral house to order, but would also, through this weeding out process, keep its fiscal house in order as well. Are these the same virtues “tapped” differently? Or are they different virtues entirely according to social class? Or is it simply a matter of greater quantities of merit (largely a subjective category after all) quantitatively rewarded? In any case, what then is the function of concepts such as “justice” and “impartiality” at this confluence of the subjectively moral and the crudely economic, and more to the point how do they collude to reproduce and maintain Emberley’s Platonic “guardian” overclass? Lloyd Axworthy claimed, “since a disproportionate number of wealthier students go to university, and since their projected lifetime income on average will be much higher than that of other Canadians, it is fairer that they, rather than a general public of poorer ... lower-income families, should be paying” (179). That ICLP would function to reproduce the structural hierarchies of a free-market society, that it would disproportionately benefit an educated guardian “segment of society” (268), for the benefit of all it is argued, is not so much the problem for Emberley. Rather, it is more the case that advocates on the right treat these results of ICLP as mere “externalities” when they are in fact desirable ends in themselves:

... many graduates go on to leadership positions and contribute to Canada at a level disproportionate to the average public. Advocates of ICLP see such contributions—an informed political citizenry, guardians of Canada’s cultural heritage ... only as externalities ... The platitude that reads “since university students gain the benefits of higher education, they should bear the costs” rests on the most naïve understanding of how national unity, duties to community and sustained productivity in employment are formed. (180)

That hierarchical structures, implicitly elitist, are maintained and strengthened is a net benefit to the nation and society generally; in such terms as this *Zero Tolerance* consciously evokes Plato's *Republic*.

Emberley's *Values Education and Technology*, with similar themes as *Zero Tolerance*, in fact oscillates between an Existentialist grounding and the "ethics and morality" of classical Greece as antidotes to the "anti-foundationalism" that begins with Nietzsche and Heidegger and later produces deconstruction, postmodernism, and the "cultural left." Considering that *VET* is a slightly earlier, more philosophical argument against the left's "project of empowerment" in the guise of "values education," it is curious, but not incidental, that it scrupulously avoids any discussion of the historically significant discourse of value that emerges in the century just previous to our own first with classical political economy, then in Karl Marx's sustained critique of this discourse that is so crucial to emerging industrial capitalism and subsequent "late" Capitalism. In *Reading Capital*, Louis Althusser, in a provocative deconstruction, reflects on "absences in the text" of political economy in its answer to the question of the "value of labour." (22). He first rephrases the text:

'The value of labour () is equal to the whole of the subsistence goods necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of labour ()'.... If we suppress our slots—our blanks—we are merely reconstituting a sentence which, if it is taken literally, itself designates in itself these points of emptiness, restores these slots as the marks of an omission produced by the 'fullness' of the utterance itself (22-3).

Althusser argues, paraphrasing Marx, that "[i]f the answer ... is merely the omission of its concept, it is because the answer is the answer to a *different question*" (23). For Althusser, this is why Marx can argue that "[t]he result the analysis led to, therefore, was not a resolution of the problem as it emerged at the beginning, but a complete change in the terms of the problem" (23). Emberley's revisiting of the "epochal" re-emergence of the discourse of value in values education in the sixties and seventies is

perhaps on one level no more than merely intriguing, and his reproduction of the gaps in the text of political economy by the suppression of its critique is doubtless strategic, but his reproduction of these gaps also represents an unconscious elision of the question of value and its origins that has become—at the beginning of the twenty-first century—normative. Because Emberley, in *VET*, claims an influence from Foucault we might give his reproduction of the gaps in political economy's text a postmodern slant supplemental to Althusserian Marxism, and evoke here the structures of the "carceral network" and identify such a gesture as the "power of the normative" (304-5). And again, Guillory provides many fruitful reflections on such gaps at levels more fundamental than simple rhetorical selectivity. First, however, a short but worthwhile detour across the treacherous structure of the bridge of "structural inequality" is necessary before proceeding to a consideration of such strategic lacunae in the articulation of education's social mission.

3. Marketing Platonic Values to the Mainstream: Values Education, Structural Cause, and the Moral Purpose of Higher Education in Canada

Although he seeks to distinguish himself from contemporary neoconservatives—as does the American Platonist, Allan Bloom, similarly extolling classical virtues and scholarly detachment—Emberley nevertheless is speaking a language neoconservatism wants to hear, and more importantly he argues a position neoconservatives want a mainstream public to hear. *ZT*, published just after *VET*, is a decidedly more accessible argument clearly aimed at a wider, more mainstream Canadian readership. Challenging what he constructs as the relentlessly self-serving logic of the left, he suggests the left should consider the possibility that there are “other political options” besides neoconservatism (liberals, red Tories, social democrats) that nevertheless subscribe to “reward based on merit or a liberal education founded on persuasive reason” (204) without subscribing to the extremism of neoconservatism on social issues: a commitment to “safe streets, strong families and nonintrusive government” does not necessarily imply “enthusiasm for the free-market model, Christian prayers in public schools, the recriminalization of abortion, stripping homosexuals of civil rights protections and censoring school libraries” (204). This lawyerly cavil notwithstanding, what could possibly please neoconservatives more than to hear that anyone who argues that “all social tension and predicaments can be *structurally explained*”²⁸ is doing nothing but promoting a “seductive, but doubtful thesis” (220; emphasis added), and “dwelling on ... victimhood [is only] ... feeding paranoia about structural intentions” (221)? This is, however, an interesting position

²⁸ Admittedly a certain weight rests here on the qualifier ‘all’; nevertheless, when placed in the context of the larger argument against any notion of structural inequality, it is soon seen that the word ‘no’ just as comfortably resides here as the word ‘all.’ Emberley’s response to the fact that reports commissioned into the Fabrikant and Marc Lepine tragedies “did search for structural reasons” causes him to suggest that therefore one “should ... take these diagnoses with a grain of salt” (92) specifically for that reason.

considering the argument, established in *VET*, which pits ethics and morality (classical tradition) against the “language of ‘values’” (55) and values education (radical tradition):

Plato and Aristotle ... affirmed their trust that the everyday holds within itself a *structure* which moves us towards the mystery of our being through images of finality and perfection. The common acts of possession characterizing the everyday invite us to deeper and more complex forms of reality. Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s perspective demands a radical dispossession from the durative aspect of being and from the everyday in whose forms being lingers.... Why I raise the spectre of Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s radical turn away from the durative aspects of being as they manifest themselves in the everyday is because I want to argue that this turn supplies the enabling context in which the values programs we are analysing were devised, [and] implemented.... (58; emphasis added)

This passage contains several of the themes found in both *ZT* and *VET*: personal affirmation of transcendent mystery, even divinity, found in the “everyday”; human limitation and perfectibility or wholeness; and possession and dispossession.²⁹

Possession is the appropriate attitude toward human limitation and the possibility of perfection; in opposition it is postmodernism, a certain sceptical tradition in philosophy (prior to and including deconstruction), socially divisive rainbow coalitions, and the left that are responsible for dispossessing individuals of such possibilities. And last, but not least, also important to Emberley’s argument is the notion of “structure”—referred to as “motivational structures” (15)—as the compelling field of causality generated out of our interactions with the contingent and everyday. This he understands in opposition to the progenitors of values education, Nietzsche and Heidegger, who, it is argued, repudiate “inauthentic everydayness” (57).

The “transition to the term ‘values,’” for Emberley, represents a momentous event of “epochal” import (14). Value in current usage, a kind of changeling and shapeshifter, takes many forms from “‘Christian’ values ... ‘human’ or ‘cultural’ values

²⁹ Gayatri Spivak effectively exposes the foundations and pretensions of empire in this essentially Kantian conception ([CPR](#) 31).

... [to] 'consumer' values" (13) and so on. However, more to the point here this cuckoo pokes its importunate neck out of the nest and squawks deceitfully that it is one and the same, "equivalent to the language of ethics or morals," and that its over-indulgent parents, having been lulled by "novelty," misrecognize it instead of the language of "limits, of directives of human conduct, of ideals of self or social perfection"; they take the discourse of value as self-evident, and "forget" that it does not truly partake of the same "underlying reality" (13) as ethics and morals. This epochal transition is represented as a moral contest for the heart and mind of human character. The struggle is not a matter of simple nuances of interdiction and prescription, but rather each "operates within a separate construct of reality" (15). However, at the level of the more everyday, human action is motivated by structures more social and political than transcendent:

... the meaningful existence within which ethics and morals ordered human desire, and the regime within which values are deployed, differ both in the image of reality which guarantees their intelligibility and the institutional structures designed on their behalf to form human character (14).

Although each may express some "'immutable essence' of human existence" (this also serves to qualify the notion of the socially constructed in order to maintain maximum space for the transcendent, essential, and universal), nevertheless these factions are also "historical constructs," and social institutions both pedagogical and political "have a strategic place within a complex arrangement of knowledge and power, and each [faction] is a distinct modality of their interaction" (15). Institutional structures, such as education and politics, in turn condition the lives of their creators and "collaborate to stimulate certain types of desires and passion, as well as motivational structures, behaviour, and attitudes, to incite certain forms of speech, to form particular forms of knowledge, to designate ... to organize...." (15).

It seems reasonable enough to claim that “institutional structures” are “designed” (more or less imperfectly, and more or more often less transparently) to accommodate in various ways a constellation of “motivational structures.” And it seems reasonable enough to suggest that each of the modalities of ethics, morals, and values “delimits a unique sphere of intervention” (15) as they are after all agonistic, or contestants in social struggle. These are not just “historical constructs,” but they are human “constructs” influenced or conditioned by history in some way. Because we are speaking here in terms of concepts of wholeness (“perfection”) and social totality—not to mention knowledge, motivation, structure, and in some way history—Louis Althusser (no less than the Foucault to whom Emberley claims a debt to) is a provocative contrast here:

... we can retain from Hegel precisely what masks from us this empiricism ... We can retain ... the fact that *the structure of the social whole* must be strictly interrogated in order to find in it the secret of the conception of history in which the ‘development’ of this social whole is thought ... (97)

To rephrase Emberley, the question is how it is that institutional structures are imbricated with motivational structures in comprising a social whole, and how it is that political and pedagogical constructs function “to stimulate,” to “incite,” to “form,” and to “motivate” their creators in turn: creators who are after all responsible for the conception and the construction in the first place. The relationships between these structures are intangible and subjective, historically conditioned; at the same time they are not separate from the material. But then my argument thus far serves only to paraphrase *VET* in order to speak what *ZT* renders silent, namely, that institutional and social structures are created by those who inhabit them, and those creators are recreated in turn by these structures. As Marx argues, “the objectification of the human essence both in its theoretical and practical aspects is required to make man’s *sense human* as well as to create the *human sense* corresponding to the entire wealth of

human and natural substance” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts”; 52), with the implication that “[i]t is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but ... their social being that determines their consciousness” (85). In the terms expressed in *Capital*, “acting upon nature outside of him, and changing it, he changes his own nature also” (53).³⁰ The causal relations between institutional and motivational structures are perhaps difficult to isolate and identify; however, the condition of the social subject’s imbrications with structure and cause is undeniable in as much as we are motivated by our social and natural environment. It is also undeniable that these days benefits and rewards, as well as interdictions and penalties, are dispensed unequally, indeed with spectacular partiality. And this inequality is institutional, structural, and systemic. As the above demonstrates, one of the crucial ways in which Emberley’s formulation of “motivational structures” differs from Althusser’s conception of structure is in the way that Althusser situates intellectual activity and knowledge production (subjective and abstract) in relation to the social matrix (material as well as intangible) of which it is a part: “Far from being an essence opposed to the material world, the faculty of a ‘pure’ transcendental subject ... the myth that idealism produces as a myth in which to recognize and establish itself, ‘thought’ is a peculiar real system, established on and articulated to the real world of a given historical society, which maintains determinate relations with nature, a *specific* system, defined by the conditions of its existence and practice, i.e., by a *peculiar structure*, a determinate type of ‘combination’ ... between its peculiar raw material (the object of theoretical practice), its peculiar means of production and its relations with the other structures of society” (42).

³⁰ Althusser problematizes this in his warning against the danger of a historicist humanist reduction that would “treat ... the *relations of production* as mere *human relations*” (139), that in fact reduces “the relations of production, political and ideological social relations ... to historicized ‘*human relations*’” (140).

Emberley argues that “common acts of possession characterizing the everyday invite us to deeper and more complex forms of reality.” Of course, “possession” also functions as the indispensable core of consumer capitalism: *private property*.³¹ And possession of this sort is crucial to the instrumentalist market that Emberley seeks to protect culture from. A normalized and normalizing alibi for epistemic and economic violence is expressed as “the possessive affinity to being that manifests itself in love of things, formation of character, or principles of truth” (*VET* 58). Again, this formulation embodies the contradictions and participates in the repressions of what Herrnstein Smith refers to as the “double discourse of value” (Guillory 296). Acting then on “invit[ation]” as it were, at this point we might more properly connect institutional structures and motivational structures—“common acts of possession” for example (self-possession, scholarly detachment, judicial and scholarly impartiality, and so on)—with what Althusser refers to as the “determination ‘in the last instance’ of ... non-economic structures by the economic structure” (99). Althusser, reading Marx, identifies the articulation of elements of the social structure, both dominant and subordinate, and their crucial determination by the economic fact in which the dominant cannot be “reduced to the primacy of a *centre* [or] ... the expressive unity of the essence within its phenomenon”:

This hierarchy only represents the hierarchy of effectivity that exists between the different ‘levels’ or instances of the social whole. Because each of the levels is itself structured, this hierarchy represents the hierarchy, the degree and index of effectivity existing between the different structured levels present in the whole: it is the hierarchy of effectivity of a structure dominant over subordinate structures and their elements ... [I]n order to conceive this ‘dominance’ of a structure over the other structures in the unity of a conjuncture it is necessary to

³¹ Jack Amariglio and Antonio Callari argue that one “quality of individuality is agents’ self-identification as proprietors of commodities. ... The self-identification of agents as proprietors is possible only if these agents are recognized by others as proprietors. In bourgeois society this recognition of proprietorship is codified in private property laws, but it also depends on the ideological conception and defense of these laws, particularly on the objectification through which agents are defined as selves differentiated from others. Agents are viewed as individuals who have a ‘natural right’ to some portion of the products of social labor, a right usually attributed to ‘their’ contribution to that social labor” (212). The authors argue that the category of individuality is not antithetical to Marx, or a Marxist critique.

refer to the principle of the determination 'in the last instance' of the non-economic structures by the economic structure; and that this 'determination in the last instance' is an *absolute precondition* for the necessity and intelligibility of the displacements of the structures in the hierarchy of effectivity, or of the displacement of 'dominance' between the structured levels of the whole ... (99; emphasis added)³²

If, out of context, this strikes us as coldly analytical,³³ nevertheless Althusser shifts us back—paradoxically—into the very realm of “deeper and more complex forms of reality” that Emberley claims a certain structure within the everyday moves us to. However, Emberley achieves this by denying structural cause in one book, and by idealizing its effects in the other. In a sense this programmatically reproduces the moral conflict of liberalism.³⁴ A brief example is worth considering before moving on.

Emberley's response to statistical inequality that favours men over women in Canadian universities is that while statistics are on the one hand “dismaying,” on the other “the question of what they mean and what should be done to change the situation are much more ambiguous” (211); nevertheless, he does support some kind of balance between “hiring on ... [the basis of] merit,” and some form of “intervention ... and compromise” in order to address statistical inequality (212). Therefore, while “antiracist education” and “recognition” of gender equality are “noble”³⁵ intentions (229), any

³² Compare Spivak's discussion of “in the last instance” in “A Question of Value,” *Outside in the Teaching Machine*.

³³ If determinism is a concern raised here, a foundational Marxist text such as *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* leaves infinite space for what Emberley calls the mystery of being; in spite of its claimed scientism Althusser and Balibar's text leaves this openness intact.

³⁴ Marx, as usual, supplies the necessary corrective to the tendency of both discussions, Emberley and Althusser's, to abstract from the realm of material experience. Nevertheless, Althusser addresses at a more philosophically abstract level a certain notion of the sovereign individual that Marx earlier exposed as a fiction. Emberley, for his part, participates in the liberal gesture that idealises the individual in the separation of the social into discrete “parts,” as J.S. Mill expresses it (74), and the primacy of individual action (“self-regarding virtues”) prior to collective interest (77). Marx demonstrates that the individual is socially constructed, “a social product,” and that logic does not allow the social, although it accommodates the individual “as a totality of human life-activity,” to be split into parts with one logically prior to the other: “What is to be avoided ... is re-establishing ... ‘Society’ as an abstraction *vis a vis* the individual. The individual is the *social being*” (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* 70-1).

³⁵ Emberley's idealisation of “noble” intent simply serves to render it abstract and enervated by mere impotent “recognition”; this marginalisation matches his sentimentalising of a departed left, “*intellectuels engagés* in the noblest sense of the word.... composed of decent, civilized intellectuals” (201-3), supplanted by “the cultural left [with] ... little charm and bottomless reserves of malice” (203).

“efforts to redress ... former injustices by accelerating the project of equity are fraught with perils” (211). The chief peril is the red peril, that is, the left orchestrated “social engineering [that] has replaced education” (229). The sad, dark history barely evoked here by “former injustices” begs the question of precisely what would be an acceptable time frame and pace for meaningful change, and acceptable to whom—particularly at a historical juncture in which the violent colonial inheritance has simply moved on, and the economic model it brought into being is today exponentially empowered by vastly improved technologies of violence and exploitation.³⁶

Canada’s racist history is disguised, even reinscribed, in the code words “former injustices.” Emberley condemns activist groups to historical oblivion—safely neutralised of all social effect—with this familiar gesture. The achievements of a “proud, new feminism” (seeming parthenogenesis in the 1960’s), and “decent, civilized intellectuals,” an “old left” (202-3), are sullied by their activist children: “the new rainbow coalition of feminists, visible minorities, aboriginals, disabled persons, gays, bisexuals and lesbians, proponents of minority discourse and postmodernist Marxists” (203). Furthermore, such assimilating condescension and euphemism (“noble” intention, “former injustices”) cannot help but evoke the forced assimilation of First Nations

³⁶ For an example of “social engineering” on a scale until relatively recently unimagined, and one rarely debated as such in the mainstream when social engineering is discussed, we might look to the agricultural revolution, genetically modified foods, and the unprecedented levels of starvation that attend these technological developments simultaneous with unprecedented levels of material wealth—also never before so unequally distributed. The claim that there is a long, long historical precedent for artificial genetic selection ignores the distinguishing fact of vastly improved technology. An analogy would be to claim that chemical weapons research in this unprecedented technological age needn’t be feared because there has always been war—and of course, beyond purposes of analogy, agribusiness and state war machines are mutually supporting. This strategic blindness accompanies the claim that resistance to genetically modified organisms will only harm the poor in the “underdeveloped” world that would otherwise benefit from the immediate incorporation of technological discovery into the market economy. This is argued with cynical indifference to the fact that since the agricultural revolution the eradication of hunger has been technically possible—for quite some time now—but it remains practically impossible in the absence of social technologies capable of realizing the promise of scientific discovery. Any improvement in social technologies is blocked by protectionist policies (of kinds that do not make the news as often as certain other “protectionist” policies) aimed at preventing any movement beyond what is necessary to enhance the ability of the dominant cultural and economic model to maintain and in fact increase disparity in its favour.

peoples disguised beneath the mask, the claimed impulse to “noble” intention, romanticising the proverbial being even as the living being suffers the on going effects of historical dispossession. This gesture has a long history, and goes some distance toward explaining how it is that Emberley can characterise activist groups interested in substantive change as “vindictive” as they struggle today with the consequences of our history.

The left’s agenda, the argument runs, follows from its “belie[f] that pervasive and systemic discrimination exists, so it seeks not just to eliminate racism, but to make race one of the most potent ingredients of education” (229). There is, however, something very unsatisfying about the alternatives expressed in *ZT*: “intellectual and spiritual adventures ... conversation and good books” (230). Emberley applauds Neil Bissoondath’s response to Marlene Norbese-Phillip’s charge that he is “pimping the tawdry racist views of colonial powers” (254): “Bissoondath shot back with the only appropriate response: ‘It’s the way public conversation is carried on in this country: lots of time to talk about everything except ideas’” (254). Bissoondath’s reply accords well with Emberley’s lament for a civil society (“*civitas*”) currently under siege, and the metaphor of society as polite conversation: “the *petite politesse* of refined speech” should be unruffled by “vulgar” activism (205) in speech or in political engagement. Emberley’s Platonic republic is threatened neither by revolution from the cultural left (with “ambitions ... [of] overturning the university” 229), nor from the strange fruit of postmodernism: linguistic indeterminacy and ethical relativism (205).

For liberalism, the problem with “[s]ystemic’ and ‘structural’ analyses” (92) is that “necessary linkage” (250) and “chains of inference”—such as “revisionist” feminism’s account of the Western misogynist tradition and its causal progression from the ancient Hebrews to Freud to Marc Lepine (215)—are “elusive and inchoate”

(110)³⁷. That is to say, the problem for contemporary neoconservative liberalism is one of cause, or more specifically “structural cause.” While the possibility of identifying “systemic discrimination” is “doubtful,” even paranoid, Emberley quite clearly believes there is, on the other hand, a causal link between the exposure of students to “the lives of exemplary people [Socrates, Christ] as models of excellence; of using myth, legend, and fable” in order to causally promote the “imitation and emulation of modalities of retrieval ... of ethical action ... [and to] instil a hierarchy of virtues” (VET 275). It is through contact with “our civilizational achievements,” and Matthew Arnold’s “best which has been thought and said,” that students are able to pursue “total perfection” and “consent to the structures and possibilities revealed in ... the data of experience” (276).

However, ethical action and virtue—claiming to aspire to “true inclusivity”—are not, according to this view, the only, not even the primary, motivational principles of society:

Ambitious and forceful persons will always be with us, and in the absence of a relatively benign system of conventional rewards for merit (public honours, economic gain, social status) they will find more indulgent and criminal means of excelling. (112)

Quite clearly then, the primary motivating principle in this argument is not moral values, but self-interest—“That smooth-fac’d gentleman, tickling Commodity,/Commodity, the bias of the world” (“The Life and Death of King John”; II.I.590-1). Liberalism, in this case, requires a calculus in which the “difference in potential and excellence” is quantifiable like the credits and debits on a balance sheet, and a society “based on

³⁷ Structural cause presents the occasion for considerable hypocrisy from the right, and right wing governments. Even as the Walkerton tragedy of 2000 was unfolding, the Harris government expended substantial media time declaring that economic prosperity in Ontario was directly caused by its policies of small government and deregulation; yet when the enormity of the Walkerton tragedy unfolded the same government expended even more energy absolving itself of all responsibility, declaring that no connection between government policy and the Walkerton affair could be made or proven. So much for respect and responsibility—the battle cry of the like-minded Reform-Alliance in the 2000 federal election.

sentiments that discount [such] difference” risks depleting (“emasculates”) the determinable social reserves of such subjective potential as well as rendering impotent the “incentives that unite individual pursuit of happiness with the collective good” (ZT 112). Hiring and measuring scholastic achievement on any basis other than merit “risks promoting mediocrity and private resentment” (112). It presupposes an almost statistical limit to the highly subjective and therefore ultimately indeterminate reserves of excellence and achievement that menaced by public, institutionalised redress (in contrast to private philanthropy) threaten to drop off the graph into the red of mediocrity. Trying to reconcile “fact” and “fable,” accounting for need and greed in such a way yields “this eccentric sum ... this unaccountable product” (*Hard Times*; 48). Ethical action and virtue are the claimed rewards of “healthy competition, initiative and achievement” (112); predictably, however, extortion (the invisible hand for Adam Smith and objectivism for Ayn Rand) is the organising principle of institutional structures and it is extortion that compels the “motivational structures” of the social subject. Emberley’s antipathy to the ethical “relativism” of postmodernism is exposed here as the mystification it is by the euphemistic understatement articulated here as the “relatively benign”: there is nothing coincidental, relative or benign about “conventional reward” as practiced today.

Deconstruction stands in as the exemplary form of postmodernism for Emberley. Its philosophical scepticism is seriously compromised by a “distinctly leftist interpretation” (104)³⁸; yet, unlike his romanticised “old left” (reduced to titular status and thus exiled from any effect in the practical world) which “continues to speak of the ideals of social responsibility and justice” (106), deconstruction extends the logic of its claim that meaning is socially constructed and “abandons the idea that there is a ‘just’

³⁸ “[T]he cultural left’s postmodern identity politics ... deconstructs all the forms of human civility and perfectibility that once made up the moral code of a genuine liberal education” (*VET* 245).

or 'fair' manner of ordering the human world" (105). Ironically, however, this critical agent most responsible for the "litigiousness of the university community" (99) actively encourages this from a position of cultural and ethical relativism and with a consequent refusal to impose judgment. Emberley levels the familiar charge of political quietism at deconstruction (110-11), but then inconsistently castigates it on the other hand for social and political activism outside of universities: "Postmodernism is ... an intellectual tool currently being used in various social sectors to rewrite history and to re-engineer the evident experiences of living" (109-10). Deconstruction's critique, of "eurocentricity" for example, is associated in his argument with the "elusive ... attempt to identify systemic discrimination" (110). Other Canadian critics have explored this question of structural cause ("systemic discrimination"). Heather Murray, in *Working in English*, prefacing a masterful feminist deconstruction of Wordsworth's "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," asks, "[d]o structures which exclude women have their origins in the texts and text-reading practices by which women are valued and devalued?" (147). This question follows from the "foundational question of literary studies ... the relationship between 'literature' and 'life'" (141). Today this relationship is more often framed, Murray argues, as a "question of the relationship between 'reading' and 'resistance': that is, what is the consonance or causality between our most basic disciplinary practice and political life?" (141).

Murray's larger concern is the classroom situation and the relationship between instructor and students, particularly a psychoanalytical pedagogy that seeks to empower students, but instead reproduces a traditional teaching perspective that closely follows New Critical assumptions. Drawing a parallel between the Wordsworth poem and the classroom situation, Murray demonstrates how such "educative and critical" models are "grounded in, [and] enact ... a repetition of, a common literary structuration" (146). However much psychoanalysis might seek to empower students

and “de-authorize teaching,” Murray argues that its teaching strategies are “traditionally literary” in positing “a post-Leavisite consonance between ‘literature’ and ‘life,’” in assuming that students initially lack knowledge and are brought to knowledge through the “maintenance of a set of therapeutic disciplinary rationales ... [and] the student-teacher relationship replicates that between the poetic object and (male) poet, and between the poem and critic” (146).

The Wordsworth poem represents for Murray an example of the “engenderment of interpretation” (146). The poem positions the eulogized female object as Muse, but one who is “doubly the generator of discourse while remaining herself silent” (147). This parallels the assumptions of psychoanalytical pedagogy with its traditional underpinnings: reading and loss in the Wordsworth example (a range of critical perspectives assume a “consonance of form and content, a readerly ... identification with the narrator, both affectively and in the attempt to restore the absent narrative line” 150) parallels “a therapeutic practice, which rank-shifts students from the position of potential knowers to the already-known” (151). Murray asks, “what is the relationship between (male) interpretation and (female) inaudibility?” (150). She argues that a reading in “which form and content have less consonance (especially when ‘she’ brings the content and ‘he’ brings the form)” (150), and in which “the ‘she’ in the poem ... [is] kept in view as much as the narratorial ‘me’” (150) might open a perspective in which “‘woman’ may be viewed, not as the text to be read ... but as the absence of a text whose recreation, in the guise of creation, then becomes the poet’s duty and desire” (150). What then is the nature of the structural connections, if any, between the fictional creation (literature) and the students’ (life)? In the literary work “the muse ... is ... figured as the dead female cipher ... from which male action is born.... In this economy, interpretation-as-substitution is the structure both of the relationship of poet

to poetic object and critic to poem, in a clearing away of the text already in place” (150-1).

Murray found a similar process of effacement, a similar “clearing away” of students articulated in a group of articles³⁹ on psychoanalysis and pedagogy: students’ everyday expressions of “the central questions of literary study and literary theory—of interpretation and system and power” (151) were dismissed and taken “purely as symptom” (151).⁴⁰ For example, the authors “set up gendered binaries of experience/analysis, opinion/thought, speech/writing, spontaneity/attention, unintentional communication/rhetorical strategy, blindness/insight, illness/health, with the woman student occupying the first position in each instance and the male professor the second” (145). In such ways these authors reinforce the assumed “stable authority” of teacher and text relative to the student who, in what Murray suggests, “may be an unacknowledged counter-transference ... is expected to become the ‘analyst,’ a silent, featureless, listener” (151). This of course affects students of every gender. Murray very effectively demonstrates how such “educative and critical” models are “grounded in, [and] enact ... a repetition of, a common literary structuration” (146).

To some extent Murray demonstrates here little more than intriguing relations of homology between literature and life, between culture and material conditions, between the “conditions of teaching” within the academy and the world outside the walls. In a sense the “necessary linkages” in a chain of causation will always be tenuous and difficult to identify and prove; however, in an important sense, structures of ‘analogy,’ and other rhetorical figures structure our lived experience as profoundly as any institutional structures—even more profoundly perhaps if only because language is a

³⁹ *College English* devoted two special issues to “‘psychoanalysis and pedagogy’” in 1987.

⁴⁰ “The premise that students do not have self-knowledge in the beginning but may develop it forms the second connection of the ‘psychoanalytic’ to the traditional classroom, in the maintenance of a set of therapeutic disciplinary rationales, elaborated most specifically in I. A. Richard’s psychiatrizing of students but held by many professors through a general sense of student inadequacy” (146).

primary motivating structure.⁴¹ At the level of the institution structural cause may be more readily apparent as the institutional hierarchy reproduces itself: although the authors of Murray's examples articulate the need to "dismantle the position of the teacher as a '*sujet supposé savoir*'" (143), and the female critics for their part also engaged a strategy of "de-authorization," she found that an "absence of attention to the specific, gendered, scene of instruction and its institutional siting" (152) results in a reassertion of the authority of the teacher as analyst and a reinscription of the student as analysand.

If we wish to expand the scope here from the Canadian local to the global, we might look to Spivak's (de)constructive claim for the efficacy of "figuration as a case of theoretical production (one practice among many), or as making visible the impossible that is the condition of possibility of all setting of theory to work" (CPR 197). What are the global relations between figuration, structural cause, the economic, and relations of dominance and subordination? How are institutions of social reproduction imbricated in these relations, and how is theory being put to work today? Spivak clearly demonstrates that the global division of labour into North and South functions as a signifying system "dividing the world into maps that make visible the irreducibly abstract quality of geo-geography. One of the guiding principles of geography ... [is that it is] inextricably tangled with the mysterious phenomenon of language" (379). One material manifestation of the relations between figuration and structural cause is the World Bank's insistence "that higher education in the developing countries should be de-emphasized because it is unproductive" (379). At the same time, as Spivak exposes, "the raw material for maps of investment" is "precisely the traditional knowledge of indigenous and rural peoples of the South that is being appropriated,

⁴¹ For a fresh perspective on the accusation of linguistic and ethical relativism levelled at postmodernism and the left (grounded in linguistic relativism) see Guillory on the history of aesthetic judgment and its marginalisation in the canon debate.

patented, and ‘sold’ back to them by the North” (n. 383). And of course this brings us right back to Canada, its social structures and its institutions of higher learning.

Murray’s question about the nature of structural causality represents a foundational conundrum not only for literature departments and the cultural disciplines (the humanities, but arguably all disciplines), but it also represents a foundational paradox in the tension between the cultural and the material. In his Marxist sociology, Pierre Bourdieu, in a succinct formulation, argues that the cultural field and the economic are necessarily incommensurable: because “there is no ‘universal equivalent’ for the adequation of cultural and material capital when the latter is *already* the order of the universal equivalent. The conversion of cultural into material capital (or vice versa) is precisely the condition of the commensuration of the incommensurable, an irresolvable contradiction” (in Guillory 326).

In one sense, then, there is and *can be no* answer to Murray’s question. On the other hand, Bourdieu’s formulation demonstrates why in an important sense (one Murray is well aware of) this unanswerability is the very answer to the question it poses: the fundamental condition of the “commensuration of the incommensurable” is the condition of the social and political order today. In what ways, we might ask, are culture, knowledge, and intellectual freedom repressed in the fraudulent commensuration of the incommensurable indexed by the current designation of this “the information age”? What are the vectors of relationship—of dominance and subordination, possession and dispossession—between all the competing forms of value in such a normalised and normalising designation?⁴²

⁴² Nobel Laureate John Polanyi effectively argues that shackling scientific “enterprise” to the law of the market—supposedly in order to more effectively produce marketable information and marketable things in this “the information age”—in the institutional phenomenon of “Canadian Centre[s] of Excellence” encourages not excellence but instead threatens mediocrity (The Globe and Mail, Saturday, November 4, 2000, D6). Readings’ semiotic exposure of the functional bankruptcy of the term ‘excellence’ demonstrates how this works at the microlevels of language.

Of course it is at precisely this point of irresolvable contradiction that there lies the potential for social and political engagement (“the consonance or causality between our most basic disciplinary practice and political life”). Such a context is far from being the occasion for despair—nothing to be done. On the other hand, neither is it the occasion for ignoring the history of a foundational concept-metaphor—value—in order to participate uncritically in the disguising of that history and its consequences in the pretence that “value-for-the-money” will adequately stand in as the universal equivalent for all other more abstract, non-economic forms of value (affective, ethical, subjective, culture and the cultural) in abject subjection to the imperious inevitability of the “financialization of the globe” (Spivak; *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*). It is this condition of incommensurability and this context that renders Guillory’s parenthetical “never more than an analogy” (325) particularly resonant in his account of political economy’s originary aesthetic analogy and the birth of a discourse of value, and the subsequent (almost simultaneous) “mutual forgetting [that] constitutes aesthetics and political economy as antithetical discourses” (Guillory 317): never more than an analogy, but more potent in its ability to motivate the social imaginary by virtue of its being an analogy—that is, more potent for policing its own origins through figuration.⁴³ Emberley’s notion of a liberal education reproduces this history and its subterfuge.

Emberley’s desire to return to value the object of its “reverence”—the meaning, moral structures, and “virtue” of the Western tradition—comes at a cost when contingency and plurality (social beings creatively engaged with, resisting with “vulgarity” even, social, institutional, material and affective structures) are subjugated to

⁴³ Althusser notes the crucial importance of language to the emergence of a theoretical revolution (Marx’s critique of political economy), and the object itself: “[Engels’ preface] reveals an intimate relationship between the *object* of a determinate scientific discipline on the one hand, and the system of its terminology and that of its ideas, on the other. It therefore reveals an intimate relationship between the object, the terminology and the corresponding conceptual system—a relationship which, once the object has been modified ... must necessarily induce a correlative modification in the system of ideas and conceptual terminology” (148).

a profoundly partial “impartiality” and subsumed in a reputed “genuine universality” that “scholarly culture extends to everyone courageous enough to ask questions” (273).

The authentic, universal “essence” of the question of value, however, includes in this context—is in fact conditioned by—the repression of its omission (“the marks of an omission produced by the ‘fullness’ of the utterance itself” (Althusser 23). The value of scholarly labour as the value of the courageous question—what is the value of scholarly labour?—is not redeemed in a contentless shift in terms that simply substitutes ‘virtue’ for ‘value,’ nor is it redeemed by subsuming plurality in “true inclusivity,” in the egalitarian deception indexed by “everyone.”

Chapter Three: *Hard Times* to “New Times”¹: So What’s New?

1. From Alienation to “Disembedding”: The Trajectory from the Global in Theory to the Global in Practice²

The practical agents of capitalist production and their ideological word-spinners are as incapable of thinking of the means of production separately from the antagonistic social mask they wear at present as a slave-owner is of thinking of the worker himself as distinct from his character as a slave.

Karl Marx, *Capital* I. 757

Marxism’s relatively long history is, at the very least, one of confrontation through persistent critique of the ploys and depredations of capital even as capital has greatly enhanced its dominion by improving and consolidating its technological ability to reproduce itself. An important element of this consolidation of power is the denial of the existence of any viable competitor. Marxism represents just such an alternative. Nevertheless, euphoric claims about the newness of today’s global regime without Socialism, following the silencing of practical attempts any where it is attempted, accompany the claim that Marxism is irrelevant, that Marxism no longer has anything to say about the contemporary. Similar claims can be made about Darwin, or Freud. However, just as contemporary evolutionary biology continues to build on the work of Darwin, or today’s psychoanalysis continues to build on the work of Freud, Marxism

¹ Many critics, from a variety of perspectives, note the triumphalist ideology that today makes the claim for a paradigm shift in political and economic culture. The supposed shift from Fordism to post-Fordism is a well known example. Robert M. Young, in the introduction to *Science and Culture* (number 8), argues “debate about possible futures has been hijacked by futurologists declaring that we have now irrevocably entered New Times” (8). Not surprisingly, while much today is clearly unprecedented, it is obvious that much of what is described as new today (the “new world order” for example) remains unchanged—and sadly so.

² According to Elinor Altvater and Birgit Mahnkopf, what “Marx characterized as the ‘propagandistic tendency’ to bring the world market into being is no longer an abstraction which can only be understood by an analytical mind. It is rather a reality of capitalist modernity” (323).

has not stood still in spite of triumphalist claims these days of its demise. Marxist socialism continues to respond critically and innovatively to the challenges of the shifting contemporary. However, the sheer dynamism of capitalism (as universal equivalent, as monopoly cloaked in the mantle of heterogeneity and choice) ensures that Marxism's riposte and alternative is presented with a particular challenge conditioned by this specific context and its history. If, as Gayatri Spivak argues, postmodernism represents a repetition as much as a rupture (317), then a modernist, Marxist critique still has considerable descriptive power even today. Adorno's incisive description of modernism's context, and his condemnation of the state of "intellectual freedom [for example] ... in bourgeois society" bears repeating:

Not only does the mind mould itself for the sake of its marketability, and thus reproduce the socially prevalent categories. Rather, it grows to resemble ever more closely the *status quo* even where it subjectively refrains from making a commodity of itself. The network of the whole is drawn ever tighter, modelled after the act of exchange. It leaves the individual consciousness less and less room for evasion, preforms it more and more thoroughly, cuts it off *a priori* as it were from the possibility of differencing itself as all difference degenerates to a nuance in the monotony of supply (1034).

Arguably, the context today is very different only to the extent that universities are under ever increasing pressure to commodify knowledge and knowledge production in the name of relevance to an extent not experienced by Adorno. In concert with the increase of managerial solutions to the administrative requirements of universities, there is the use of management specialists in positions formerly held in part-time rotation by full-time academics. There is a shift in terminology that increasingly uses the language of business management: scholarly activity is more and more referred to as "information management" further reducing the gulf between scholarship and training in favour of the purely technocratic. It seems hardly necessary here to note the ability of language to form the social structures it describes. In Canada, in 1951, the space of "subjective refrain" set aside by reform-liberalism, for example, is the moment

marked off as detachment and Arnoldean disinterestedness by Canada's Royal Commission Report on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (the Massey Commission).³

Spivak argues that the postmodern contemporary represents a repetition as much as a rupture. Reconsidering the photographic negative in Andy Warhol's work that Fredric Jameson uses to support his claim of a radical rupture between the modern and the postmodern,⁴ Spivak demonstrates with a striking example that, at the level of lives lived, postmodernism is perhaps less a rupture than the same old, same old:

For the photo-graph ... is also the guarantee of the existence of the object-world. Indeed, if one wanted to extend the concept-metaphor, one could locate a break between film (the photo-graphic negative) and video (electronic virtual space), and extend Jameson's isomorphic practice to say that postmodernism (and post-modernization as postfordism) is related to micro-electronic transnational capitalism rather than multinational late capitalism [Jameson's term]. And then the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union can reveal to us that hi-tech postfordism is supported, in the lower ranks, by labor practices that would fit right into old-style industrial capitalism. (317).

It is Spivak's contention that Jameson repeatedly invokes "multinational capitalism without attention to its multinational consequences" (330). Many people today, including workers more privileged than garment workers, know from personal experience⁵ that change in the postmodern is easily as much a matter of intensity and

³ For comparative purposes, see the most recent government policy document on culture *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Being: The Evolving Role of the Federal Government in Support of Culture in Canada*. 1999.

⁴ It must be noted that Jameson more carefully articulates the transition between the modern and postmodern than Spivak's critique might suggest. Although Jameson accepts for "pragmatic reasons ... that the postmodern is as unusual as it thinks it is ... that it constitutes a cultural and experiential break" (xiii), he also argues that "postmodernism is not the cultural dominant of a wholly new social order ... but ... yet another systemic modification of capitalism itself ... [within which] shreds of older avatars ... live on" (xii).

⁵ I myself work fulltime as a library assistant in a research library (factory) devoting the remainder of the day to my own academic work. There is a romantic notion of the student's disciplined self-sacrifice in the interest of furthering knowledge, personal reward to follow later, reward that nevertheless will retain its patina of altruism through teaching and mature study. Nevertheless, while I am compelled by the fundamental value of such idealism (even having a vested interest in believing it to be true), there is no denying that at the same time I am imbricated in a dominant global system that dings it into its citizens that

magnitude as it is complete transformation into something else. In terms of technological advance, there is no comparison between today's genetic engineering and the millennia-long selection of domesticated agricultural organisms through very simple, more immediately human technologies. On the other hand, today's historically unprecedented privatisation of genetic material has more than just an incidental similarity to the enclosing of common land that took place from the time of the English Renaissance to the dawn of the industrial age—in fact it quite clearly represents the next (final?) stage of this long process of privatisation. However, the technology and tempo is unprecedented: in a matter of a few short years, even before the human genome had been “mapped,” tens of thousands of patents have been, and continue to be, taken out on genetic material with virtually no more “value-added” labour involved than the investment in the legal means to draw them up. This example alone demonstrates that the enclosing of the commons is an ongoing process; the shift from the modern to the postmodern is less a substantive shift than a remarkable increase in technological tempo. Cultural dispossession reaching its peak in the nineteenth century is today followed by technological intrusion and the technological penetration of the economy into every aspect of our lives to an extent unimagined by the British at the height of their imperial ascendancy. The scandalous new-wave of dispossession of the vulnerable of their own genetic inheritance is cynically justified as invention (virtual) in the interest of scientific discovery (private profit). The enormity of such facts threatens to render trivial the question that concerns us here: what will the consequences of this enclosing of knowledge be for disinterested scientific enquiry and academic freedom?

national economic competitiveness and individual social survival depend on “continuous education,” or “life-long learning.” This is a mantra that runs not coincidentally with the discourse of scarcity (in an ocean of plenty for the few), and the massive underfunding (both private and public) of education in this country; at the same time universities are under increasing pressure to privatise education in the interest of choice as the old song would have it. This is a considerable privilege to the extent that continuous education for me now means graduate school, and not upgrading my skills as an oilfield technician. And, as I say, in either case I am certainly more privileged than the workers Spivak evokes here.

There is no doubt that there is much about the contemporary that is new, and if it does not represent an abrupt rupture, or “absolute break,” (Jameson xx), then certainly a paradigm shift in intensity or vector (magnitude and direction). This sense of a shift in intensity is suggested by Jameson’s apophthegm: “Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process” (x). This expresses the “autoreferential,” if not the tautological, nature of postmodern culture as postmodernism recreates itself as a “return of narrative as the narrative of the end of narratives” (xii). In this way, Jameson reinflects Lyotard’s account of a rupture, the “end of the ‘master narratives’”: “everything significant about the disappearance of master narratives has itself to be couched in narrative form” (xi). This shift in intensity is then autoreferentiality as the index of the “sheer” penetration of the social matrix by commodification in the abstract, in the reverberating consumption of the self-same in every discrete instance. Perhaps we witness here the globalisation of narratability itself. The dominance (difference enclosed) of this new narrative thus registers the activities of the homological, monocultural forces that increasingly reorder all aspects of twenty-first century life from agriculture to television, the “‘market economy’ as a totality” (Altvater and Mahnkopf; 308). But, then that would be a master narrative would it not? This is not the same as suggesting that “the *cultural* and the *economic* ... collapse back into one another and say the same thing” (xxi), as Jameson suggests; rather, in the postmodern, just as in the modern, it remains necessary to keep in mind Adorno’s admonition that dialectical method “is obliged to be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039).

The homogeneous is an illusion, as Jameson also suggests, and the parenthetical nature of the following parallel is more than apropos, manifesting as it does the “effacement in disclosure” (*CPR*; 310) of the postmodern cyborg, Capital: “The constitutive impurity of all postmodernism theory, then (like capital itself ... must

include the foreign body of alien content)" (Jameson; xii). The strength of any culture, or any nation, such as Canada, lies in its ability to circulate within its borders, as well as to project outward, its own narrative; the test of the social well-being of a culture or nation is determined by who is allowed to participate in constructing a narrative of diversity. How does that work when "the *cultural* and the *economic* ... collapse back into one another and say the same thing"? How does that work when, given Spivak's more tendentious description of actual conditions, the market economy (exchange value) is the both the "parasitic part [and] is also the species term of the whole" (*SR*; 118)? Spivak, writing about the canon/culture debate in the United States ("the West-and-the-rest-debate"), makes an important distinction, arguing, "in effect the two sides legitimize each other. In a Foucauldian language, one could call them an opposition within the same discursive formation" (*OTM*; 279). Is Jameson contradicting himself in the two claims above, or is he merely reproducing the actual contradictions of postmodern capital? If the latter, where is the robust articulation of resistance to such conditions conceived of as more than merely a fatal "collapse" of an opposition within the same discursive formation?

Jameson's seemingly mystifying epigram ("Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process") is a paraphrase of Marx's own exposure of the "mysterious" mechanism that transforms the "product of labour" into an "enigma ... so soon as it assumes the form of commodities" (446). It remains to be seen, however, in what ways Jameson's formula represents an epistemic transformation of what Marx describes as the "mysterious thing," the "enigmatical" commodity that represents "social relations ... as the fantastic form of a relation between things" (447). Or put differently, if today we witness the shift to a new level of intensity or penetration of the economy into lives lived—as Jameson's paraphrase certainly suggests—then what

might be the “metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties” (444) attending its appearance?

Elinor Altvater and Birgit Mahnkopf, in “The World Market Unbound,” observe, “markets as an economic place of exchange and as a social institution are ancient” (315). Markets are as old as the “neolithic revolution when it became possible to produce a tradable surplus” (315). Therefore, since the advent of the industrial revolution, it is “not the market itself which is historically new, but rather the all-encompassing reach and enormous tempo of market transactions” (306) that is unprecedented. Spivak refers to this epistemic shift as the “global hyperreal,” or the “financialization of the globe” (397), empowered by the “computerization of the great stock exchanges and dismantling of nationally based capital” begun in the 1970’s (360). Marx wrote of alienation as the product of the “fetishism of commodities” (447), or the objectification of human labour: again, epigrammatically articulated, “Value is a relation between persons ... disguised as a relation between things” (449). Alienation on an entirely new register marks the displacement, after Bretton Woods, of the unique individuals that embody the social by “an impersonal ‘Economic Citizen,’ site of authority and legitimation, lodged in finance capital markets and transnational companies” (*CPR*; 276).⁶ This marks the appearance of a virtual citizen invested with a disproportionate franchise. Altvater and Mahnkopf, recontextualising Karl Polanyi’s 1957 use of the term, describe this new stage of technologically empowered alienation as “disembedding.”

⁶ This virtual entity is embodied in actual human beings. Canadians were not long ago taught the power of the bond market and electronic global finance increasingly self-contained and detached from social responsibility; at the same time its managers enjoy an enhanced ability to influence the social. The lesson took the form of bond-traders in New York manipulating the social policy of the Canadian government (Chretien Liberals, first term) by invoking through the media the instantaneous and adverse volatility of bond markets to social policy unfavourable to the market. Of course, “market volatility” is no more than economic agit-civility for what is in practice outright market violence.

Disembedding, simply put, is the “separation of the economy from society” (309) that accompanies the “rationalizing economization of social relations” (308). The ongoing process of disembedding (normalised by “*Sachzwange*,” or “objective compulsion”) has been facilitated, according to the authors, by “expert systems” (311), by the transition from “biotic, spacially and temporally limited energy resources” to “fossil and nuclear energy,” and the emergence of a “global spatio-temporal regime” (309). Its effects “feed back onto society” and are normalised by the “compulsion of integration” (*Sachzwange*) that is starkly exemplified in the “capitalist imperative of the new age ... ‘time is money’. Life time, free time, work time, time for oneself and time for others ... obey this motto unconditionally” (309). William Pietz, recapitulating Marx’s critique of fetishism, argues that with the development of banking systems the “substance of money [becomes] ... time or, more precisely, the temporalization of social power ... banks *create* money simply by contracting new credit-debt relations—in effect lending the same money several times in a miraculous multiplication that is possible because deposits are withdrawn, loans are paid off, and interest comes due over varying periods of time” (n146). Human interaction is less and less determined by direct social participation; rather, today “credit schedules ... determine the rhythm of global time regimes” (Altvater and Mahnkopf; 312), even as society is less than ever held together by “gifts and generosity,” and more and more integrated by “the market process, ‘naked interest’ ... [and] the binary code of ‘payment/non-payment’” (311). Jameson’s thesis that in the postmodern time has been displaced by space⁷ does not satisfactorily explain a context in which “spatio-temporal abstraction and money” (311) *together* render social relations increasingly virtual within the new electronic

⁷ “[I]t is at least arguable that *our* daily life, *our* psychic experience, *our* cultural languages, are today dominated by space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism proper” (quoted in Spivak; 313). Spivak cites this (concatenating ‘our’) as an example of centrist “[t]ransnational literacy” (315) incautious with respect to the “specificity of subject position” (313).

(computerized) economic system.⁸ As with the division of labour (regulated by and dispersed throughout “expert systems”), “disembedding mechanisms ... remove social relations from the immediacies of context” (311).

Of course the primary mechanism of alienation is marked by the “transition” that occurs when “a general type of useful thing comes to function as a general-equivalent exchange object ... [as] it comes to be recognized as embodying a new quality: that of a general form, the very medium of exchange (money)” (Pietz; 146). The general form is further transmogrified into “a universal form” in which common social practices are “transubstantiat[ed] ... into custom or law”: “these causally effective representational forms are ‘universals’ that incorporate ... the particular social processes that produce them and which they thereby alter” (146). “[C]apitalist production as a mode in which social value is fetishistically materialized” (147), cycles through the exchange circuits of valorisation, realization, and accumulation. “[V]alue creation by labor in commodity production,” the realization of “value in money form during market circulation ... and ‘accumulation’ of realized value through capital investments” is an endlessly repeated circuit (147). Therefore, concealed beneath law and custom is the general form, the general equivalent, “money-capital,” an autopropagating process that “becomes an end in itself”:

The object that had been an accidental means to achieving some desired end becomes a fixed necessity, the very embodiment of desire, and the effective,

⁸ The compression of space and temporality, with global extension—the effect of micro-electronic transnational capital—is represented in the 1999-2000 Canadian National Railways’ advertising campaign in the image of gargantuan children towing, like beach toys, globe-straddling container ships. The reassuring message is that globalisation is more than safe for our (white, privileged global-tourist) children; and at the same time, transnational global finance is child’s play, a day at the beach. In other words, while small (the local) may be beautiful, today there is nothing like innocence, and nothing seems more innocently seductive to some than globalisation (the economic that transcends social responsibility) with an unprecedented global reach. Hollywood’s *Dark City* represents spacio-temporal compression in a future world reduced to a cosmically isolated, inward looking city with a nineteen-fifties, modernist ambiance (art deco, golden age of radio, detective stage-sets and action, tropes common to films like *Brazil*, *Blade Runner*, and a host of similar postmodern, modernist repetitions) in which we no longer see the sun, and the city is recreated anew every night, along with human memory, by an inescapable and malevolent technological matrix.

exclusive power for gratifying it. The human truth of capital is that, as a means that has become an end, it is a socially constructed, culturally real power-object: it is the instrumentalized power ... over ... labor activity through investment decisions. Capital is a form of rule, of social government. It is this political truth that the chiasmic personification-reification structure of capitalist fetishism conceals. (147)

The “substance of capital itself is ‘value,’” and in its purest form, as “*interest-bearing capital ... finds its most objectified form [and] ... appears ... as an independent source of value; as something that creates value*” (149).

Continuing the paraphrase of Marx, Pietz argues the crisis of capital arrives at the moment that this self-reproducing “temporal-material system” (today greatly empowered on a global scale) is exposed “as social government (and, therefore, as democratically accountable)” (149): “[t]he micropolitical fact that our *real* social government consists of the private, undemocratic decisions made by corporations and banks becomes visible in the macropolitics of social security funds and international debt” (150). That there is today a glaring crisis in democracy in the West is undeniable. This crisis is nevertheless matched only by the greatly enhanced ability of the market to function very much like the operating systems of computers—largely invisible in its innermost functions, and yet everywhere normalised and everywhere unquestioned in its effects in the everyday. At the same time it enjoys the ability to function purely in its own interest, serenely independent of democratic debate and agency. Democratic institutions more and more resemble the Roman Senate after Augustus—a disempowered figurehead—as real power increasingly devolves onto those institutions independent of the nation-state (IMF, WTO, World Bank) that form the infrastructure of a world government whose surrogate political party is the market and “market forces.” The sole constituent of this single party is the virtual citizen, Spivak’s “impersonal ‘Economic Citizen,’” site of authority and legitimation, lodged in finance capital markets and transnational companies” (Spivak; 276).

Technology makes possible the ability of “money as money” to “overcome space and destroy time” (317), and thereby to “decouple” itself from the social (while remaining very much the operator of the commodity cycle). The implications for the political, and the spaces of the political, are for Spivak dramatic, as the example of contemporary money managers demonstrates:

The self-propulsion of money as money comes to fruition only when the material and energy become available to detach time and space from the immediacy of a banality limited by the everyday world. Only then does money appear as the superbly suitable instrument ... not only to connect distant times and spaces and to mediate the respective interests based there through arbitrage, but above all to re-organize temporal and spatial coordinates. While commodity owners must still be spatially and temporally present in order to exchange their wares, this is no longer necessary for the owners of money. (317)

While “disembedding on the national scale is never as complete as it is on the global scale” (316), the emergence today of a “global spatio-temporal regime” (309) has “created a global *debt-society*” (318) that is hierarchal⁹ and structured by the “order of markets”—and therefore structured by disparity. Marx, in his day, already “conceived the trading of commodities as a trade of ‘labor times’” (Amariglio and Callari; 204). Much has changed in the interim. It is here with the emergence of a global spatio-temporal regime that we can mark the emergence today of a specifically postmodern episteme as a politics of appearance in which maximum regulation (presided over by the simulacrum of “an impersonal ‘Economic Citizen’”) masquerades¹⁰ as the democratic resistance of unique individuals to “government intervention,” or government regulation:

⁹ “[A] capitalist economy creates a specific hierarchal order of markets: the money market directs the goods market whose development directs the labour market ... Marx was quite right when he showed in his form-analysis of value how work as the final creator of all value becomes socialized through the circulation of money. Market economies are, as the ‘monetary Keynesians’ emphasize, money economies, and money decodes their laws of movement” (316).

¹⁰ Altvater and Mahnkopf point out that the assumption that globalisation and free trade will only thrive in a deregulated environment, and that the need for regulation will diminish with a deregulated market is not borne out by research: in “contrast to neo-liberal assumptions that more market means less state, market economizations produce an enormous demand for legal regulation of money relations which increases state intervention at least with respect to regulations.... economic deregulation is followed by regulatory law and political re-regulation” (321).

When interest and currency rates are no longer determined politically by legitimate institutions of the nation state but rather are formed by global markets, the market dynamic can no longer be politically regulated according to directives which are *incompatible* with it. Then in reality as well as theoretically, ideologically and finally politically the ratification of these conditions of global disembeddness [sic] appears as a politics of 'deregulation'. Politics does not disappear, but its rationality is synchronized with the economy. (319)

The consequences of this synchronization for Canada (disempowerment of the nation-state), and the conflation of "market institutions [with] ... political ones" (324), finds a dramatic example in the recent scandal of a single New York bond-trader (the embodied agent of the above virtual citizen) micro-managing Canadian social policy [*Globe and Mail* 1997?].

The difference between the commodity fetish critiqued by Marx, alienation its primary product, and disembedding today is that the industrialism of Marx's day has been vastly empowered by technology even as the social technologies necessary to meet the challenges and crises of the "new world order" have failed to progress beyond the ineffectual compromises of nineteenth and twentieth century reform-liberalism. We can say today that compromise in both senses conspires against meaningful change even as the sense of the word as a bringing into danger increasingly outweighs the sense of 'compromise' as "mutual concession" in the interest of resolving conflict. Even the rapprochement between labour and capital (the "welfare state" etc.), the concessions hard won out of the catastrophes of the Depression and the unprecedented blood-bath of two World Wars turn out to be impotent compromise in the face of today's discourse of inevitability. At the same time, compromise functions as the pathetically reduced theme park of socio-political debate (as any election in the West clearly demonstrates). The sole member of this one party system, standing in for all unique and particular individuals, is the abstract, virtual constituent: the "impersonal 'Economic Citizen'" (Spivak 276), the beneficiary of the fully developed capitalist credit-debt system (Pietz 149). On the other hand, unique, non-virtual human beings are

“members of the body of Capital, whose value-essence transcends and yet incarnates itself in these material beings” (149). The “temporal-material system” of capital, the substance of which is value, has expanded and continues to expand its reach. For example, as Spivak argues, one of the primary strategies of “development,” as that which the wealthy nations project onto the global poor largely to the formers’ own advantage and the latter’s exponentially greater disadvantage, is to incorporate underprivileged women into the global financial matrix and into economic dependency through “the encouragement of women’s microenterprise—credit-baiting with no infrastructure” (419).

Altvater and Mahnkopf, like Spivak, note the consolidation of “a specifically ‘Fordist’ culture” (rather than its supersession). They argue that the vitality of Fordist culture is guaranteed by the unconditional acceptance that the “commodity form of relations between people and likewise between humans and nature ... [is] an unquestionable self-evident truth” (311). The potency of the world market is also guaranteed by a paradox: “we live in a culture dominated by a specific world system of rationality, the ‘disembedding tendency’ is itself ‘embedded’ in rationalization” (311). This paradox is manifest in the fact that “functionaries and institutions [“expert” rationalising systems such as education, justice etc.] act as regulators within a widely deregulated market society” (311). This represents the social manifestation of what Spivak describes as the globalisation of human relations objectified in the economic as the final instance, objectified in the “most efficient and abstract coding of value, the economic” (Spivak; 245-6).

In fact, the authors note that the consequence of deregulation is large-scale re-regulation elsewhere.¹¹ The authors argue that economic rationalisation “require[s]

¹¹ The authors cite a 1995 UNICE report (a “plea for further deregulation”) that found that deregulation in fact produced an increase of regulatory measures. The rate of increase was highest in Britain where

social regulation”: in “contrast to neo-liberal assumptions that more market means less state, market economizations produce an enormous demand for legal regulation of money relations which increases state intervention at least with respect to regulations” (320-21). The disjunction between the economic and the social, or cultural, masquerades as a harmonious unity. This necessarily has implications beyond “money relations,” as the authors note, simply because the money form is the universal equivalent in liberal ideology. It is claimed that national deregulation will enhance individual freedom in order to make the nation more globally “competitive” within a global context of deregulation—greater freedom for all through global deregulation. The reality barely concealed by ideology is that massive economic deregulation is proportionately matched by social re-regulation: for example, just as national boundaries today become increasingly permeable, virtually non-existent, for freer and freer economic trade so the same borders are transformed into the instrumental machinery of the police state, threatening the freedom of all, in order to restrict absolutely the free movement of human beings across those same borders. If we did not have “international terrorism” and “queue jumpers” as an excuse, how else might we justify this massive control of borders? The purpose of this introduction has been to flesh out this context, to give it a human face, a Canadian face in fact, exposing Canadian complicity in the new global order. Spivak cites Jan Borowy’s *Designing the Future for Garment Workers*, a study of labour in Canada’s garment industry, a study

deregulation was implemented earlier and with most zeal: 600% increase in Britain, 100% in France, and 200% in Finland (325-6). At the same time, there are the regulatory strategies that capital itself imposes precisely in order to stifle the competition that is reputed to be one of the benefits of deregulation, as Paul Sweezy points out in “Marxian Value Theory and Crises.” Sweezy argues that the “transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism” results in a “redistribution of surplus value in favour of large monopolistic units of capital and to the disadvantage of small competitive units” (28). In order to protect their monopolistic positions they tend to “go slow in expanding their productive capacity. To protect their monopolistic positions they erect what barriers they can against outsiders invading their markets (one of the most effective ways is to maintain a considerable margin of unused capacity which can be quickly activated in retaliation against unwanted newcomers)” (28). Slower growth than the economy is capable of is the result, and “stagnation, [is] precisely the situation in which the global capitalist system now [1981] finds itself” (28-9).

we will look at shortly. If this is the new global context, the serenely detached Capital of Marx's day with a greatly empowered ability to function independent of everyday social experience, even as it functions with an unprecedented power for intervention in our lives in order to serve its own interests, then what are the potentials of a Marxist critique within that context? What is the value of 'value' as the object of that critique?

2. Economic Liberalism: An Origin That is Not One; a Repressive Hypothesis

Accumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production: this was the formula in which classical economics expressed the historical mission of the bourgeoisie in the period of its domination. Not for one instant did it deceive itself over the nature of wealth's birth-pangs. (*Capital*. I. 742)

Liberal academics, as we have seen, use the term 'value' in ways that camouflage its history in order to privilege the dominant universalising theme in the Western tradition—the affective as analogy here perhaps no better described than by Spivak's deconstructive key, "effacement in disclosure" (310). Before moving on to Spivak, we will consider first the ways in which liberalism represses the history of value, and in so doing its own origins. Then we can consider Spivak's deconstructive-Marxist key for unlocking the potentials of what it is that liberalism represses. The disinterested doubleness of the commodity form itself compels duplicity from the economic model that claims (self) interest as its primary operating principle. Individual self-interest in competition is supposed to guarantee social harmony and balance.¹² However, antinomy and contradiction arise from the necessity of proving that self-interest does not threaten social stability, and that individual economic freedom is coextensive with social (democratic) freedom. These contradictions are entrenched in

¹² Susan Himmelweit and Simon Mohun, in "Real Abstractions and Anomalous Assumptions," point out that "the fundamental contradiction between value and use-value finds its most complete expression in the fact that it is through competition that the laws of motion of capitalist development are expressed" (248). Furthermore, the connection between magnitudes of value and "actual prices"—the so-called transformation problem—is a logical problem for Ricardian economics. However, how a "transformation of values into prices of production and of surplus-value into profits, interest, and so on" (Bandyopadhyay; 103) takes place is a long standing difficulty for Marxist analysis as well. Himmelweit and Mohun note that the "abstraction that is value yields the price-form directly" (249). However, as "soon as *competition* is taken into account, abstract labour cannot directly be assigned to commodities" (249). There are a number of Marxist attempts at resolving this "problem ... insoluble at the level of formal logic" (249). I argue that seeking a resolution is perhaps the wrong direction from which to approach the problem—as Spivak's argument for the utility of the "'total or expanded form of value'" (232) makes clear. This will be explored further on in this argument.

liberalism's theoretical foundations, and as well, they are historical. Neo-classical economics does not "treat ... the formation of exchange-values as a social process," but rather "assumes exchangeability," and proceeds from there to prove equilibrium in the exchange process (Elson 154-5). Furthermore, the "exchange process is explained in terms of commodity owners commensurating different commodities in terms of the satisfaction they bring" (155)—an "anthropology of needs." In this way, Liberal economics reduces the dynamic of the exchange process to the "common essence of all wants" (Georgescu-Roegen in Elson; 155). That is, liberal economics reduces the exchange process to utility. For Marx the commodity is not reducible to this single essence:

As use-values, commodities differ above all in quality, while as exchange values they can only differ in quantity, and therefore do not contain any atom of use value (Elson 156; *Capital*.I.128)

Rather, the commodity is characterised by double-ness as "abstract and concrete" labour with "social and private aspects" (149). There is then ambivalence here in "the dual character of labour embodied in commodities" (148). Nevertheless, in one sense there is a fundamental equivalence in "the general exchangeability, through the market, of every commodity with every other commodity" (152). However, "[e]quality in the full sense between different kinds of labour can be arrived at only if we abstract from their real inequality, if we reduce them to the characteristic they have in common, that of being the expenditure of human labour-power, of human labour in the abstract" (Marx in Elson; 149).

Jairus Banaji argues that a simple dichotomy, or "separation," between "the qualitative [and] quantitative ... is *not enough* to render a proper account of Marx's concept of value" (32). This is because, on the one hand, the representation of the commodity as money (exchange value) is a "surface-relation ... a 'relation among

things”, on the other there is the “inner relation a ‘relation among persons.’” In other words the latter “represent[s] ... (private) individual labour as social labour” (32):

Although inseparable as qualitative and quantitative aspects respectively, they belong to the same dimension of the value-process, the dimension of the inner content [of value] as a process within which individual labour is connected to and becomes part of total social labour. On the other hand, this ‘content’ is logically inseparable from its specific ‘form’; or ... it only becomes something real *through its form*, which is the representation of the commodity as money. (33)

The Harris government of Ontario’s claim that we need to extract maximum “value for the money” from universities seems to imply both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of value. “Commonsense” decrees that the simple combination of the two terms ‘value’ and ‘money’ produces the desired formula of equivalence: (minimum) money in should equal maximum value out. However, because assumptions about this formulaic combination of terms are normalised and unquestioned, it is not even necessary that the claim include the range of possibilities suggested by the term value: economic value, social value, public, or private? The range of more qualitative social experience is simply implied in the repetition of the formula. More importantly, if the claim includes all of these, then how is this value distributed? In practice, the Harris equation, for example, reads very differently: money in produces money out; then perhaps secondarily, and only incidentally, it produces social value. The evidence of what we do rather than what we say more than suggests that the equation is simply reduced to money in equals money out. Liberalism suspends questions such as these when it assumes universal exchangeability as an originary ground and proceeds from this to prove equilibrium in the social exchange process. Of course, labour is what the Harris conservatives are most eager to write out of the equation, and out of the social contract.¹³ The qualitative/quantitative process will be discussed more fully later in the

¹³ For example, putting the ‘more value for the money’ ritual incantation into practice, the Harris conservatives of Ontario added a half-credit course to the secondary school curriculum. *A Globe and*

context of the value debate in which one side of the debate places most emphasis on the quantitative distinction.

These gestures are not new ones. Marx argues that liberal economics (David Ricardo) “is concerned only with the magnitude of value ... [whereas] the labour embodied in (commodities) *must be represented ... as social labour.*” “[T]his qualitative aspect of the matter which is contained in the *representation of exchange-value as money* ... is not elaborated by Ricardo” (Marx in Banaji; 32). The relation in the value-process between “the representation of the commodity as money, and ... the representation of (private) individual labour as social labour,” is one in which a “surface relation, exchange-value, becomes the form of appearance of an inner relation, the relation which connects individual labour to the total social labour” (Banaji; 32). This social process of exchange is then necessarily a relation between, not mere discrete qualitative and quantitative aspects, but the “logically inseparable” interrelation between the “inner content” of the process—“within which individual labour is connected to and becomes part of the total social labour”—and its form “which is the representation of the commodity as money” (33).

“The utility of a thing makes it a use-value ... [and] Use-values become ... reality only by use [their immediate being] or consumption ... they are, in addition, [in capitalism] the material depositories of exchange value” (Marx in Fischer; 68). As Banaji points out,

Mail contributor noted that: “adding a half-credit course to their annual load of six ... meant an extra 25 minutes in the classroom a day ... more unpaid preparation time, more papers to be marked, more students.” Evidence clearly suggests that a very important factor influencing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning symbiosis is smaller class sizes. A recent Rand Corporation study in the U. S. determined that factors critical to quality of education are reduction of class size, teacher training and professional development, and access to adequate pre-kindergarten programs (CBC Sunday Morning 02 Sep. 01). However, in Ontario and other Canadian provinces, severely reduced resources (special needs staff, library instructors, etc.), overextended teachers, larger class sizes all conspire to penalise students, teachers, and society overall. One teacher argued the obvious: “You’ve got to switch off a certain amount of caring, a certain amount of integrity ... Because you can’t do 6.5 [courses] at the same intensity” (*Globe and Mail*. Monday, February 5, 2001). This is clearly “common sense.”

In its 'immediate being' the commodity is only a use-value.... The commodity can posit itself as a commodity-*value*, a product of *social* labour, only in a form in which it negates itself in its immediate being, hence only in a *mediated form*. This form is *money* [the money-form]. Only through the representation of the commodity as *money*, or, expressed more concretely, through the individual act of exchange, the transformation of the commodity into money, is individual labour *posited* as social labour. (33)

In this way the "contradictory determinations of the commodity ... become reabsorbed as a *unity* (money)" (33). The facile equivalence suggested in the Harris government's input-output, immediate cost-recovery model of education deliberately understates the social dimension of these relations, necessarily marked by contradiction; at the same time this model elides, or writes out of the story the fact that one moment—the realisation of exchange-value—occurs only as the negation of use-value. This negation of use-value in its immediate being represents an inherent repression always already achieved in the innermost transformations of value. Classical and neo-liberalism continue, in all their calculations, to idealise the individual in spite of the fact that necessarily it is the social that is actualised in the act of exchange; even as it does this liberalism is forced to circumscribe and bracket the possibility of individual consumption unmediated by exchange, or unmediated by the money-form. As Banaji argues, the response of capital itself to the double, differentiated existence of the commodity is the source of contradiction:

... in its most simple and essential definition capital is a form of value where value itself is grasped as a form of social labour. From this it follows that when capital seeks to *overcome* or to *subordinate* the commodity-form of its own relations of production, to regulate the 'market' according to the combination of its individual wills ... then it merely seeks to overcome or subordinate *itself* as a form of value, or itself in its most essential definition. And this is impossible except as the *contradiction* which capital becomes. (36)

This contradiction, and its repression, is then in one sense the logic of capital in its synchronic existence as it responds to the inherent doubleness of value. However, as already discussed, there is as well a matching historical repression at work here in liberalism's earliest self-justifications: that is, the repression of the aesthetic, or

affective, analogy as 18th and 19th century political economy grapples with the problem of value, and grapples with the problem of theorising civil society in a context of rapid social transformation brought about by the twin engines of industrial technology and a capitalist economy.

As John Guillory points out, use-value is a problem for classical political economy from its earliest inception as it attempts to account for the discrepancy between use value and exchange value. Because utility, use, or human needs and desires cannot be measures of exchange value,

... political economy was forced to construct, as its first order of business, a theory of value, a hypothesis about what it was that was actually measured or expressed in the exchange value of an object. It is in response to this problem that earlier political economists were able to propose that the exchange value of an object expresses the quantum of labor expended to *produce* that object for the market (the "labor theory of value") and not the quantum of energy expended to *acquire* the object in the market. The question of the use of the object, or the desire of any individual for an object, does not enter into the equation of exchange value as a quantum, but is bracketed. There is in that sense no such thing as a 'personal economy,' no economy at all on Crusoe's island, because no such hypothetical 'intrapersonal' exchange could be expressed as a quantum of value. (301-2)

Marx argues that use values are qualitative, not quantitative. The historical failure of political economy is its inability to "solve the problem of the relation between the individual subject and market society" (Guillory; 302). The discrepancy between use value and exchange value registers the incommensurability of individual needs and desire (the affective) and the prices of commodities in a market. The double differentiated existence of value means that,

... the use of an object cannot be *expressed in, or measured by*, its exchange value, its money price in the market. (301)

Marx observes that the moment humans appropriate the natural object for use as an exchangeable commodity it becomes marked by difference (see the epigraph to this chapter). Out of differentiation and difference between what are qualitative and quantitative comes incommensurability:

The desire of individual consumers will vary greatly for any commodity that appears on the market, but individuals will not be able to express the relative intensities of their desire or need for the 'use' of an object in monetary terms. (Guillory; 300)

For this reason political economy is forced to "bracket" the "question of the use of the object, or the desire of any individual for an object" (301). It is then the affective, qualitative and non-quantifiable that political economy, and liberalism thereafter, is forced to bracket. At the same time of course, liberalism redirects the energies generated by the disjunction between use and exchange by sublimating desire and need in the commodity itself. Out of incommensurability come contradiction and the necessity of generating a narrative of reconciliation, or resolution: "the problem of justifying the social order" (305). Historically, the need to bracket what is essentially unquantifiable and subjective, use value, serves the primary imperative of deriving harmony out of the socially destructive energies of self-interest harnessed by nascent capitalism. This foundational antinomy drives the conflict between the individual and the social, the cultural and the economic. We might say that synchronically, in its inherent theoretical essence, "political economy relegates use value to a domain of subjectivity, which it cannot enter into the equation of exchange value" (Guillory; 302). Similarly, historically, as moral philosophy (in the authoritative person of Adam Smith) attempted to write the justifying narrative of reconciliation "the theory of civil society was haunted by the problem of taste" (Caygill in Guillory; 306), just as, in time, society becomes haunted by value. This divide continues to disturb the contemporary in the struggle between culture and the economy; and it continues to trouble the institutions that study, recreate, and transmit culture—more noteworthy universities.

With the emergence of an "autonomous civil society" (independent of noble estate, monarchy, or theology), in the context of burgeoning capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, it becomes necessary to "deduce the principle of the manifest order of

society from the apparent disorder of incompatible individual self-interests” (305).

Political economy gives new impetus to an already extant aesthetic analogy in order to produce a philosophical narrative of social harmony—a balance between public good and private interest. Both political economy and aesthetics evolve out of a British tradition of moral philosophy, social thought, and social reform that was already accustomed to drawing an analogy between a harmonious social order, and “the order, proportion, or harmony of a work of art, or any object of beauty” (305)—the social practice required for its application was the faculty of taste. Guillory argues that aesthetic value and exchange value, or aesthetics and political economy, are not at this time separate discourses, but have rather a “convergent origin” in the thought of moral philosophy. What happens very quickly, however, is the highly significant precipitation of two separate discourses out of this primordial convergence. The separation “at birth” of these two discourses accompanies, and is driven by, political economy’s inability to adequately account for the discrepancy between use value and exchange value. Guillory finds this taking place in the short space between Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and his seminal (an appropriate word in this case) *Wealth of Nations*.

In attempting to account for what it is “in the object that induces a desire for it” (310), Adam Smith takes up Hume’s utilitarian theory of sympathy. Hume seeks to explain the sensation of beauty for objects owned and not owned. Deriving the “perception of utility [as] ... the source of ... pleasure common to all made objects,” Hume proposes that for all made things “their beauty is chiefly deriv’d from their utility, and from their *fitness* for that purpose, to which they were destined” (Hume in Guillory; 309; emphasis added). While this immediate utility “concerns only the owner,” the non-owner experiences beauty “by ... sympathizing with the proprietor” (309). We non-possessors “enter into [the owner’s] ... interest by the force of imagination, and

feel the same satisfaction, that the objects naturally occasion for him” (309). Where Hume conceived of two modes of aesthetic consumption (“an immediate and a deferred or ‘reflected’ utility”), Smith,

... did not go on to analogise the social order to the work of *fine art*, with its principle of deferred utility. On the contrary, he moved in another direction, deriving the beauty of the social order, the harmony of its unlegislated production, from a beauty he attributed directly to the *commodity*. (310)

He focuses on “a distinction internal to the commodity itself, a distinction between its being as means (its ‘beauty’) and its being as end (its use)” (311). In this way, Smith attempts to account for how it is that the “desire for the object exceeds the gratification supplied by its use” (311), and, more importantly, how that excess is in fact socially useful. Commodities then have two dimensions. They can “be used to satisfy needs.” However, they “are attractive ... because they possess an aesthetic dimension.” If for a commodity “utility is one of the principal sources of beauty,” it is because its “‘fitness’ to use can be admired” (311). For Smith then an “*aesthetic disposition itself* [is] the motor of the economy” (311). It is from this that he extrapolates to demonstrate that the cruder “‘satisfaction’” engendered by the desire for “‘things’” appears “‘contemptible and trifling’” in comparison to the “‘beauty of that arrangement which is fitted to promote’” this satisfaction (311)—that is the economic system and social framework that satisfy desire (self-interest). Smith himself argues that by means of a “‘deception’” we “‘confound in our imagination’” the cruder satisfaction of desire with the “‘regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or oeconomy by means of which it is produced’” (311). As Guillory argues:

If the aesthetic disposition is the motor of economic production, we should not be surprised that an economy so organized should come to resemble the very ‘beauty’ of the *commodity*, in that everything in it aspires to the condition of being ‘fit’ to the end of satisfying desire ... Smith thus finds in the surplus ‘beauty’ of the commodity over its actual use the source of the *social surplus*, the explanation of ‘wealth.’ (311)

However, the derivation of social harmony from this “anthropology of needs” required a pragmatic deception indeed.

In Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the well-known but mysterious compulsion, the “invisible hand,” will redirect the “aestheticized cupidity” of entrepreneurs toward altruism:

... in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity [the rich] ... divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants (312)

(This idea, of course, dates at least as far back as the early modern period in Britain.

Cf. the speech of Menenius Agrippa to the “mutinous” rabble in *Coriolanus* I.I.80-148.)

Guillory exposes again what has been demonstrated many times before, that Smith’s resolution of the conflict between private interest and public good disguises the “violence of production’ ... The ‘invisible hand’ is really the multitude of invisible hands, the wage-laborers of manufacture, who were excluded as a group or class from the domain of aesthetic consumption or ‘taste’” (312). Of course the “violence of production,” as the exploitation of one class by another—“coercion in the domain of production” (318)—entails far more than the simple exclusion from aesthetic consumption. And, because rapacity is a “natur[al]” quality according to Smith, liberalism naturalises and normalises human indifference to its own basic needs. Today, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the bill for the accumulating costs of the violence of production daily threatens to come due. However, Smith’s attempt to derive the harmony of the social from the “‘proportion of production and consumption,’ a harmony between the realm of production and the realm of need or desire,” failed to “explain ... the phenomenon of market price” (312). The drive to consume might explain entrepreneurial rapacity, “but when the commodities produced arrived in the market, their surplus of beauty over use failed to yield a formula for the determination

of their price, their exchange value" (312). The discrepancy between value and price will continue to be a problem for economic and social theory down to the present. Referred to as the 'transformation problem,' it surfaces in leftist critical debates about the relevance of value at around the same time (late 70's to early 80's) as continental philosophy in its poststructuralist forms begins to have a marked impact on theory in North America.

Smith and political economy therefore "shift their analysis to the terrain of production" (314) and a labour theory of value. The exchange value of a commodity could be "account[ed] for ... by reference to the quantum of labour it embodied", but only if "consumption was ... bracketed as irrelevant to the determination of price" (314). This shift takes place in Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. It is here that the hitherto convergent discourses of aesthetics and political economy become a divergence into new and distinct discourses:

Smith cannot after all explain the exchange value of a commodity solely by reference to the aestheticized concept of utility proposed in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*; thus in *the Wealth of Nations* he must put forward a theory of value grounded in the pole of production. That theory can never find its way back to, or include within its formula for price, the 'beauty' of the commodity. In order to reestablish the proportion of production and consumption, political economy must invent the concept of "use value," on the *analogy* of "exchange value." Casting its lot with an anthropology of needs, it has to forget the aesthetic theory which posited the surplus of beauty over use as the motor of production, as the engine of social life. The theory of taste becomes irrelevant to political economy, and the "invisible hand" can be reconceived.... (315)

This re-conception means that the aesthetic is no longer the motor of economic production; rather, it is individual self-interest that displaces the aesthetic in this function: the self-interested individual "intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it" (Smith in Guillory; 315). The fact that the

aesthetic analogy is “conspicuously absent” from this later formulation marks a repression that not only founds two separate discourses but also marks the location of an enduring antinomy: “the largest aporia of social analysis: the problem of the relation between the economic and the cultural” (316). Moreover, as Guillory argues, the new dynamic antagonism between the economic and the cultural also marks a reconfiguration and reassertion of class structure.

In terms of class, for example, how this historical repression unfolds reveals a social landscape that is in many ways more than familiar today in spite of recent claims for an absolute rupture between the modern and postmodern:

... just as bourgeois political economists found it necessary to discard aesthetics, in order to make sense of the system of production and exchange, so did the bourgeoisie find it necessary to take up a “pure” aesthetics supposedly uncontaminated by economic considerations, in order to distinguish itself *culturally* from the class which produced what it consumed. (316)

It is no stretch to argue that in England this repression and subsequent aporia founds the academic disciplines as we know them today. Matthew Arnold’s model of education, for example, a nineteenth-century attempt at resolving class conflict, represents one response to the new socio-economic transformation and the contradictions that flow from it. Again, some of these contradictions include the discrepancy between use value and exchange value: the conflict between private interest and public good—necessarily inflected by class—and the manifest disproportion between production and consumption, in other words the incommensurability of labour and desire with the money form. And of course what exceeds the calculus of the market is the subjective, the affective: “Can labor and desire really be expressed in the market by a *single* quantum, the money-price or ‘exchange value’?”(313).

The notion of a pure aesthetics, or high art, is today no longer quite the same mechanism for sedimenting and maintaining class structure that it once was. However,

this does not mean that the postmodern has somehow transcended class, but rather that this function of the fraught dialectic between the economic and the cultural operates differently today. Guillory argues, “aesthetics immediately reasserted, against the universality of economic commensurability, a theory of the incommensurability of aesthetic and economic values, on the basis of the inutility of the aesthetic object” (317). This describes very well the history of the plastic arts, for example, as it has become familiar to us. The history of modern art from the early modernist deconstruction beginning in the 1870’s of the representational assumptions of classical art, to Abstract Expressionism, to the ironising, foregrounding of the commodity aspect of the art object at the expense of individual genius and artistic detachment (Warhol’s Fordist mass reproduction of pop culture images, for example) demonstrates that culture generally, like the plastic arts, has evolved with the shifting intensities of the economy to which it is inextricably linked. By means of irony, the latter example only serves to draw attention to the disjunction between the cultural realm and the economic.

Political economy and aesthetics “between them divide the world of cultural production into works of art and commodities” (317). This division further serves to sediment class, the division of labour, and at one of the primary locations of cultural production—universities—produces internal disciplinary division within the university, and between the university and the world outside. In the Fifties, the Massey Commission embodies the aporia between the economic and the cultural as it evolves along this same historical trajectory. The Massey Commission represents a particularly important example in terms of the sheer political acumen and effort it required for the commissioners to negotiate the philosophical and social disjunctions between high modernist, elite culture, and Fifties mass culture, and in terms of the enormous care and energy required to negotiate the disjunction between the work of art and the

commodity. This negotiation is significant because social discord is disguised in the attempt to achieve an Arnoldean harmony between the corrosive effects of the economy and culture and education. In some sense the Commission necessarily and successfully reproduces Arnold's own notorious political ambiguity. Stefan Collini, in his introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, notes that Arnold is variously republican, Jacobin, conservative, and self-declared liberal (Collini xxii-xxvi). While this speaks well for the formidable critical abilities of both Arnold and the Massey commissioners, it represents the cloaking of social conflict in the camouflage of harmony nonetheless.

There are two consequences worth noting here: first, this site of inherent and historical repression is politically contested, politically polarised, and arguably all contestants involved—from left to right—in one way or another base their claims on the inutility of the aesthetic object “uncontaminated by economic considerations” (316). The aesthetic object is presumed to be separate from the realm of the economic. However, merely to say that Abstract Impressionism, for example, is profoundly subversive even as it is profoundly conservative at the very same time, would be to reduce the true complexity of this political fact. Second, and more importantly, this and other examples demonstrate the critical significance of the concept-metaphor ‘value’ itself as a contingency of social conflict, ideological censorship, and contradiction. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the institutions that support culture. While Arnold's conception of culture and education is not the only competitor in the academic bazaar, the Arnoldean response to deregulated and unfettered self-interest continues to have a compelling influence on the Canadian University. In a sense, Arnold's resolution represents a reversal of Smith's shift from the invisible hand of mysterious altruism in one text to the invisible hand of self-interest pure and simple in Smith's subsequent text. Arnold, like reform-liberalism down to the present, places more emphasis on altruism. His integrity and sincerity notwithstanding, it is the same gesture

in that the meliorating influence Arnold imputes to criticism as a “disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought” has all the semiotic openness of Smith’s invisible hand, even as it disguises the imperialism of its ideals (the “best”) as a general utility for all—and of course criticism is always necessarily interested. The other major competitor in the Canadian academic world is neo-liberalism, unapologetic in its condescension toward aesthetic discourse, and at its more extreme moments, hostile toward culture. Arnold was at least more honest in the sense that he openly advocated an education system in which accessibility matched the class structure in contrast to the fiction peddled by neoliberalism today of equal opportunity for all.

In summary, the historical separation of aesthetics and economics is the occasion of a transformation that founds a “mutual forgetting,” a repression. Political economy discards aesthetics as unnecessary to explaining “the system of production and exchange” (316). Aesthetics, for its part, henceforth defines the “work of art” according to its distinctiveness “from both ‘craft’ objects and the commodity” (316). Aesthetics can proceed on the assumption that the “work of art” had always existed only by “*forgetting* political economy, by forgetting the fact that the ‘fine arts’ emerged as such in contradistinction to commodities as such” (316). More important to this argument here and its support for the relevance of ‘value’ as a critical concept, the notion of aesthetic value “can be posed as such only after the divergence of aesthetics and political economy, and as a consequence of the repression of their convergent origin” (303). That is, only after “‘the standard of taste’ [necessarily qualitative] moved into analogical relation to the ‘measure of value’” [quantitative] is it possible to speak of the aesthetic as a value, as aesthetic value (317). This historical movement is preserved as a particular discordance and contradiction ever after. It is for this reason that “it becomes ... necessary to reconceive aesthetic judgment by *analogy to*

exchange value. The very concept of aesthetic *value* betrays the continued pressure of economic discourse on the language of aesthetics" (317). Again, the simple purpose in my argument of drawing a distinction between what is an inherent, synchronic censoring in Capitalist logic, and what is an historical suppression is to provide the theoretical background for the claim that this foundational antinomy has neither been superseded by history nor transcended by the postmodern.

3. From Repression to Effacement in Disclosure and Resistance

It is because utility, use, or human needs and desires cannot be measures of exchange value, that political economy must “relegate ... use value to a domain of subjectivity, which it cannot enter into the equation of exchange value” (Guillory; 302).¹⁴ If there is then this disjunction, or “disproportion,” between the realm of production and the realm of need or desire—subjective after all—then the aesthetic analogy can also be described as an affective analogy.¹⁵ We have already explored the liberal perspective of two influential academic commentators on the Canadian university in transition, and how it is that at least one of them (Peter Emberley) uses the term ‘value’ selectively, particularly with regard to that history most pertinent to liberalism, and to the author’s own liberal credentials. Emberley privileges the dominant universalising themes in the Western tradition; however, in ignoring the history of ‘value’ he reinscribes this originary repression, a repression both inherent (what I characterise as synchronic), and historical. If we are to explore a Marxist-deconstructive methodology, such as Spivak’s, then we can describe the gesture that liberalism, then and now, imposes on the question of value as a trace-structure, or as “effacement in disclosure” (310).

¹⁴ Guillory points out the importance of utilitarianism to, and its persistence in the ideology of political economy. Utilitarianism’s attempt to reconcile individual selfishness with altruism on the basis of social usefulness, reduces “the domain of the economic to the expression of the individual subject’s needs or desires, and its individualism cannot account for the manifest independence of exchange value from determination by the individual subject” (302).

¹⁵ The term affective analogy is historically appropriate in the sense that, as is well known, political economy, Adam Smith for example, emerges out of the philosophical, social, and cultural currents of the cult of sensibility. With its roots in philosophical empiricism, sensibility is concerned with the “great sensorium,” feeling, sympathy etc. It is legitimate still that Marxist critique continue to concern itself with these origins as they are the origins of liberalism, and as Guillory demonstrates, origins that liberalism conserves even as it represses these same origins. At this end of the historical continuum, Spivak rethinks the potentials of the expanded form of value in order to retool the concept to include the affective in a changed context.

In terms of the question of what it is that is effaced in disclosure, the impossibility of positing use value as a recuperable originary ground should be stressed from the outset. As Guillory points out, while the use of an object is absolutely necessary to exchange value, it can be “represented as a kind of ‘value’ only if there is *already* a discourse of exchange values, that is, an economy of generalized commodity exchange. Exchange value is thus the condition for the *retroactive* construction of the use of an object as an expression of its value” (301; emphasis added). So, there is no return to a utopian social space outside of exchange—Crusoe’s island. Nevertheless, the corollary to Guillory’s observation is that while market exchange represents the *sine qua non* for this utopian space of possibility (use value can only be reconstructed “retroactive[ly]”), this space is, nevertheless, at the same time the condition of possibility for radical action directed toward substantive change. Shortly we will look at Spivak’s reading of Marx, and his articulation of two such conditions of possibility—a realm of necessity and a realm of freedom—that between them transect the relationships between humans and nature, and the individual with society, with “pure nature and pure humanity as limits to rational planning at either side” (Spivak; 328). For now we will simply overlay a phrase of Marx, as a kind of palimpsest, on Guillory’s claim just above: “The pure realm of freedom ... can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis” (*Capital*. III. 959).

We have looked briefly above at the history of value, and how it is that liberalism and liberal Canadian academics use the term ‘value’ in ways that camouflage its history in order to privilege the dominant universalising theme in the Western tradition. In this way the affective as analogy marks the occurrence of an “effacement in disclosure” (310). What is meant here by “effacement in disclosure” is deconstruction’s well-known description of how it is that the positing of any philosophical concept necessarily implies the repression of that which it is not. In being

named, the other is effaced. In the earlier Derrida, differentiation and deferment (*différance*) together constitute the function of (philosophical) language, the “rhetorical manoeuvres performed by words” (*CPR* 423), as it names self relative to other: “all institutions of origin concealed the splitting off from something other than the origin, in order for the origin to be instituted” (426). Here we might consider the epigraph to the beginning of this chapter (quoted in *Spivak Reader* 115). Here Marx emphasises the “differentiated existence” of the commodity, and the slippage between its “natural form of existence” which “ideally contains (latently contains) its exchange value, and ... [its] other aspect as manifest exchange value (money)” (*Grundrisse* 147). This represents the suppression of an originary inception, and the concealment of contradiction.

Of course, the claim here is not that Marx is working a Derridean deconstruction. However, because the labour theory of value is “explanatory as well as critical” (Arthur 34),¹⁶ Marx exploits the fact that value is symptomatic in order to demonstrate that through critical articulation of its conceptual modalities (use-value, exchange-value, surplus-value, money, capital) the economic text in a sense deconstructs itself. Marx’s sensitivity to the conceptual incommensurability of the “particular natural qualities” of the commodity with its “general nature as exchange value,” lends itself to an interpretation and critical strategy that would see the conceptual frame deconstructed by its own concepts. Because Marx talks about the money form as “symbolized exchange value” (*Grundrisse* 148), this incommensurability of the particular with the general is a matter of representation as well. Therefore, Spivak’s deconstructive reading not surprisingly emphasises the textuality of the “chain of value” (*SR* 113). For Marx, the fact that the commodity exists doubly, means that its “depend[ance] on natural properties” (148) in its one aspect brings it into “*antithesis*

¹⁶ That is to say, the conceptual modalities inherent in the value form are at the same time the tools for exposing its concealed contradictions.

and contradiction" (147) with its symbolic aspect as money, what Marx refers to as its "general social qualities" (147).

However, Spivak argues that Marx does not simply "stop at a contradiction, [but] ... seems to indicate the possibility of an indeterminacy" (SR 115). The passage in question quite clearly suggests indeterminacy in the "incongruence" of the commodity, alienated from its natural existence, with its symbolic aspect as money. This is complicated further in the splitting of exchange itself into the reciprocating, but "dissonan[t]," "exchange of commodities for money, [and] exchange of money for commodities" (148). Spatial and temporal separation, alienation, and contradiction proliferate further in the "doubling of exchange—exchange for the sake of consumption and exchange for exchange" (149), in finance capitalism the pure exchange of money for money. A fundamental contradiction inherent in the value-form arises out of the incommensurability of the "particular nature of the commodity as product" and its "general nature as exchange value" (147) in which the latter becomes "alien" to the former. Significantly for this dissertation, this alienation is a matter of alienated desire and need at both poles: the "commodity is demanded in exchange because of its natural properties, because of the needs for which it is the desired object. Money, by contrast, is demanded only because of its exchange value, as exchange value" (147). The "transposability" of the commodity into money on the one hand depends on natural properties; on the other hand "that of money coincides with its existence as symbolized exchange value" (147-8). The problematic transposability of the commodity into money depends on "external conditions" that are ultimately independent of exchange value, and are "hence a matter of chance" (147-8).

Therefore, the rational unity of the whole is troubled and undermined by basic needs and the desire for the natural properties of the commodity on the one hand; on the other hand there stands the incestuous desire of a tautological sign system for self-

reproduction and self-validation. Spivak's emphasis on the textuality of value and exchange, and Marx's own analysis, suggest that the permutations of the value-form function as an esoteric sign-system, a coded system of signification. As such it is subject to decoding, re-coding, and transcoding. As Spivak points out, the relationship between value and money is a matter of representation (114). Therefore, another instance of the "extreme dissonance" that Marx locates in the ruptures and indeterminacies of the exchange relation is reflected again in the dissonance between mimetic representations such as aesthetic objects, and representation in exchange "symbolized" in the form of money, as well as political representation. This has significant implications for universities as social institutions riven by conflict between the cultural, the economic, and the political. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, part five.

Guillory's description of the historical origin of value is a description of a "splitting off from something other than the origin, in order for the origin to be instituted" (426). Because human needs and desires cannot be measures of exchange value, political economy must "relegate ... use value to a domain of subjectivity, which it cannot enter into the equation of exchange value" (Guillory 302). Again, in the third epigraph to my chapter, Spivak argues, "one case of use-value can be that of the worker wishing to consume the (affect of the) work itself, [however] that necessary possibility renders indeterminate the 'materialist' predication of the subject as labor-power or super-adequation as calibrated and organized by the logic of capital" (118). The transcoding of an aesthetic analogy into a utilitarian anthropology of needs in which the affective is subsumed—"moved into analogical relation to the 'measure of value'" (Guillory 317)—in the commodity, represents such concealment, or "radical alterity ... necessarily effaced" (Spivak 424).

This transcoding works in two directions. On the one hand, it represents capitalism's *socialisation* of (private) individual affective and emotive experience ("work as the final creator of all value becomes socialized through the circulation of money"; Altvater and Mahnkopf 316); on the other hand, it represents capital's simultaneous appropriation, or *privatisation*, of the affective for its own use in the generation of private wealth. What is disclosed is the "track, of a previous differentiation and a continuous deferment ... called 'trace'" (424). Political economy (and liberalism ever after) responds to the "discrepancy between use value and exchange value" (Guillory 301) by positing the "universality of economic commensurability" (317), and by defending the "rationality of the social order ... in the form usually of 'equilibrium' theory" (316). As Guillory argues,

The defense of the *harmony* of the social order was conducted by Adam Smith (as ever since) on the terrain of consumption, by arguing that production is driven by the desire to consume, and "fits" [Smith's utilitarianism] itself to that desire. In that sense, "neoclassical" economists, the economics of utility theory, or supply and demand, simply returns to this more explicit ideological agenda of classical political economy (newly armed ... with a "scientific" methodology). (313)

What is effaced is the necessity for an aesthetic analogy in the first place, that is the necessity to disguise disproportion and discord as harmony and universal commensurability; what is disclosed in effacement, however, is the persistence of incommensurability, as Guillory's paraphrase of Bourdieu effectively illustrates:

[T]here is no "universal equivalent" for the adequation of cultural and material capital when the latter is *already* the order of the universal equivalent. The conversion of cultural into material capital (or vice versa) is precisely the condition of the commensuration of the incommensurable, an irresolvable social contradiction. (326)

The simple working definition of deconstruction's critical strategy given above (the work of the trace, or *différance*) represents an earlier (Derridean) deconstruction; it nevertheless implies the more incisive criticism against that deconstruction—the charge of political quietism, that deconstruction in its method and perspective is

inherently averse to political activism. One of many to level this charge, Fredric Jameson, defending a certain Marxism, argues against “sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable” (in Spivak; 314). Spivak correctly identifies this as a critique of deconstruction. The purpose of the following is to consider Jameson’s critique, and Spivak’s response to it. From there the following chapter will look at the debates over the relevance of value as a critical tool before moving on to explore the viewpoint of critics of poststructuralist Marxism, including the alternative represented by Spivak’s deconstructive Marxism.

If liberal academics, as we have seen, use the term ‘value’ in ways that camouflage its history in order to privilege the dominant universalising theme in the Western tradition (in Emberley’s case a philosophical idealism—Platonism in fact—that divorces ‘value’ from material experience), there is at the same time debate on the left concerned with the value of ‘value.’ Amongst critics on the left there are academics, not engaged in cultural criticism *per se* (but in “economistic Marxism”), who would privilege the economic sense of the term at the expense of its figurative powers. Not unexpectedly, there is within the left itself as well, amongst critics engaged in literary and cultural criticism, a suspicion of a poststructuralist inflecting of such theoretically charged foundational concepts as ‘value.’ This suspicion of certain poststructuralist/Marxist hybrids comes from both materialists concentrating on the economic senses of the concept of value, and Marxist critics of language, art, and culture. Gayatri Spivak, in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, responds to the euphemism ‘value-added’ to describe the activities of transnational corporations. She captures both classical liberalism (today neo-liberalism masquerading as a “kinder, gentler” reform-liberalism, more recently in the U.S. called “compassionate conservatism”) and certain varieties of Marxism with the charge that the “word ‘value’ stands for me here as a mockery of both Marx and academic marxism, which

apparently gave the Marxist notion of 'value' a decent burial by showing that it was not theoretically viable" (412).¹⁷ The field of materialist discourse, between varieties of Marxism and poststructuralist-Marxism, is a contested one, and to whatever extent it is true that 'value' has been rejected in certain quarters, it remains the case that contest continues, and continues to hinge on the relevance or irrelevance of 'value' as a critical concept. The position of this dissertation is that a poststructuralist hybrid, such as Spivak's, demonstrates the explanatory and critical power of value in a postmodern context.

¹⁷ Jürgen Habermas for instance "criticizes ... the Marxist theory of value" (Habermas in Altvater and Mahnkopf; n 325). See Habermas: *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: The Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Cambridge: Polity, 1987a. 340. Somewhat earlier (1977), Anthony Cutler et al argue against economic determinism in Marx's work, and that "the critique of economic determinism requires a rejection of 'the value categories in *Capital*'" (Amariglio and Callari; 198). See their note on the same page for further references, including Piero Sraffa's 1960 *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities*. William Pietz, in "Fetishism and Materialism: The Limits of Theory in Marx," rejects Marxist-poststructuralist hybrids on the grounds that "a certain semiological reading of Marxian theory ... impedes any fruitful engagement with Marx's writing" (119).

4. Jameson and Spivak: “Political Postmodernism,” or an “Axio-Teleology” of Freedom?

Persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit is the deconstructive stance. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*OTM* 284)

Some of the outlines of debate and contention within Marxist ranks are explored by Spivak in her critique of a by now almost canonical text that represents a particular Marxist attempt to come to terms with postmodernity (or even postmodernism’s attempt to come to terms with Marxism): Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Many of the elements of these differences in perspective are well known, and Spivak rehearses a few here. Jameson, in conflating postmodernism and poststructuralism (312), participates in the project to “neutralize the potential for a critique of modernization in poststructural thinking” (313). According to Spivak, by “describing postmodernism as a *force-field*,” Jameson “neutralize[s] marxism as an analysis of *power*” (315). Of course, this represents his attempt to adapt a materialist critique to the supposedly new context that we refer to as the postmodern: the term ‘*force-field*’ establishes a postmodernist theoretical foundation via Foucault combined with a Marxist theoretical foundation by way of Raymond Williams’ version of the contesting ebb and flow of hegemony (“*residual*” and “*emergent*”). Jameson rejects what he views as “*sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable*” (in Spivak; 314). Spivak argues that the particular strain of poststructuralism/postmodernism that Jameson targets is Derridean deconstruction (focussing at last on the term “*undecidability*”): the coding of Jameson’s text makes it “clear that it is the battle between marxism and deconstruction that is being replayed” (314). The passage in question is worth reproducing:

I am very far from feeling that all cultural production today is “postmodern” in the broad sense I will be conferring on this term. The postmodern is however the force field in which very different kinds of cultural impulses—what Raymond Williams has usefully termed “residual” and “emergent” forms of cultural production—must make their way. If we do not achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable. (Jameson; 6)

Jameson’s antidote is then a version of the dialectic (46), but as Spivak points out this is a dialectical practice that is neutralised by his claim that, responding to “the historical development of capitalism ... Marx ... urges us to do the impossible, namely, to think this development positively *and* negatively all at once” (47). This gesture of reducing the dynamic of dialectical flux is a familiar one that has been discussed in Chapter Two, part one: Canadian critic Bill Readings extrapolates from Adorno’s observation that “ideology is not simply reducible to a partial interest. It is, as it were, equally near the centre in all its pieces” (1038). Readings confuses this with his own claim that, therefore, “the critique of culture as an ideology becomes obsolete, since there is no outside to cultural ideology. Culture no longer hides anything; there is nothing behind culture for ideology critique to find” (120). He claims that ideology critique (Cultural Studies) will only be co-opted and contained: “its analyses of culture do have an effect, but as sites for further investment by a system that is no longer cultural in the traditional sense” (121). This argument resonates with Jameson’s (somewhat earlier) observation that the “shorthand language of co-optation ... omnipresent on the left” is the consequence of a “prodigious new expansion of multinational capital ... penetrating and colonizing those very precapitalist enclaves (Nature and the Unconscious) which offered extraterritorial and Archimedean footholds for critical effectivity” (49). In fact, Jameson argues, within the new spatial configuration of the postmodern, “critical distance’ (for the left the possibility of conceiving of “a certain minimal aesthetic distance, of the possibility of the positioning of the cultural act

outside the massive Being of capital”) has been obliterated in the “new space of postmodernism” (48). Unless we accept Jameson’s claim in its strongest sense, this then represents a dilemma for the left: whether, on the one hand, to assert the inutility of the aesthetic object (an object “uncontaminated by economic considerations” 316), and its presumed separateness from the realm of the economic: or, on the other hand, to accept that there is no space for independent creativity outside of the “massive Being of capital.” The former, although it implies a realm of freedom, often aligns the socialist critic with liberalism’s philosophical idealism and liberalism’s critical detachment. The latter, on the other hand, threatens to obliterate creative diversity in the “monotony of supply.”

For his part, Jameson looks to culture itself: to “one possibility of a new radical cultural politics ... evident” in the recuperation of “one of the age-old functions of art: the pedagogical and the didactic” (50). In the postmodern context we see a “prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life—from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself—can be said to have become ‘cultural’ in some original and yet untheorized sense” (48). Extending the claim that the postmodern is a spatial society and culture, he envisions a cartographic metaphor appropriate to the new postmodern global imperative, an “aesthetic of *cognitive mapping*,” as a “model of political culture” (50-1). As for a theoretical key that would empower subjectivity in its relationship with its postmodern environment, there

... is ... a most interesting convergence between the empirical problems studied ... in terms of city space and the great Althusserian (and Lacanian) redefinition of ideology as ‘the representation of the subject’s *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence’ ... [W]hat the cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city ... [is] to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structures as a whole. (51)

This formulation addresses the postmodern crisis of (self) representation that parallels the ultimate impossibility of representational cartography itself, “in particular the unresolvable ... dilemma of the transfer of curved space to flat charts” (52). The problematics of “geographic and cartographic issues” (52) are “transcoded” to the “global space of the postmodernist or multinational moment” (53), a “space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban [global] totality” (51).

This “properly representational dialectic of the codes and capacities of individual languages and media” will present the possibility of a

... new political art ... [that] will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism ... to its fundamental object—the world space of multinational capital—at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion. The political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale (54).

The invocation of a “political form of postmodernism” is intriguing; however, the possibility of what must be an axio-teleology (if in fact “struggle” means substantive change) is neutralised in this highly qualified and partial description. As has been argued (page 128 this chapter), the postmodern is not structured by the spatial alone, but rather by the effects of a spatio-temporal regime, the space-time of capital itself. The consequences of this particular elision will be discussed in more detail shortly in terms of its place in the contest between postmodernist strains of Marxism and Marxist deconstruction. It is explored in terms of its importance to what Spivak refers to as an axio-teleology, in other words, its importance for political engagement with substantive change now, and in the future: “Marxist practice must take the risk of an axio-teleology (a value-system that has an end in view)” (315). The argument of this dissertation is that the operator of this new spacio-temporal regime is the value-form. Of course, the

consequence of what Spivak identifies as Jameson's tendency to "neutralize marxism," is Jameson's own articulation of the impotence of "a capacity to act and struggle" within the space of the postmodern, an articulation reminiscent of Foucault's conclusion to *Discipline and Punish*. After Foucault's three hundred page description of the birth of the "carceral network"—a description in another register of the very same postmodern spatio-temporal regime—agency and resistance to the implacable normalising logic of the "power-knowledge" nexus is reduced to little more than the cautionary intrusion of the author into his own text at the last to warn us that in "this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations ... we must hear the distant roar of battle" (308). Both Foucault and Jameson carry authority in postmodern thought. While Jameson is clearly more comfortable articulating a Marxist position, both nevertheless share the fatalism, as well as the shortage of specific detail, in articulating political engagement and struggle.

Central to what Jameson correctly identifies as "the truth of postmodernism ... the world space of multinational capital," that is the greatly empowered spatio-temporal regime of capital, is the "separation of the economy and society ... [that is] only possible where a money economy develops; when money is also unbound from society and can become a money fetish in the Marxist sense" (Altvater and Mahnkopf; 315). At the core of the money fetish is the value form. What Jameson euphemistically refers to as neutralization and social confusion, Altvater and Mahnkopf more boldly elaborate in detail as the "family resemblance" between the "regulatory law and political re-regulation," the products of "economic deregulation," that come to resemble "political authoritarianism" (321). At the foundation of these socio-political effects, Marx "showed in his form-analysis of value how work as the final creator of all value becomes socialized through the circulation of money. Market economies are ... money economies, and money decodes their laws of movement" (316). Value and the value-

form in Jameson's partial description of the spacio-temporal regime remains little more than a footnote to his discussion of Paul deMan. This dissertation argues that the value-form is crucial to a critique of postmodern capital—even one availing itself of a “complex representational dialectic” between the Imaginary, the Real, and the Symbolic; and particularly one making special claims for the “pedagogical and the didactic” functions of art and culture in the contemporary context.

Addressing this appeal to think dialectically, Spivak argues that what we in fact find in Jameson's text is a rhetorical aporia (his claim that Marx invites us to “do the impossible ... to think ... positively *and* negatively all at once ... without attenuating ... the force of either judgment” 327). Furthermore, this aporia is purged of an “axio-teleology (a value-system that has an end in view)” (315) crucial to any text, such as *Capital*, interested in substantive political change: “Marx points out, not how to *think* well and ill of capitalism at the same time, but that one must work to sublimate the good things *in* capitalism *out* of capitalism” (327). Sublation, the negation of negation produced as dialectical synthesis, Spivak argues, places the emphasis on activism and “movement” beyond the inevitability of a static aporia. This is reflected in Marx's own critical activism: “Position as philosopher, negation as activist (the energy of the negation supplied by the discovery of injustice in the Faculty of Philosophy), and sublation as philosopher of activism who destroys philosophy even as he preserves it on quite another level—to speculate on a philosophy of practice that will be pertinent to human beings in general” (74). As Adorno demonstrates, the challenge presented by the obligation to “be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039) is proportional to the extent to which the subject internalises “socially prevalent categories” “modelled after the act of exchange” (1034). As discussed earlier, Adorno articulates a more robust, more nuanced conception of dialectical thinking than either Jameson's postMarxism, or a liberal-postmodernism such as Readings' will allow.

Spivak's charge that Jameson "de-moralizes the Left anti-postmodernist stance in the interest of keeping what may be generally described as deconstruction (heterogeneity, undecidability) at bay" (320) is based on his claim that there are contextual reasons for "reject[ing] moralizing condemnations of the postmodern and of its essential triviality when juxtaposed against the Utopian 'high seriousness' of the great modernisms: judgments one finds both on the Left and on the radical Right" (46). However, it is the left that is singled out here, as it is ideology critique that Jameson argues is ineffective because of the oppressiveness of the postmodern paradigm:

... when we interrogate the position of the cultural critic and moralist; the latter, along with all the rest of us, is now so deeply immersed in postmodernist space, so deeply suffused and infected by its new cultural categories, that the luxury of the old-fashioned ideological critique, the indignant moral denunciation of the other, becomes unavailable." (46)

The rejection of ideology critique—"indignant" or not, as these are not necessarily coextensive—has been previously discussed in regard to Readings' similar rejection of ideology critique in his response to the crisis of higher education, and the state of the university in the postmodern context. Both Readings and Jameson reduce dialectical thinking to a static aporia. Readings, seeking a strategy to meet the "legitimation crisis" of the humanities, and the changing status of universities and intellectual labour, argues, "[c]hange comes neither from within nor without, but from the difficult space, neither inside nor outside, where one is" (*For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics*; 185). Jameson reduces dialectical thinking to aporia in the formulation that thinks capitalism both "positively *and* negatively all at once" (47).

Jameson argues that "if postmodernism is a historical phenomenon, then the attempt to conceptualize it in terms of moral or moralizing judgments must finally be a category mistake" (46). Such "moral positions" are viewed as an undesirable "lapse" from the "austere dialectical imperative" conceived by Marx, according to Jameson. The apparent high regard for the rigour of this "austere dialectic" turns out to come with

a degree of condescension from Anglo-American Marxism as, ultimately, Jameson believes that the Marxist dialectical imperative can be inclined toward determinism: this “dialectical view of historical development” might in fact be “paralyzing,” tending to “demobilize us and to surrender us to passivity and helplessness by systematically obliterating possibilities of action under the impenetrable fog of historical inevitability” (47). The antidote for this is the cognitive mapping discussed above. However, as the above descriptions imply, determinism may be more a characteristic of Jameson’s own conception of the postmodern itself than a characteristic of ideology critique. In other words, while he rejects the “historical inevitability” of a utopian socialism, on the other hand, he seems to accept the inevitability of the postmodern itself as the end of history, the subject “so deeply immersed in postmodernist space, so deeply suffused and infected by its new cultural categories” that ideology critique is “unavailable.” The only remedy for this is to think the positive and negative of capitalism at one and the same time.

As Spivak demonstrates, this seriously reduces the subtlety of Marx’s conception; as well, the Marxist conception of the dialectic is not characterized by stasis, but by movement, as expressed in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, “in the absolute movement of becoming” (64). On the one hand, there is Spivak’s deconstructive-Marxist reading of the textual chain of value (Value—Money—Capital) “open” at both ends and “harbor[ing] discontinuities” (SR 113-14). This is discussed in more detail shortly. On the other hand, functioning in a different but not unrelated deconstructive register, there is Marx’s own dialectical¹⁸ conception of the teleological

¹⁸ The conflation of these two terms here—‘deconstructive’ and ‘dialectical’—glosses over for the moment a distinction, noted by Spivak, between the two: “This irreducible work of the trace ... produces an unrestricted economy of same and other, rather than a relatively restricted dialectic of negation and sublation [negation of the negation, synthesis, or the sublimation of dialectical oppositions], in all philosophical oppositions” (424). The distinction is necessary considering that deconstruction claims to undo conceptual oppositions. Nevertheless, dialectical critique, in a similar way, uses the work of the

movement toward “*a higher form of society*” (*CPR* 327; *Capital* 3:958). Marx posits a “realm of freedom” (*Capital*. III. 959) conceived as one pole in the movement from a “realm of necessity” toward the “true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, [that] begins beyond it” (959). At the same time, the two are coextensive and interdependent, synchronic and immanent: the “true realm of freedom ... can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis” (*Capital*. III. 959). There is, however, a distinction made here between a circumscribed freedom within the realm of necessity itself, or realm of material production, and this “true realm of freedom” conceived then as a “pure outside,” or as “post-teleological” in Spivak’s words (329). Spivak looks to Marx’s earlier description (*Early Writings*) of “man’s” relationship with nature as a realm of necessity: “Nature is man’s *body without organs*, that is to say nature in so far as it is not the human body. Man *lives from Nature*” (328; *Early Writings*, 328). In this formulation, Spivak argues, the human seems to be almost subsumed in nature; whereas in *Capital* there is a marked shift toward the human with “all references to nature appropriated” (328). Spivak argues that both together represent Marx’s “attempt ... to break into that pure outside—pre-originary and post-teleological—of pure nature and humanity” (328). She argues that, while Marx conceives of the possibility of a “break into that pure outside,” he nevertheless keeps the relationship between man and nature “within ‘materialist’ outlines” (329):

negative in order to expose the contradictions in what is ordinarily presented as a unified whole characterised by structural harmony. To an extent both leave things exactly as they are: for deconstruction there is no privileged position outside of the instability of language; for a materialist critique, dialectics is characterised by unceasing change driven by conflict. In a sense similar to Derrida’s “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*,” Marxism finds there is no outside to the capitalist text—for the present. The difference lies in Marxism’s teleological commitment to revolutionary transformation. I would argue that dialectical critique is paradoxically “relatively restricted” because it conceives of freedom outside of the capitalist text. In other words, dialectical critique, from the point of view of deconstruction, is relatively restricted in positing and arresting the endless “play” of signification, with what would seem to be a transcendental “higher form.” Such a possibility is contained within the present capitalist text nonetheless. For the purposes of this dissertation, Spivak embodies the contradiction that arises out of this difference between the two perspectives at the same time as she radicalises deconstruction.

The inside of these two outsides is described in ... *Capital 3* as “governing the human metabolism with nature in a rational way ... instead of being dominated by it as a blind power.” This larger drama between nature and humanity, with pure nature and pure humanity as limits to rational planning at either side, subsumes the narrative of capital itself as one of its moments. (328)

Marx conceives of the relationship between human and nature as one of dynamic interdependence (“metabolism”), and thus initiates all subsequent analysis on the foundational assumption that reality is primarily material. To this extent Marx’s conception is not philosophical idealism, nor does this realm of freedom represent a transcendental signified. Furthermore, as Spivak argues here, this does not suggest that the dynamism of the dialectic is foreclosed by “allow[ing] the work of the negative to stand still ‘within a single thought’” (326), as Jameson, and Readings, argue. It is not a matter of thinking of limits to rational planning and thinking of pure freedom outside of those limits at one and the same time. As Spivak argues, such a strategy “marks the management of a contradiction, the covering-over of a foreclosure” (330). In this way Jameson’s claim that the “residual and emergent must make their way in the dominant,” a claim stripped of the axio-teleological force in Marxism (rejected as “moralizing”), becomes an apologetics and a justification: “a plea for understanding postmodernism begins to use the axiomatics of imperialism” (330).

Because he brackets “the arena of practice, identical with the arena of necessity” between “these two realms of freedom” (329) (one realm of freedom “always remains [grounded in] a realm of necessity”; C. III. 959), Marx’s conception remains open to the broadest range of human potential possible, and this potential can never be entirely contained: “[b]ecause ... the arena of practice ... remains bounded by these two realms of ‘freedom,’ it can never be adequate to all of human/natural reality, never be absolutely justified” (*CPR* 329-30). Rather than “random difference,” or undecidability, Spivak’s deconstructive-Marxist approach demonstrates the usefulness

of the levers of difference and deferral¹⁹ as tools for theoretical practice and the productive transformation of theory into practice, as formulated by Marx (330), and shows that agency is not crippled by undecidability:

... action is possible only because there is something already dividing the apparently pure formulations at origin and end, the trace of the human in the natural and the trace of nature in the human, and of course the paleonymy of "metabolism" as concept-metaphor. The pre-originary and the post-teleological are inscribed by the trace of the other and thus, as pure pre- or post- they are effaced in their articulation.

...because of ... this graphematic traffic at either end of theoretical practice (planned economy or revolution), it can be demonstrated that the place of practice remains un-totalizable in Marx. Because ... the arena of practice, identical with the arena of necessity, remains bounded by these two realms of "freedom," it can never be adequate to all of human/natural reality, never be absolutely justified. (329)

This model of human potential open at both ends, as Marx conceives it, resists unitary, final, or fixed origins (*CPR* 328). At the same time, this reading demonstrates that there is an outside to the capitalist text. In opposition to this open, un-totalizable axio-teleology, liberalism, on the other hand, continues to make its claims for universal adequation, social equilibrium in the face of manifest disjunction, and the "universality of economic commensurability" (Guillory; 317). As contemporary neo-liberal arguments make more than clear, Francis Fukuyama's for example, these claims operate at the end of history; humanity has already reached the zenith of social perfection, now and forever. In this way possibility, freedom, and hope envisioned by Marx, but certainly not by Marx alone, are diminished: hope for the future is obliterated in a present in which technology is more and more appropriated to the uses of an economy without responsibility.

¹⁹ Setting up her argument for the deconstructive potentials of the expanded form of value, Spivak convincingly argues "Value in Marx establishes itself not only as a representation but also as a differential. What is represented or represents itself in the commodity differential is Value: 'In the exchange-relation of commodities their exchange-value appeared to us as totally independent of their use-value. But if we abstract their use-value from the product of labor, we obtain their value, as it has just been defined. The common element that represents itself ... in the exchange-relation of the exchange-value of the commodity is thus value'" (114). This, of course, implies the deconstructive levers, difference and deferral.

5. The End of History: Eternal Return of the Spirit of Christmas Past, Or a Utopian Future?

Fukuyama claims that we witness today “a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy’ (xi). The evidence, glossed over by Fukuyama here, that this ‘remarkable’ consensus is illusory is exposed in the extent to which Western governments resort to coercion in order to enforce compliance. The “developed” nations use all the usual methods at home and offshore—every method of exploitation, domestic and international espionage, soft and hard coercion—which powerful minorities have traditionally used to further their interests and put down dissent. The history of the West right down to its liberal democratic present is replete with all the familiar methods exerted by imperial state powers down through the ages, and many more new technological twists are added yearly.²⁰ Even a cursory glance at

²⁰ Any number of examples could be given here; these are simply current ones. Canadian police forces routinely use pepper spray to quell civil disobedience. Civil rights lawyer Clayton Ruby, observed, “I cannot find anything governing the use of it ... It seems to be totally unregulated other than by the Criminal Code, which says police cannot inflict grievous bodily harm” (*Globe and Mail* Saturday, March 10, 2001). In Ruby’s view bodily harm, or “the affliction of serious pain [as defined by the British Columbia Court of Appeal]... would include pepper spray” (*Globe*). Preparing for the impending April 2001 “Summit of the Americas” in Quebec City, Ruby noted the anti-democratic nature of the summit: “[t]hese leaders ... are so [democratically] illegitimate that a city has to be sealed off to protect them” (*Globe*). Civil rights lawyer Julius Grey, responding to the “block[ing] off [of] a whole city for 5 days for a political conference, asks, ” “What’s the legal authority? ... Is it convention? Custom? Emergency Law?” (*Globe*). Michael Valpy, again commenting on the anti-democratic nature of global trade agreements, notes that, “disputes between member countries of the WTO and NAFTA are resolved by appointed tribunals that function in private” (*Globe*). The consequences for democracy are very grave: “The surrender of political and economic power in Canada from Parliament to the rule books of the World Trade Organization and the North America free-trade agreement—rule books to which the public has no access—has altered the shape and behaviour of political opposition in ... [Canada]. No democratically elected supra-national body—comparable to, say, the European Parliament—oversees or has authority to intervene in the operations of the WTO, NAFTA or the proposed FTAA” (*Globe*). In other words, there are no global bodies that would function as democratic opposition to these supra-democratic bodies that function now as *de facto* global governing bodies; national governments lack the will and the power to mount any substantial opposition. The *National Post* recently (1st week March, 2001) reported the development of a microwave ray effective for up to 700 metres. The new tool causes excruciating pain by heating up human flesh, and therefore works through deterrence, that is the application of fear and terror; better yet, for liberal democracies in the business of marketing the tools necessary for ensuring social harmony both at home and abroad, it accomplishes this without causing visible damage. The *Post* dutifully reported both the manufacturer and a law enforcement spokesperson’s claims that the ray is ideally suited to “crowd control,” and “objectively” passed on this information

recent history shows that the Western powers today proudly carry the torch of “civilisation” passed them by their imperial antecedents—the imperial powers of the colonial period. However, while Fukuyama generously concedes that the “stable democracies” are prone to “injustice or serious social problems” (xi), these have nothing to do with inherent contradiction. Rather, they are the consequence of some kind of lack of will, the result of an “incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality on which modern democracy is founded, rather than of flaws in the principles themselves” (xi). The liberal democracies have simply not gone far enough according to this argument. While there are bound to be backsliders as some states “lapse ... into more primitive forms ... the *ideal* of liberal democracy ... [can] not be improved upon” (xi).

Of course, my work here has taken pains to demonstrate that the practice of liberal democracy does not merely contradict that “*ideal*,” but that in its very practice it expends an inordinate degree of energy directed toward managing (on stage and behind the scenes) precisely those contradictions inherent to it—not only contradiction revealed in its history, but immanent in its idea. I argue above that the manifest, inherent disjunction, or “disproportion,” between the realm of production and the realm of need or desire—historically at its origin an aesthetic analogy—can subsequently be described as an affective analogy. Fukuyama’s own rhetorical gyrations are positive proof that liberal thought and practice continue to be compelled by the necessity of repressing their own foundational and inherent contradictions. It is not surprising, then, that Fukuyama claims, “liberal democracy [is] ... arguably free from ... fundamental internal contradiction” (xi), and then proceeds to rationalise the “missing link between

completely without criticism or analysis. The report is so fantastic that it seems to be calculated disinformation. If this is the case, it is even more intriguing. Nevertheless, any number of examples demonstrate that increasingly liberal democracies enforce social harmony with both hard coercion (law enforcement) and institutional (obedient privately owned media monopoly) methods of enforced compliance.

liberal economics and liberal politics” by way of what amounts to a double discourse of desire:

The desire for recognition, then, can provide the missing link between liberal economics and liberal politics that [is] ... missing from the economic account of [Fukuyama’s] History in Part II. Desire and reason are together sufficient to explain the process of industrialization, and a large part of economic life more generally. But they cannot explain the striving for liberal democracy, which ultimately arises out of *thymos* [from Plato], the part of the soul that demands recognition. The social changes that accompany advanced industrialization, in particular universal education, appear to liberate a certain demand for recognition that did not exist among poorer and less educated people. As standards of living increase, as populations become more cosmopolitan and better educated, and as society as a whole achieves a greater equality of condition, people begin to demand not simply more wealth but recognition of their status.... this leads them to demand democratic governments that treat them like adults rather than children, recognizing their autonomy as free individuals. Communism is being superseded by liberal democracy in our time because of the realization that the former provides a gravely defective form of recognition. (xviii-xix)

It bears repeating here, that because human needs and desires cannot be measures of exchange value, political economy must “relegate ... use value to a domain of subjectivity, which it cannot enter into the equation of exchange value” (Guillory; 302). Evidently drawing on J.S. Mill’s distinction between “self-regarding” and “other regarding” virtues (77), Fukuyama grasps for a concept to account for what distinguishes liberal democracy from “market-oriented authoritarian[ism],” such as that found in “Franco’s Spain ... or South Korea” (xviii). However, even as both education and high standards of living conspire to homogenize and bring “greater equality,” there is as a consequence a countervailing tendency to reassert disparity. This does not represent equilibrium; rather, it represents the systemic tendency toward difference and inequality.

Searching for a concept that will produce reconciliation out of social discord, that will present a facade of equilibrium in the face of manifest disjunction, Fukuyama gives us “the desire for recognition” as the “motor of history” which renders transparent seemingly divisive phenomenon such as “culture, religion, work, nationalism and war”

(xix). The more rational “universal recognition of the liberal state” thus tames the social discord (“irrational recognition”) produced by diversity (religion, nationalism, and ethnicity) (xix). Nevertheless, in order that disruptive plurality be tidily contained, “irrational forms of recognition” are nonetheless necessary to liberal democracy as well (xix). Relegating use value (“satisfaction of human desires and relief of human pain”) to a domain of subjectivity which liberalism cannot enter in the equation of exchange value, Fukuyama argues that the “work ethic” itself (in Asia particularly) is “sustained not so much by material incentives [exchange value] as by the recognition provided for work by overlapping social groups [irrational forms of recognition], from the family to the nation” (xx). The violence of production is camouflaged here in the anodyne of “universal recognition.” Thus “certain cultures with a strong work ethic, such as the Protestant entrepreneurs who created European capitalism, or ... the elites who modernized Japan” (xix) were motivated neither by necessity (use value), nor by mere greed for material gain, but by the desire for recognition. In this way social discord produced in large part by institutionalised inequality is written out and harmonised in a double discourse of desire:

Liberal democracy replaces the [necessary] irrational desire to be recognized as greater than others with a rational desire to be recognized as equal. (xx)

And so it is that pure self-interest (greed) as the motor of liberal economics and its supporting institutional framework, fades behind the shimmering veil of ‘equality’ in the abstract.

In this way Fukuyama, with the familiar soporific, ‘equality,’ elides the question of disparity and class. “Labor has traditionally been understood in the Western liberal economic tradition as an essentially unpleasant activity” (xix), Fukuyama argues. If one can comfortably believe against all evidence that liberal democracy driven by liberal economics tends toward “a greater equality of condition,” then an understatement such

as ‘unpleasant’ to describe a system in which the exploitation of labour alone satisfies self-interest, and a system whose primary product is disparity of condition—structurally enhanced and maintained—is soothingly appropriate. The fact is, in the liberal tradition the relationship between labour and private capital has been and continues to be one based on exploitation, in other words the violence of production. In this way Fukuyama’s defence of “liberal democracy” is not only a justification of class exploitation, but it is in effect an apology for imperialism:

A world made up of liberal democracies, then, should have much less incentive for war, since all nations would reciprocally recognize one another’s legitimacy. And indeed, there is substantial empirical evidence from the past couple of hundred years that liberal democracies do not behave *imperialistically* toward one another, even if they are perfectly capable of going to war with states that are not democracies and do not share their *fundamental values*. (xx; emphasis added)²¹

So, the tendency toward “equality of condition” and the countervailing tendency toward reasserting difference do not represent equilibrium; rather difference is necessary to establishing recognition from the very start—not only locally, but globally as well. In the “developed” world many analysts in countries such as Canada and New Zealand, for example, nations that have been and continue to be the objects of imperial power imposed from without, would very much beg to differ on this point. Of course, things are

²¹ This serves to illustrate the mechanics of the deconstructive side of Spivak’s distinction between the “irreducible work of the trace ... [that] produces an unrestricted economy of same and other, rather than a relatively restricted dialectic of negation and sublation [negation of the negation], in all philosophical oppositions” (424). Liberal democracies routinely objectify nations and peoples that resist Western hegemony; in Fukuyama’s case, that objectification finds a focus in the irreducibly transcendent signifier, “fundamental values.” As Len Findlay, in *Composing Value: Valuing Composition* (pending), argues, Spivak too flirts with a version of the irreducible that forecloses on the suppleness of the Marxist text closing it down to an irreducible foundation of her own. In “what amounts to a metaphysics of absence” (a matter of selective translation), she reduces the productive openness of Marx’s text to a “version of the irreducible” (16). Marxist dialectical critique, on the other hand, captures the productive instability between the “resolutely relational” elements of its concepts, and in this way provides the critical tools for actually changing “particular arrangements of social relations of production” (16). Marx’s analysis of the value-form presents just such an opportunity for exposing the particular economic arrangements of dependence and exploitation between the Western sources of “fundamental value,” and the exploited sources of surplus economic value in the “developing” world. In a sense, the “developing world” exports raw material in return for the value-added products of Western ideology. One suspects that whether the South recognises the fundamental values of liberal democracy or not, the trade imbalance will remain exactly as it is. This is what is concealed in Fukuyama’s highly subjective and abstract “fundamental value.”

markedly worse for countries in the “developing” world that, according to this view, have failed to mimic the “fundamental value” of “recognition”; failing to acknowledge appropriately the “universal” “value” of *our* brand of democracy (“the universal recognition of the liberal state”), they consequently open themselves up to imperialist exploitation by the liberal democracies. Quite clearly, the implication is that such countries (in the ever shifting morass of ideological euphemism today these nations are referred to as “states of concern”) are the authors of their own misfortunes. That they are them and not us is the result of a failure to recognise; as a consequence, they suffer imperial impositions disproportionate to those endured by us in the “first-world” who are appropriately socialised to desire recognition. This claim is circular, if not tautological. And so we find here at the end of the millennium a utilitarian, neo-liberal argument, which claims to guarantee freedom, the “autonomy [of] ... free individuals.” However, its guarantee is achieved by subsuming the “irrational” (the uncertainties and disorder of culture, religion, nationality, ethnicity etc.) in the “rational” recognition of the universal commensurability of liberal economics—*sans* contradiction—and the idealist abstraction of ‘equality’ in liberal democratic politics. That “equality of condition” is promoted “in particular [by] universal education,” is particularly germane to my argument, and of course accessibility is the issue here. This brings us back to Marx where we find that a word such as ‘universal’ is not foreign to Marx’s own conception of freedom.

Significant for the argument put forward in this dissertation, Marx not only posits a forward motion toward human and social perfectibility; but the realm of freedom, the fullest actualisation of human capacities possible, is also at the same time a synchronic possibility. Just as the value form encloses within itself a dynamic antinomy, enclosed within the value-form is the immanent possibility of freedom in the here and now:

The ancient conception, in which man always appears ... as the aim of production, seems much more exalted than the modern conception, in which production is the aim of man and wealth the aim of production. In fact, ... when the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth if not the universality of needs, capacities, enjoyments, productive powers, etc., of individuals produced in universal exchange? What, if not the full development of human control over the forces of nature—those of his own nature as well as those of so-called “nature”? What, if not the absolute elaboration of his creative dispositions, without any preconditions other than antecedent historical evolution which makes the totality of this evolution—i.e., the evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any *previously established yard stick*—an end in itself? What, if not a situation where man does not reproduce himself in any determined form, but produces his totality, where he does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming? In bourgeois political economy—and in the epoch of production to which it corresponds—this complete elaboration of what lies within man appears as the total alienation, and the destruction of all fixed, one-sided purposes as the sacrifice of the end in itself to a wholly external compulsion. (*Marx/Engels on Literature and Art*; 63-4)

This passage articulates the forward momentum of an axio-teleology toward an “end in itself”; at the same time it articulates the possibility of the fullest realisation of human creative potential (production in universal exchange) “in the absolute movement of becoming,” as immanent and not subject to the “external” imperatives of today’s dominant economic system. The present economic system is a product of history; at the same time, imminent freedom resides in its concepts, concepts that in turn condition our social experience. While the present economic system is a product of history, the possibility of freedom is synchronically imminent in its idea in much the same way that the genetic code of an entire organism is reproduced in each of its individual parts. In summary, the “ethico-political moment in Marx” (330) is neutralized, not only when simply dismissed as “moralism,” but in the reduction of a productive contradiction to a rhetorical aporia (“*positive and negative at once*”) with desire for substantive change, or movement beyond foreclosed as “moralism”: a realm of freedom, with a teleological moment, is reduced to that freedom that resides within the realm of necessity. As Spivak argues, use-value calls the entire chain of value into question (*SR*; 118). In a related fashion, while the dominant discourse of liberalism

attempts to contain this possibility of freedom, it can never manage its disruptive energies entirely. These aspects of the value-form—necessity and freedom—are considered again in more detail in Chapter Four.

Finally, then, the emphasis in Marx's passage on freedom and necessity, as Spivak points out, is on the "irreducibly situational" character of the contingent material world, and activism within this realm of necessity—again, "[b]ecause ... the arena of practice, identical with the arena of necessity, remains bounded by these two realms of 'freedom,' it can never be adequate to all of human/natural reality, never be absolutely justified. (329). To repeat, it is neo-liberalism that stakes its fortunes on universal commensurability fully actualised now and forever. The word 'justified' is an important one here, deliberately chosen, and we might focus on it momentarily in order to get a sense of how a deconstructive methodology might transform theory into practice—how it might wrest action out of "experiences of the impossible," or "experiences of radical alterity," that is, how it might convert theory into practice out of transcendent, theoretical concepts such as "justice and ethics" (426).

A "setting to work" can be initiated by critically attending to what it is that is "disclosed in effacement" in the idealist realms of justice and ethics as can be seen in Spivak's pertinent example (quoting Derrida):

"Law is not justice, it is just that there be law," says "Force of Law" ... Justice cannot pass in a direct line to law; that line is a non-passage, an aporia. Yet justice is disclosed in law, even as its own effacement. This is the peculiar nature of the deconstructive embrace. Ethics as 'the experience of the impossible' and politics as the calculus of action are also in a deconstructive embrace. (427)

The example is relevant in terms of the mechanisms of effacement at work in the value-form itself, and the relation between justice and the economic is a "juridical relation," as Marx argues. In the exchange process the contractual agreement between the "guardians" of commodities is a "juridical relation, whose form is the contract,

whether as part of a developed legal system or not, is a relation between two wills which mirrors the economic relation" (*Capital* 178).

It may seem a mere begging of the question to simply "insist ... that the economic be kept visible under erasure" (*CPR* 358), if the goal of Marxist-deconstruction is to actually instigate a critical "setting to work" in the interest of actual resistance and change in the present context of postmodern capitalism. Nevertheless, the intimacy of the economic and the legal cannot be overstated: "[social] justice is disclosed in [economic] law, even as its own effacement." In the postmodern space of academic capitalism the effaced relation between them is disclosed in the increased legitimacy of some forms of academic inquiry (commerce and computer science for example) commensurate with the receding legitimacy of other forms (classics or native studies for example). This depends today on the perceived proximity of such knowledge to the concerns of imperial economic and political policy objectives coded into the somewhat empty phrase, "information technology," not to mention the problematic translatability of academic use-value directly into commodity form.

For Marxism material reality is fundamentally social, and activism is generated from the dynamics of the antinomies inherent and immanent in Capitalist logic. Marx describes the antinomy central to Capitalism in this way: "The historical broadening and deepening of the phenomenon of exchange develops the opposition between use-value and value which is latent in the nature of the commodity" (181). In mature exchange, human "relations of production [labour] ... assume a material shape [the universal equivalent, money] which is independent of their control and their conscious individual action" (187). In the academic context, alienated labour and the banishment of selected knowledge use-values from the circuit of exchange, the increasing gap between what is socially useful and what is merely useful to the market, are very much at issue. In terms of postmodern capital's space-time regime, it is necessary to

consider where resistance by labour is necessary in as ordinary an example as time outside of work. Countering the dismissal of “the ... ethico-political moment in Marx as moralism” (330), Spivak points out that Marx concludes his discussion of freedom and necessity with a modest proposal firmly grounded in the material and situational: “Marx outlines an appropriately matter-of-fact project within the arena recognized as no more than the realm of necessity and irreducibly situational: ‘The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite’” (330). In other words, as she argues, “one must work to sublimate the good things *in* capitalism *out* of capitalism” (327). “Time out of work” also includes social space and value that escapes the horizon of economic imperatives. Strictly speaking in a social context it is not possible for use-values to escape the economic; nevertheless the possibility that use-value can be transformed as part of a revolutionised model of exchange is what capital represses, and it is in this sense that Spivak’s phrase works.

Marx associates this basic prerequisite of a reduced working day with an activist working class fighting to further its own interests in the “protracted and more or less concealed civil war between the capitalist class and the working class” (*Capital* 1.10. 412). With the reference to civil war Marx evokes the example of America “disfigured” by slavery where “Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin” (414). However, even the free labourer is no free agent within the process of production: “the period of time for which [the worker] ... is free to sell his labour-power is the period of time for which he is forced to sell it” (415). Capital in the Caribbean and America recouped the loss of slave labour with its transformation into indentured labour. It is hard to see that too much has changed in the interim. A farmer on the Canadian prairie pays the taxes on the land she and the banks own and she owns the machinery to farm it; however, increasingly the inputs necessary to farm are provided by corporations who at the same time are insulated from the highs and

lows of the market and external forces of nature because the farmer absorbs by far the greater share of these. The farmer is even more dependent with the forced introduction of genetically modified organisms that cannot live without the chemicals supplied by the companies that develop the seeds. If this is not an example of indentured labour, then what is? For Marx a “legally limited working day” is after all a “modest” proposal when wage-labour in a capitalist system is intrinsically a form of slavery (416). Marx observes that an “independent workers’ movement in America was “paralysed as long as slavery disfigured” the economy and society (414). Canadian labour’s struggle is no less paralysed today by such socio-economic disfigurement in the enormous disparity between workers here and machiladora labour in Mexico, or worse labour conditions elsewhere in the world. In order to consider what subverting what is socially useful out of capital might mean, and in terms of the possibility for activism in the interest of meaningful social change, it is necessary first to consider by way of example just how new these “New times” are in fact. How are “information technologies” produced in universities put to use in the market place? What are the consequences of the new space-time regime for labour time, and labour?

6. Would the “Last Man” to Leave the Sweat Shop Please Turn Her Lights Off: Canadian Labour, Knowledge Workers, and the “New” Knowledge Economy

A great deal has changed in the mean time; nevertheless, even a cursory glance at evolving management strategies (“Total Quality Management, Just-In-Time Delivery systems, Lean Production and ... Agile Production” *Re-Shaping Work*; 11) and their effects on labour reveals that much has remained the same since Marx’s day. In what ways might they be different, and in what ways the same? Wayne Lewchuk and David Robertson, in “Listening to Workers,” point out that the benefits for workers of new production/management strategies in the final analysis turn out to be dubious. Proponents claim that strategies such as Lean Production differ from the older Fordist model in that the former makes “better use of labour’s knowledge” (86). The benefits for labour are couched in such terms as “challenge,” “control,” and “empowerment.” Because the emphasis is on knowledge here, in a sense the difference between the older mass production and the new is another marker of the transition to a knowledge economy, or the “information age.” For example,

Most people ... will find their jobs more challenging as lean production spreads ... [It] provides workers with the skills they need to control their work environment and the continuing challenge of making work go more smoothly ... Lean production offers a creative tension in which workers have many ways to address challenges. This creative tension involved in solving complex problems is precisely what separated manual factory work from professional ‘think’ work in the age of mass production ... By the end of the century we expect that lean-assembly plants will be populated almost entirely by highly skilled problem solvers whose task will be to think continually of ways to make the system run more smoothly and productively. (Womack in Lewchuk and Robertson; 86)

However, a Canadian Auto Worker’s study found that rather than empowering workers, lean-production “scored significantly worse on many of the indicators of good working conditions, including empowerment” (87). Workers reported increased levels of

management surveillance (87), and increased levels of management control. Tellingly, in the collective agreement of a Mazda plant in Michigan, the “management rights clause in the collective agreement clearly establishes the company’s exclusive right to ‘direct and control ... the methods, processes and means of handling work’” (88).

Rather than enjoying “creative tension,” workers “were moulded into a reactive environment, responding to the needs of the line and technology” (88). The declared intention of involving workers more in the decision making process only goes so far as the above management rights clause indicates. Management may talk about its desire to “empower’ the workforce”; however, in practice “increasing management control,” “electronic monitoring,” and “team work” (91) more “often ... means speeding up the production process to meet the goals of loading jobs as close to 100% as possible and increasing the percentage of value added time” (90). One worker’s experience of lean-production management strategies speaks volumes about the way in which these strategies function to win compliance from the workforce by harnessing the subjective:

“In the 1960’s, management forced their way to get where they wanted; they don’t force any more. They win your heart and soul, they involve you more ... It is a different way of doing business.” (91)

This experience represents a striking account of how the working subject is formed (brought into being) through interpellation, as Althusser describes the mechanics of ideology. The declared intention of management to “blur ... lines of authority between managers and production workers” (92) aside, another important goal of lean-production plants is not any different from that of earlier models: “Reduction of the labour complement, while holding output constant was still a management objective ... The target [at one Ford plant] for 1995 was the reduction of 167 workers out of the total workforce of 2,700” (92). Citing Oliver et al., Anderson notes that the correlation between high productivity in Canadian plants and lean production strategies (such as the use of teams, flexible human resources practices, and “human resources policies

intended to modify the attitude of workers towards their employers”) are tenuous at best:

... success was based not on the innovative human resource practices found in Japan, but rather on process discipline and control. This focus on control stands in sharp contradiction to the picture painted by supporters of lean production, who argue that authority will become more diffuse within the organization and that workers will be empowered to improve their working lives. The Oliver study appears to argue quite the opposite. Successful lean plants are controlled plants; whether they empower workers is secondary. (93)

It is worthwhile here to make an argument for the value of an axio-teleological perspective by setting its horizon of positive change against the effects of technological transformation working in combination with the neo-liberal discourse of inevitability. For one example of the hold that the discourse of inevitability has in the political sphere, one needs to consider the hold that the notion of “competitive advantage,” as the very pinnacle of ethical principle put forward by the neo-liberal proponents of globalisation,²² has on the public and private imagination. Around the globe people are experiencing great change as a result of the transition to what is described as a knowledge economy. Supra-political trade agreements, such as NAFTA, facilitate such change. In Canada the transformation has dramatic consequences, as John Anderson argues. From 1960-1990 “manufacturing employment, in ten industrial countries, fell from 27% to 21% ... Service employment [in the same period] grew ... from 50% to some 67% across these countries, Canada’s pattern was similar but the differences have been compounded by the free trade agreements. Canada experienced a drop of 20% of all jobs in the manufacturing sector from 1989-1992. The new growth sectors have become health care, communications and telecommunications and instrumentation. Knowledge workers, such as engineers and computer programmers ... have become

²² Social democracy is too often prone to ill-conceived *rapprochement* with the ideological stratagems of liberalism. For example, in February 2001 British Prime Minister Tony Blair denounced critics of Free Trade as “misguided and unfair,” and damaging to Britain’s competitive advantage. This comes from a party that calls itself Labour.

the new shock troops of the world economy” (Anderson; 12). What are the implications of this new growth for society generally? What are the consequences of the new knowledge based economy and information technology on labour? John Anderson, project coordinator for the Ontario based Technology Adjustment Research Program,²³ in “Information Highway and the Technological Revolution: Toll road or Freeway?”, describes the consequences for labour of new technology combined with new management strategies:

... the introduction of the information highway on a wide scale will contribute to the growth of a non-standard workforce and increasing flexibility for the employer in the workplace.

The decline of Fordism ... has been noted by many scholars, from Lipietz and the regulation school to Robert Reich to Piore and Sabel. Flexible specialization, or lean production, is the new model for these changes. As one ILO [International Labour Organisation] researcher has indicated, the new plan by business—“massive introduction of new technologies: the more the better”—is combined with the push for technological innovation (the newer the better, with a “search for more and more [labour] flexibility) and by growing recourse to atypical forms of work: multi-skilling, teamworking, flexible working time arrangements, telework, and mobile work,” and with “making the organization leaner and leaner: by downsizing, cutting jobs, outsourcing, outplating, and offshoring.

As the writer [Vittorio Di Martino] points out, in the U.S. in the period 1982-1996, against a 20% rise in productivity, there was a “virtual stagnation in aggregate real wages, an unprecedented widening in the inequalities of income distribution, and a dramatic shift in work-leisure trade-off that is putting increasing stress on family and personal priorities. (66-67)

Jan Borowy, Research Co-ordinator with the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, argues, “[f]actory closures, downsizing, privatisation, layoffs, contracting out, and trade liberalization are some of the key issues facing both the private sector and public sector workers” (29). Borowy points out that the discourse of inevitability promulgated by the corporate sector justifies “downsizing and factory closures [with] ... the need for greater ‘flexibility’” (29). Clearly, gender continues to be a critical factor in

²³ Funding for the TARP initiative was established by the Pederson government in 1990 to research— from labour’s perspective—the consequences of “new technologies and new forms of work organization on workers” (i). Funding was renewed by the NDP government of Bob Rae, but cancelled “abruptly ... by the newly-elected Harris Conservative Government” (ii).

an unequal distribution of labour and reward, as the most “flexible” worker in the garment industry is of course “a homemaker—a woman who is sewing clothes at home, often over 70 hours a week, for less than minimum wage” (29). This not only affects the workers at the bottom end of the pyramid; a combination of technology (information technology), home working, and contracting out is having profound effects in other sectors. The new space-time regime of Capital has similar consequences for the relatively better-off workers in the federal public sector where “the push for greater flexibility is through telework ... [that is] work ... performed away from the central office using technology (laptop computers, modems) ... result[ing] in a lengthened work day, often as much as 2.5 hours more per day” (29). Of course, labour flexibility is marketed to workers as providing greater freedom and choice for the employee, the opportunity to spend more time at home with the family. Ontario recently (January 2001) increased the statutory workweek from 40 to 60 hours, again marketing this increase as providing more choice and flexibility for workers, particularly workers with families. Evidently, Marx’s “appropriately matter-of-fact” proposal for “[t]he reduction of the working day [as] ... the basic prerequisite” (Spivak; 330) is neither so naïve, nor is it irrelevant to the present.

The McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology presentation to the CRTC Hearings on the Information Highway, insightfully argued that the “line of argument that should be rejected is the fatalistic stance that globalization renders all national policies obsolete ... [for the reason that] Technologies do not define public interests” (Anderson in *Reshaping Work 2*, 72). However, technology is quite clearly precisely what drives the engine of globalisation, and technology propels its prime directive—competitive advantage. The importance of the information highway to what is referred to as the information age is reflected in the Canadian government’s declared intention to make “the information and knowledge infrastructure accessible to all Canadians by

the year 2000, thereby making Canada the most connected nation in the world” (Speech from the Throne, September 23, 1997 in *Reshaping Work* 71). As Anderson points out, the evidence clearly shows that rather than enhancing accessibility to new information technologies, what we find is that these new technologies instead further empower corporations and promote “the concomitant erosion of national sovereignty” (72):

The information highway project does this, not only by breaking down the technological boundaries to transmission of information and to electronic commerce on a wide scale, but by opening the door to changing many previously public services into market commodities: education, the arts, government information, libraries, etc. (72)

At this point it is worth reflecting once again on Readings’ incisive claims about the decline of the nation state and its consequences for the university. And of course we must carefully weigh his proposal for a way forward, or, consider whether or not his proposal counts as a way forward for the Canadian university at all. Anderson is less accepting than Readings of the so-called decline of the nation state. He points out that in a context where transnational companies [seem to] ... owe no allegiance to national governments” (106), the “country of majority ownership still gets the benefits of possessing the head office which include, management decisions, jobs, and research and development” (107). He convincingly argues, “for the working class and the trade union movement ... to exert influence on the policies of government remains a better bet than putting one’s faith in the Royal Bank or Ford of Canada to negotiate on our behalf with Mexico or any other country” (107). Anderson’s observation above (block quotation) demonstrates how it is that the new space-time regime of Capital is unfolding, breaking down boundaries for information transmission and commerce (as previously discussed in Altvater and Mahnkopf).²⁴

²⁴ Is it mere coincidence that every major automaker today advertises their products with some variation of the cynical anodyne that there are no “borders, no boundaries, no limits”? This ideological fiddling

An issue crucial to Canadian universities today, as well as society generally, is accessibility, not only to information technology, but, just as important, accessibility to the *free expression* of scholarship, study, and learning. In terms of accessibility to higher education, it is worth repeating here that Spivak, citing several sources including “World Bank Staff Working Paper 440,” notes the “WTO’s insistence that higher education in the developing countries should be de-emphasized because it is unproductive” (Spivak; 379). In respect to information technology generally, here in Canada, pro-business analyst, contributor to the *Ottawa Citizen*, and educator at McGill, William Watson, has declared, “[p]roviding free access to the Internet will subsidize a lot of chat” (Anderson; 71). At the same time, it is well known that corporate concentration and foreign ownership are growing trends in the media, communication, and information technology sectors in Canada. BC Telephone and Quebec Telephone are entirely American owned. That this poses a threat to public access to information technology—that is public control and access to information and information infrastructure independent of the law of the market and the monotony of supply—is demonstrated in the growth of corporate concentration, and the declared intentions of these increasingly powerful global entities to privatise information technology where it is produced in the education system itself:

Public ownership of the systems or networks on the information highway must be strengthened and expanded. This is no longer simply an ideological question. In a globalized world, we already know that companies based in one country very quickly make alliances with those of another and become partners. The UNITEL example of its partnership and fusion with AT&T is one occurrence near home. The Bell partnership with Ameritech-Jones in the U.S. is yet another. Interestingly, Ameritech wants to privatise the public television network in the U.S. and is leading the charge for free trade in education and training.
(73)

occurs at a time when the automobile significantly contributes to global warming and the deterioration of the ozone layer that protects the Earth from solar radiation. Previously three times the size of the continental U.S., in 2001 the hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica expanded in size to reach the southern part of South America. In spite of the gravity of the threat, the free-market offers only one solution: increased consumption and increased development spirals.

The Stentor group of telecommunications companies (including Bell which is owned by BCE, “one of the most profitable companies in Canada” 58) has already begun moving into the educational market in buying a 400 million share in Jones Intercable, “an American company ... intent on developing educational software” (59). Anderson cites a Stentor conference presenter who “claimed educational software and delivery of courses would be a major—if not the major—source of profits in the future for the telephone companies” (59). Here we might refer back to Fukuyama’s claim for the power of “universal education” in liberal democracies to promote “a greater equality of condition” (xviii-xix), a dramatic example of the disjunction between theory and practice. Bourdieu argues there is no “universal equivalent for the adequation of cultural and material capital when the latter is *already* the order of the universal equivalent. The conversion of cultural into material capital (or vice versa) is precisely the condition of the commensuration of the incommensurable, an irresolvable social contradiction” (326). Fukuyama’s utilitarian, liberal perspective attempts to subsume this manifest incommensurability, one that would otherwise escape the calculus of exchange, in a supposed universal equality. The fullest possible range of human potential guaranteed by a truly universal education is reduced to one more stock option in the monotony of supply. Here we might contrast this perspective to the axio-teleology of Marx and his conception of the realization of unquantifiable human potential beyond the calculus of the universal equivalent of liberalism: “what is wealth if not... the evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any *previously established yardstick*” (*Marx/Engels on Literature and Art*, 63-4).

The private sector claims that a combination of trade liberalisation, deregulation, and technology will create employment. A 1997 paper produced by the Conference Board of Canada, *Jobs in the Knowledge-based Economy*, “maintains that

information technology will create jobs. The main argument of this document is that business will save money through automation and job cuts, and thus be able to invest this sum elsewhere to create jobs" (64). Evidence indicates that while there are job increases in higher skill areas, there are at the same time concomitant job losses in the lower skill levels (65). However, cycles of corporate restructuring and mergers in the telecommunications industry have generally been accompanied by downsizing and massive layoffs:

During the period 1991 to the present, thousands of jobs have been lost. Overall cuts for U.S. telecommunications companies announced are 103,000 jobs from 1993-1995 alone. Bell telephone laid off some 10,000 workers from 1995-1998, and has continued the layoffs in 1999. Unitel announced January 12, 1994, 650 layoffs or 20% of staff by 1996. (Anderson 65)

In Canada, world leader Nortel announced in February 2001 that it would cut its workforce by 10,000 workers. If technology is the driving force in the Information Technology revolution, the benefits for labour in terms of job creation are in fact dubious and disproportionate to the benefits enjoyed by corporations: Statistics Canada figures for 1993 show that "manufacturers increased their output by 7.7% while the workforce expanded by only 2.9%" (64). Anderson notes, the "most damning [sic] evidence against the job creation argument is simply to examine the employment rates in the leading industrialized countries. There are now some 35 million people out of work in OECD countries" (64). These numbers are accompanied by the marked expansion of a non-standard workforce as a result of a corporate need for a "flexible," or "just-in-time workforce":

In Britain between 1992 and 1996, the number of temporary workers rose by nearly a third, with fixed-term contracts and agency temping increasing by a similar amount. Half of companies in a recent survey were employing temporary staff. Many studies, including those of Statistics Canada, have noted the increase of those working non-standard hours.... By December 1998, Statscan reported that just over 11.8 million people were working full-time in Canada, up 8.0% from the start of the decade, while the number of part-timers zoomed up by 24.4% over the decade to just over 2.7 million. Of those, about 23% of youths, working part-time, would have preferred to work full-time, as would

some 30% of adult women. An astounding 44% of adult men working part-time wanted full-time work. (67)

Anderson cites a “staggering 42.5%” increase in the number of self-employed since 1998 as one indicator of the increase in homework (“seven times the rate of increase in the number of employees”) (67-68).

Evidence that information technology in combination with new management methods and new corporate goals will work to the disadvantage of labour is not hard to find. Anderson argues that the convergence of technologies (telecommunication, cable, computer, modem etc) provides not only the opportunity for increased competition, but it also “opens a window of opportunity for dismantling the regulatory framework that has governed the areas of broadcasting and telecommunications” (57). Anderson notes that CRTC hearings in 1995 focussed on the narrow issue of how and when to open up full competition between cable and telecommunications. He points out that questions of “public interest ... question[s] of access and ...the implications ... for the world work [sic], or the possible negative implications for communities ... are not even mentioned” (70). Anderson, however, goes further to argue that technological convergence is a

Trojan horse ... for the privatisation and deregulation of areas such as education, health, and government services previously largely untouched by the commercial sector. Also, by its labour-saving intensity, the information highway offers the possibility of saving large sums on labour costs, while allowing cheaper costs for those who remain, as well as more control of workers in the workplace, wherever that may be in the future. (57)

We are confronted daily with the evidence that rather than creating employment the consequences of these changes results in the loss of a great many jobs. While at the same time employment is created elsewhere (offshore in the following example), it is readily apparent that conditions for workers deteriorate—as a desired effect—as Anderson illustrates:

... Bell announced in January 1999 that it was selling off its operator division to a low-wage American company. Not only would wages be cut by at least 40%, but Bell would try to avoid paying the pay equity awards to these overwhelmingly women workers. (57)

An MIT study found that “for every 1% increase in information technology investment, the average firm dropped 13% of its employment within one or two years. This means that if investment increases 100%, employment drops 13% ... In other words, employing new information technology generally means job losses” (15).

Technology makes possible the ability of “money as money” to “overcome space and destroy time”, and thereby to “decouple” itself from the social (while remaining very much the operator of the commodity cycle). Altvater and Mahnkopf’s example is worth repeating here. Their description of the new technologically empowered ability of the money cycle to detach itself from the everyday experience of social interaction illustrates how the postmodern, spacio-temporal regime benefits the owners of money:

The self-propulsion of money as money comes to fruition only when the material and energy become available to detach time and space from the immediacy of a banality limited by the everyday world. Only then does money appear as the superbly suitable instrument ... not only to connect distant times and spaces and to mediate the respective interests based there through arbitrage, but above all to re-organize temporal and spatial coordinates. While commodity owners must still be spatially and temporally present in order to exchange their wares, this is no longer necessary for the owners of money. (317)

While the new spacio-temporal regime and information technology benefits the owners of money in this way, the new global regime (“no limits, no borders”) and its empowering technologies also function at the same time to the disadvantage of labour. Schenk and Anderson show that with the emergence of this “global spatio-temporal regime” (309), the ability of information technology to “detach time and space from the immediacy of ... the everyday world” (317), serves to encourage deteriorating conditions for labour. Consequently, not only are working conditions degraded, but also labour becomes increasingly fragmented and alienated:

If we are to identify one technology, it seems to be information technology which has become the enabling technology for economic restructuring, just-in-time production and the “virtual corporation” of which Benetton in Italy is one of the obvious models. It is the information system which permits companies like Benetton to co-ordinate retail stores around the world with manufacturing production by thousands of homeworkers and small sweat shops. (15)

As Jan Borowy and Theresa Johnson point out, the impact on home-workers is not that different for public service workers. Organised labour with an interest in a more balanced social consensus is particularly vulnerable in this new context: “[t]rade unions cannot as effectively defend the interests of their members if private capital is globally mobile, if companies can leave the country whenever they please and if the regulatory role of the nation state is much diminished” (15). Anderson summarises how the new information technology is being implemented in Canada:

As more and more workers are pushed into individualized work environments, as the virtual corporation and the virtual workplace become more and more prevalent, the push to move towards the New Zealand model of labour relations which means eliminating basic trade union rights, privatisation and total de-regulation is becoming more and more appealing to elements in the business community. (16)

The efforts Canadian governments are expending to satisfy the corporate sector are demonstrated in “the adoption of these ideas by the Ralph Klein government in Alberta” (16). We can add to Anderson’s example. Evidence for the pathetic reduction of a healthy continuum of political alternatives and social debate to the narrow space envisioned by the new model liberalism is found in governments as seemingly disparate as the conservative governments of Klein and Harris to what regrettably can hardly be called the other end of the political spectrum—the social (liberal) democracy of the Romanow government of Saskatchewan.

While the Canadian government “pour[s] ... 10 million a year into a Technology Network”—that is pours money into the “hardware end of information highways”—labour is effectively excluded from any input into the social consequences of information technology, the consequences for “human and employment issues” (17).

While the Canadian government pours money into hardware technology, it barely pays lip service to the need for social technologies necessary to meet the changes technology brings. For, example, Anderson points out, “the federal government’s 1994-95 task force on the information superhighway ... [included] only one representative for working people out of 30” (17). Fukuyama claims that “liberal democracy [is] ... arguably free from ... fundamental internal contradiction” (xi); from this it follows that the manifest discord found in liberal democracy is simply the result of an “incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality on which modern democracy is founded, rather than of flaws in the principles themselves” (xi). His resort to the terminology of “consensus,” and the “greater equality of condition” that follows from the “fundamental values” of liberal economics and liberal democracy, promoted by “universal education,” marks the “management of a contradiction” (to use Spivak’s words). This claim flies in the face of the manifest contradictions disclosed in the decoupling of the economy from social responsibility, the exclusion of the public from meaningful participation in making decisions about the new social experiment that affects them so profoundly, the emergence of “the virtual corporation and the virtual workplace,” and the attendant corporate assault on organised labour and labour generally.

Diversity of political alternative, following the trend in other spheres of existence, today increasingly degenerates into monoculture. Healthy political debate more and more cedes the field of social debate to “global pessimism” and the discourse of inevitability. Anderson argues that “structuralist theories” that “attempt to show that trade patterns are primarily the result of overall economic and social trends,” also tend to overemphasise the powerlessness of national governments and the inevitability of globalisation. As a result this reduces the range of possibility open to

governments, public policy, and the involvement of the public in the social decisions that affect our lives:

The implications of these theories, which are ... a form of "global pessimism" are that countries now have very little room to manoeuvre. They can only respond to shifts in trade and investment with two main weapons: investment in education and training and investment in infrastructure to attract multinational plants. Political solutions or economic policies beyond these limited tools are seen as very difficult or unworkable. This reduction of economic policy options to a contest to see which country can best attract multinationals because of a better educated work force and a better infrastructure creates a somewhat dangerous competitive game of winner-take-all. What happens to that trained and educated work force when a company decides to locate in another country with an equally fine infrastructure and equally skilled workers? (106)

Anderson correctly identifies here the crucial importance of universities to the emerging global order. The pressure on universities to conform and adapt to the imperatives of this "financialization of the globe," and the idea of its inevitability, are enormous (Spivak's words provide the proper inflection to demonstrate that the process is not a natural force just passively happening somehow). One result is the increased blurring of the lines between education and training, and the increasing emphasis in English departments on "composition" over literary scholarship, for example. In spite of all the talk of interdisciplinarity, in some quarters within the university community itself there is an assumed conflict between the Sciences and the Humanities, and the false dichotomy between objective and subjective knowledge. The Sciences and the Humanities bracket Commerce and Business Management that typically, and not unsurprisingly, often seem equally uncomfortable with, and equally unsure of where they stand relative to either pole in this false dichotomy. The opposition between presumed "objective" and "subjective" knowledge is a false one, but it is one that reinforces, and is reinforced by, the free-market driven discourse of relevance and accountability. The discipline of "English" capitulates to the discourse and accommodates the condescending tolerance of its pursuit of literary scholarship within the sequestered confines of the departmental hermitage. At the same time, however,

when it comes to the “objective” relevance of English to the scholarly community as a whole, and the need to export to other colleges what English departments do, then the emphasis shifts away from culture, that is education and scholarship with a social connection, and toward training, in this case composition, with a market connection. It is also necessary to situate the university in the larger social context where there is considerable suspicion of what it is that universities do, if not outright ideologically fostered and strident anti-intellectualism.

The grip that the liberal economic imperative of “competitive advantage” has on the public imagination is marked by the ubiquitous appearance on university campuses everywhere of how-to-manuals dedicated to competing for private funding for university infrastructure and programs. As is often pointed out these days, this state of affairs represents a considerable threat to academic freedom.²⁵ On the other hand, this context in which the crucial connection between education and activities outside of the institution is receiving renewed emphasis represents an opportunity for universities; but it represents an opportunity only if universities seize it as an opportunity to enhance

²⁵ Tom D’Aquino, president of the Business Council on National Issues, has recently called for a “massive” restructuring of Canadian institutions—including Education—in order to make them more competitive (*Globe and Mail* (or *National Post*); April 01-13). This full-page article articulates the sense of urgency for dramatic social change in idealist abstractions virtually without specific logistical detail. We needn’t look far for specific examples of how the Business Council’s vision for post-secondary education are, and will continue to be implemented. The *Globe and Mail* recently reported the University of Toronto’s courting (since 1998) of David Healy, “internationally renowned ... clinical psychopharmacologist and ... historian of the role of drugs in modern psychiatry.” Healy’s posting offer at the U of T was subsequently rescinded following a public lecture at which Healy expressed concern over the rate of suicide associated with Prozac. Prozac is manufactured by Eli Lilly, the major contributor (more than \$1-million) to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health’s (a teaching hospital affiliated with the U of T) capital fund-raising campaign. Spokespersons for the U of T and CAMH denied that the rescinding of the posting offer was connected in any way to Eli Lilly or the universities fund-raising efforts, but that Healy’s “approach is [in]compatible with the goals for development of the academic and clinical resource” of the U of T and CAMH. Paul Garfinkel, of CAMH, admitted that the term ‘development’ was often used as a synonym for university fundraising, but nevertheless he insisted that in the email of rejection to Healy it meant program development and nothing more. Eli Lilly had previously cancelled \$25000 in funding to the Hastings Centre in New York, “a think tank that looks at ethical issues” following a series of articles published on Prozac, including one published by Dr. Healy. “Two U of T professors, who ... asked that their names not be published, said that what happened to Dr. Healy in Canada raises disturbing questions about whether professors are free to be critical of drug companies in an era where medical schools are heavily dependent on them for financing” (*Globe and Mail*, April 2001-04-14).

their ability to fulfil their social responsibilities independently of the efforts of elites to monopolise scholarly endeavour to their own advantage. Capitulation and accommodation is a destructive strategy. Such a context represents for universities a tremendous opportunity for a calculated response to socio-political transformation from a position of strength, rather than passive reaction. New global imperatives also represent, as Anderson clearly shows, many dangers for universities participating in the social engineering now underway—social engineering at the behest of global capital and designed to serve its interests first and foremost. Universities, in order to protect programs assumed to have no direct benefit to the new economic world order (Classics, Philosophy, Literature etc), can disguise the perceived irrelevance of certain programs (especially in the Humanities) by marketing their “objective” qualities to the rest of the university community (Engineering, Agriculture, Commerce), the private sector, and the public. At the same time they can fold one discipline into another (fold Classics into History, then fold both into General Studies) in the interest of dissolving what are not incorrectly perceived to be arbitrarily constructed disciplinary boundaries. However, this is mere cynicism if the idea of interdisciplinarity serves simply as an alibi for saving money by what amounts to slashing programs. The other option is, of course, simply to dispense with the subterfuge, cut programs, and continue to download the costs onto students in the form of tuition. The *Globe and Mail* (Friday March 16, 2001) recently noted “[s]tudent’s debt load exploded over [a] ... 15-year period studied by Statistics Canada. The total amount owed by students in Canada was 6.2 times higher in 1999 than in 1984, Stats Can noted. As for individual students, the median debt load rose from \$3,400 in 1984 to \$7,300 in 1999. After all is said and done, the resort to the strategy of compromise is perhaps more destructive than cuts out front and undisguised. A certain compromise is in practice at best ineffective, and at worst catastrophic. For example, the University of Saskatchewan has recently

confirmed its commitment to improving accessibility for both aboriginal students and aboriginal employees on campus; at the very same time, however, the university cut native language programs at a time when there is grave concern for the very survival of native languages and the cultures that these languages necessarily sustain. Without the languages that produce culture, these distinct cultural entities too will die. In this way Canadian universities collude in the larger institutionalised policy of assimilation that continues unabated into the Twenty-first century.

Chapter Four: Value: Structuralism, the PostModern, and Poststructuralist Marxism

We economics students of the world, declare ourselves to be generally dissatisfied with the teaching we receive ... We wish to escape from imaginary worlds! Most of us have chosen to study economics to acquire deep understanding of the economic phenomena which confront the citizens of today. But the teaching offered, for the most part neoclassical theory or approaches derived from it, does not generally answer this expectation ... theory ... rarely returns ... to the ... empirical side—historical facts, functioning of institutions, studying the behaviours and strategies of agents, etc. ... this gap in the teaching, this disregard for concrete realities, poses an enormous problem for those who want to be useful to economic and social actors ... We oppose.... mathematical formalisation when it is an end in itself.... We want a pluralism of approaches, adapted to the complexity of the objects and the uncertainty surrounding most big questions in economics (unemployment, inequalities, the role of financial markets, the advantages and disadvantages of free trade, globalization, economic development, and so on)

(“French students declaration in support of pluralism and against ‘autistic economics” Capital and Class 73 (2001): vi

1. Value: Necessity and Freedom

One response to the presumed inevitability of the new global imperative, inside universities and out, is passivity, “political paralysis,” and accommodation. While we might expect concerted resistance from the left to the determinism of liberalism, what we find instead is prevarication, or even collusion. We may recall here Jameson’s hypothesis that the “austere dialectical imperative” of Marxism may itself tend to determinism: this “dialectical view of historical development” might in fact be “paralyzing,” tending to “demobilize us and to surrender us to passivity and helplessness by systematically obliterating possibilities of action under the impenetrable fog of historical inevitability” (47). Of course this is precisely the charge with which the left counters the claimed inexorability of the global dominant, as in Anderson’s own warning about perspectives on trade that see globalisation as inevitable. In his view, structuralist theories of trade development (among several

discussed) emphasize that “trade patterns are primarily the result of overall economic and social trends” (106). Trade patterns are “determined” by global structures such as “production, finance, knowledge, and security structures” that develop differently in different national contexts, rather than “international agreements or national policies, whether liberal or protectionist” (106). For Anderson, the view that globalisation is inevitable “can lead to a dangerous paralysis in public policy—a malaise which confines government to a very limited range of activities” (106). The emphasis a structuralist perspective places on national and social context is crucial. Nevertheless, Anderson’s point that “global structuralists end up with a position which in practice is similar to that of free traders” must be kept in mind, even as the left combats the seemingly irresistible hold that the imperative of “competitive advantage” has on the popular imagination. This hold is managed by political and ideological means—it is not a natural force. The disarming point that Socialism should emphasise is not that globalisation is inevitable, but, rather, that its inevitability is a carefully stage-managed perception. Chapter Five explores further determinism in Marxist thought. What follows first considers how determinism works in the Canadian work world, and then looks at how the discourse of inevitability works in an academic context.

In “Trade, Technology, and Unions,” Anderson argues that the predominant trade theories (global structuralism, strategic trade, Vernon’s product cycle, and dependency theory) “popular as rationales for trade policy in the U.S. and Canada,” “view economic questions in the abstract, cut off from questions of political, economic, and social democracy; none of the theories incorporates these dimensions, which are so vital to the future of the union movement” (113). But then this is precisely the point here. Liberalism misrepresents the economic as universal equivalent; therefore democracy in any of these spheres of social activity is always necessarily problematic precisely because, as Spivak points out, the globalisation of human relations is

objectified in the economic as the final instance, is objectified in the “most efficient and abstract coding of value, the economic” (Spivak; 245-6). To repeat, Jameson rejects the “historical inevitability” of a utopian socialism, but nevertheless seems to accept the inevitability of the postmodern itself as the end of history in which the subject is “deeply immersed in postmodernist space, so deeply suffused and infected by its new cultural categories” that ideology critique is “unavailable.” The only remedy for this, according to Jameson, is to think the positive and negative of capitalism at one and the same time. Again we return to Spivak’s Marxist-deconstructive rejoinder: rather than reducing the dialectic to a static aporia, Marx brackets “the arena of practice, identical with the arena of necessity” between “these two realms of freedom” (329). The theories of trade that Anderson considers, conceive of the inevitability of global free trade as almost a natural force. Therefore, reducing human potentiality to the realm of natural necessity alone, they reduce individual and collective agency to submission to the global economic imperative—in its essence an abstraction. Attending consistently to the material foundation of experience, in contrast to the abstraction of liberal economics, Marx argues that one realm of freedom “always remains [grounded in] a sphere of necessity” (*CPR*; 328). Nevertheless, Marx’s conception consequently remains open to the broadest range of human potential possible, and this potential can never be entirely contained: “[b]ecause ... the arena of practice ... remains bounded by these two realms of ‘freedom,’ it can never be adequate to all of human/natural reality, never be absolutely justified” (329-30). The dynamic tension between limitless possibility on the one hand, and limits to possibility on the other, opens a space for freedom and agency that bears a homological relation to the value form itself.

Within the realm of necessity, what appears as freedom masks the occultation¹ of use value by exchange value. Ever accelerating transnational capital then misrepresents this occultation of use value by exchange value as both origin and end—the then, the now, and the forever. In “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value,” Spivak employs a Marxist-deconstructive critical strategy in order to expose this displacement of use value as a particular kind of ruse: “the logical progression to accumulation can only be operated by its own rupture, releasing the commodity from the circuit of capital production into consumption in a simulacrum of use-value” (*OTM* 116). Jameson, on the other hand, argues that “‘use value’ drops out of the picture on the opening page of *Capital*” (231)—that is it drops out as a discrete concept. In an operation that symmetrically reflects his claim that Marx invites us to grasp the positive and negative in Capitalism at once, Jameson argues that “we might say that ‘use value’ is the realm of difference and differentiation as such, whereas ‘exchange value’ will ... come to be described as the realm of identities. But what this terminological usage means in Marx is that henceforth *value as such and ‘exchange value’ are synonymous*” (emphasis added; 232). As has been emphasised at several points in this project, such a description of the internal dynamic of the value form is seriously lacking in the necessary complexity and nuance. For one thing, what Marx describes is more a matter of complicity, as it is impossible that use-value simply “drop” out. Marx’s own description demonstrates that the commodity itself instigates difference:

... the simple fact that the commodity exists doubly, in one aspect as a specific product whose natural form of existence ideally contains (latently contains) its exchange value, and in the other aspect as manifest exchange value (money), in which all connection with the natural form of the product is stripped away again—this double, *differentiated* existence must develop into a *difference* ... (*Grundrisse* 147)

¹ The term ‘occultation’ seeks to capture the incongruity and indeterminacy—posing as unity—that reflect the senses of the magical, esoteric, beyond ordinary knowledge, and concealment that is found in Marx’s own description of commodity fetishism. (*Capital* 1.I.4)

Spivak argues that Marx does not merely stop at contradiction, but rather “seems to indicate the possibility of an indeterminacy” (115).

Spivak argues for the “subtle open-endedness at the origin of the economic chain,” and that this openness is a consequence of differential determinations that function along the chain of value—rather than a simple matter of substitution and equivalence as Jameson more than implies. At the same time, “the complexity of the notion of use-value ... problematizes the origin of the chain of value” (*OTM* 114); and, as the above quotation demonstrates, use value continues to haunt the entire continuum of value. In Spivak’s far more productive formulation the two are not merely synonymous. Both Adorno and Spivak demonstrate precisely why the two cannot be synonymous. Adorno’s critique, as has been stated before, gives a more carefully nuanced articulation of the modern dissolution of autonomous subjectivity (subjectivity that is profoundly implicated in a context in which “ideologies become ... increasingly abstract” and “equally near the centre”). What seems like prevarication, a “neither” “nor,” is rather the enactment in thought of Adorno’s dialectical method in its active engagement with modern experience deformed by monological capitalism. Consequently, a clear distinction between subject and object (Hegelian) can no longer be “presumed”; therefore, given the nature of the contemporary, the more necessary it is that dialectical method “is obliged to be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039).

Adorno draws a distinction between a transcendental criticism, and a “more essentially dialectical” criticism. Immanent criticism

... takes seriously the principle that it is not ideology in itself which is untrue but rather its pretension to correspond to reality. Immanent criticism of intellectual and artistic phenomena seeks to grasp, through the analysis of their form and meaning, the contradiction between their objective idea and that pretension.... Where it finds inadequacies it does not ascribe them hastily to the individual and his psychology, which are merely the façade of the failure, but instead seeks to derive them from the irreconcilability of the object’s moments. It

pursues the logic of its aporias, the insolubility of the task itself. In such antinomies criticism perceives those of society. A successful work, according to immanent criticism, is not one which resolves objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure" (1039).

Of course, words such as 'inadequacy' and 'successful work' could very well be claimed as evidence of the elitism Adorno is charged with. To problematise such a charge one need only connect it to the transcendental criticism that is the target of Adorno's analysis: Matthew Arnold's critical strategy of "detachment" for one example. As well, one might place Adorno's immanent critique in the context of Guillory's discussion of the history of value, and the contemporary eclipse of cultural judgment that accompanies it, in other words, the rejection of cultural judgment by neo-relativist, quasi-pluralist liberal criticism in the postmodern context.

Such criticism is relativist in its refusal to impose judgement on cultural objects, and at the same time quasi-pluralist as it refuses to acknowledge its own privileged and cloistered position within academic walls from where it complacently misidentifies representation in a literary canon with political representation without the walls (Guillory; viii; *CPR*, 260). From this position it misrepresents its own prescriptions and interdictions as political activism. Again, Matthew Arnold is an important example here considering his persistent influence in the shaping of the idea of the Canadian university, and the transformation of that idea into a practice of detachment posing as activism. The misidentification of literary representation as political representation also has more than passing importance to the Canadian university in which the ubiquitously declared marginalisation of theory (see Guillory's discussion of de Man; Chapter Four) is matched only by a proliferating array of "oppositional" theoretical perspectives deftly practiced everywhere. Theory is not as marginal as it often claims. The reputed marginalisation of theory can be merely a rebel pose conferring the charisma of the

cutting edge on the practitioner. On another level, as Guillory argues, the assimilation of theory in English departments, and others, also registers the “symptom of crisis” in the practice of literary criticism. Earlier forms of criticism, the “art’ of interpretation or the even more intuitive exercise of judgment or taste, the art of appreciation,” served the interests of the older bourgeoisie, but no longer serve the interests of the “new professional-managerial class” or the new educational system it requires (181). The technical rigor of theory, the “reconstruction of criticism as a ‘technical’ practice,” registers the adjustment of institutionalised academic labour to changing socio-economic conditions as “critical practice ... tend[s] ... to model the intellectual work of the theorist on the new social form of intellectual work, the technobureaucratic labor of the new professional-managerial class” (181). The conflation of representation, as aesthetic imitation, with political representation is another aspect of the containment of the resistant energies of institutionalised criticism. The problem of the productive doubleness of representation is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Spivak similarly captures Adorno’s sense of the critical subject’s impossible insertion into the contradictory matrix of modern social experience: “Persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit is the deconstructive stance” (*OTM*; 284). The double negative captures the inevitability of the subject’s determined imbrication in the social; at the same time it captures the sense that this same determinism presents the very possibility, in fact the necessity of a critique from within. In addition, that which necessarily escapes the calculus of rational critique, of logic and structure—the affective and desire—is bracketed in this formulation in just the same way as need and desire, use value, are bracketed by political economy and liberalism. If liberalism brackets need and desire in order to appropriate it to private use, to privatise it in fact, then this bracketing presents an “affirmative deconstruction” with precisely the opportunity of leverage in the interest of substantive change by an

engaged critique from a position of “critical intimacy—rather than the usual critical distance” (*CPR* 425). In this earlier essay (“Speculations”), Spivak’s robust reading of Marx exposes the contradiction in the “innermost structure” of the value form in her articulation of the complex relation between use-value and exchange-value which generates indeterminacy out of non-random differential structure:

The parasitic part (exchange-value) is also the species term of the whole, thus allowing use-value the normative inside place of the host as well as banishing it as that which must be subtracted so that value can be defined. (118)

However, as Spivak points out, there is an important distinction to be made here between a scientific socialism, and a utopian socialism that would falsely desire a return to a prelapsarian state in order to “restor[e] ... a society of use-value” (117).

In order to flesh this distinction out, we might begin with Jameson’s observation, that “‘exchange value’ will ... come to be described as the realm of identities” (272), as a point of departure on the way to determining, for a start, in what this distinction between utopian and “scientific” socialism might consist. In other terms, this represents the distinction between a merely “theoretico-teleological justification” (*SR*; 117) and an “axio-teleology” (*CPR*). The former represents a static aporia (Jameson); the latter represents the possibility of substantive change itself, sublating the good in capitalism out of capitalism (Spivak). The value form not only has considerable explanatory power for describing the disjunction between economic value and social value; but, as a consequence, the value form represents a tool with great critical potential for exposing the contradictions that reside within the current economic and social system. In the interest of introduction rather than deliberate mystification,² we might then contrast

² If my work here seems to be an uncritical paraphrase of Spivak’s, then it is necessary to include Terry Eagleton’s more eloquent denunciation in his review of Spivak’s *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*: “In the Gaudy Supermarket” *London Observer* (10 June, 02). It is in some ways a standard critique of deconstruction’s, or in this case Marxist-deconstruction’s, “obscurantist” mystifications: Spivak’s rhetorical strategies, in Eagleton’s words, are characteristic of a “politically directionless Left,” or in the standard critiques of deconstruction, political quietism. This is not in any way meant as an evasion of his

Jameson's claim that "henceforth value as such and 'exchange value' are synonymous" (232) with Spivak's claim that "circulation ... bestows textuality upon the Money-form" (SR 120). Jameson conflates the moments of the value chain, reducing them in a way that mimics the compression of the space-time of (postmodern) global capital already discussed. Spivak, on the other hand, demonstrates how the chain of value produces indeterminacy, radical heterogeneity, and out of these the potential for revolutionary practice. However, this radical knowledge is only useful if it pays "careful attention to the international division of labor" (119).

The editors of *The Spivak Reader* argue that the complexity of capitalist logic on a global scale is beyond the grasp of ordinary people in "their everyday existence" (108).³ The "knowledge gap" between the ability to fully "conceptualize ... capitalist logic" in its macro geopolitical functions and the incomprehension in everyday

review's value as a balancing corrective to such an uncritical emulation. It offers genuine insight into the contradictions of what Spivak refers to as "transnational literacy." Jameson's critique originates in America, today's actual global imperial power. Eagleton's originates in the affective, cultural, or imperial centre of the imagination, Britain. Politically the late British Empire today plays a new supporting role for America's imperialist adventures in the Middle East, the Balkans, or wherever "NATO" may be needed next in order to protect the global balance of payments (Margaret Thatcher or Tony Blair in charge, it does not much matter). The titular, but nonetheless very necessary, power of tradition and cultural authenticity that Britain represents has historically played an important supporting role for the coercive power of military and economic culture. What is Canada's national subject-position in a global system that necessarily involves its academic culture politically? What is the best strategy for responding to the pull of nominal cultural authority on the one hand (Britain), and very real imperial power on the other (United States)? How is the Canadian university situated within this context? As a "highly-paid bourgeois [intellectual] and ... scion of a colonial elite," Spivak embodies many contradictions: a privileged yet marginal academic at one and the same time as a consequence of her gender, ethnicity, and her stature in the American academic world. Eagleton's decidedly astringent critique nevertheless provides insight into Spivak's own critical engagement with these very contradictions; however, Eagleton trivialises such critical engagement as the "post-structuralist" obsession with subject-position, yet chooses to construct his own academic subject-position with too much of the critical "distance" and opacity that he accuses Spivak of not having enough of. While a cultural fortress Canada would not be useful, Canada's neo-colonial status requires that Canadian academics attend to Canada's involvement in global political structures, and its cultural origins. For any criticism with an interest in national sovereignty and cultural independence, this necessarily includes a theorised awareness of academic subject-position.

³ "Marx gives us a way of conceptualizing capitalist logic on a global scale; and while the continued development of capitalism depends upon this, it is something that has become increasingly difficult for people to comprehend in their everyday existence. [Consequent, in part, on the occultation of use-value by exchange value.] The interconnectedness between events ... has become difficult to grasp. This knowledge gap allows various forms of complicity between western prosperity, including education systems, and the spectacular dynamics of exploitation to continue. This complicity through nonknowledge of the international division of labor is something Spivak frequently takes pains to point out, particularly emphasizing the importance of women's labor to these international calculations" (108).

experience of capital's innermost conceptual sanctuaries enables the "complicity between western prosperity ... and the spectacular dynamics of exploitation" (108). Canadian systems of education are implicated in this "complicity through nonknowledge" (108). The photographic negative image to the knowledge generated inside educational institutions is nonknowledge in the everyday of the exploitive violence of global economic and political systems. Exchange value's occultation of use value⁴ becomes manifest as violence at these external political and economic levels.

Jameson is correct in as much as the "structural moment when ... capital logic emerges to give birth to capital as such" (SR 117), also produces "the realm of identities" (Jameson 232). This structural moment, as described by Spivak reading Marx,

[e]ntails the *historical* possibility of the definitive predication of the subject as labor-power. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that the "freeing" of labor-power may be a description of the social possibility of this predication. Here the subject is predicated as structurally super-adequate to itself, definitively productive of surplus-labor over necessary labor. And because it is this necessary possibility of the subject's definitive super-adequation that is the origin of capital as such, Marx makes the extraordinary suggestion that Capital consumes the *use-value* of labor-power. If the critique of political economy were simply a question of restoring a society of use-value, this would be an aporetic moment. (117)

The interest of revolutionary practice in social justice, "presuppos[es] labor outside of capital logic or wage labor ... [and] introduces the force of illogic into the good use-value fit—*philosophical* justice—between Capital and Free Labor" (117). The super-adequation of labour power (potentially free), and the illogic of social justice to Spivak's claim that this "situation of open-endedness [represents] an insertion into textuality" (117). This means textuality in both a "narrow sense, that even 'theoretical' texts are produced in language," as well as in the expanded sense "that 'reality' is a fabrication

⁴ My use of the term 'occultation' attempts to represent the "knowledge gap" from its foundational moment to its reproduction in the recoding of all instances of value. To repeat, at the same time, it seeks to capture the incongruity and indeterminacy—posing as unity—that reflect the senses of the magical, esoteric, beyond ordinary knowledge, and concealment that is found in Marx's own description of commodity fetishism. (*Capital*; Chapter I.4)

out of discontinuities and constitutive differences with ‘origins’ and ‘ends’ that are provisional and shifting” (113n). The possibility of a revolutionary practice arises out of the social possibility of the predication of (free) labour, and the textuality of circulation (the chain of value) that “opens up identity as adequation” (120).

The “textuality of Value in Marx ... gives us a sense of the complexity of the mechanics of evaluation and value-formation. It shows us that the Value-form in the general sense and in the narrow—the economic sphere ... being the latter—are irreducibly complicitous. It implies the vanity of dismissing considerations of the economic as ‘reductionism’” (120). The complicity between the economic and an “expansion of the textuality of value” (119) is not, of course, one of conspiracy amongst equals—the “parasit[ism]” of exchange value over use value within the circuit of exchange itself ensures that. Spivak’s term “parasite” reflects the inversion of the “part-whole relationship” between exchange value and use value, further complicating the relationship between the two. The occultation of use value by exchange value enables the expansion to the general form of value, and introduces a productive “indeterminacy” (rather than “sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable” Jameson 6) into the logic of capital itself:

... since one case of use-value can be that of the worker wishing to consume the (affect of the) work itself, that necessary possibility renders indeterminate the “materialist” predication of the subject as labor-power or super-adequation as calibrated and organized by the logic of capital. In terms of that necessarily possible “special case,” this predication can no longer be seen as the excess of surplus labor over *socially* necessary labor. The question of *affectively* necessary labor brings in the attendant question of desire and thus questions in yet another way the mere philosophical justice of capital logic without necessarily shifting into utopian idealism. (118)

Rather than a compromised “effectivity,” a Marxist-deconstruction exposes the indeterminacies that are the products of capitalism’s own self-contradiction. The distinction between contradiction and indeterminacy, as critical terms, in a sense marks

the distinction between the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, and a critical adaptation to this latest phase of capital (the end of the subject, end of history, end of “conspiracy,” the end of imperialism etc.). Such contradiction marks the shift to the contemporary application of imperialist power in all the usual forms—the technology much improved in every instance—that supports the relentless mechanisms of postmodern, spacio-temporal, economic abstraction.

One of the more intriguing indeterminacies is, arguably, that arising out of the dialectical negation of “circulation time” itself (Marx in Spivak; 120). Circulation, “as a constantly repeated circle or totality” (115), produces indeterminacy in two registers: the economic and the affective. To “critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit ... the deconstructive stance” (*OTM*; 284), means harnessing the doubleness, the “duality of the moments” (productive of contradiction and indeterminacy), of the “chain of value” (119). In Marx, “money is seen as a negative relation to circulation”: “cut off from all relation to (circulation) it would not be money, but merely a simple natural object” (119). As a consequence, Spivak argues, circulation not only has the power to “bestow textuality upon the Money-form” (120), but it also has the “morphological (if not the ‘actual’) power to insert money back into *Nature*, and to *banish* it from the textuality of Value.... Textuality as a structural description indicates the work of differentiation ... that opens up identity as adequation” (119-20). In the economic register, outside of circulation, adequation means that an ounce of gold is an ounce of gold; “But here in the process of circulation one ounce practically does weigh ten ounces” (Marx in Spivak; 120). However, at other levels, because “[n]ecessary labor is the amount of labor required by the worker to ‘reproduce’ himself in order to remain optimally useful for capital in terms of the current price-structure” (119), the value-form and its indeterminacy, can be expanded to include “birth-growth-family-life reproduction” (119). For example, this would allow the consideration of “the place of

sexual reproduction and the family within ... social relations [in order to] show the pure (or free) 'materialist' predication of the subject to be gender-exclusive" (124)—a valuable tool for feminist practice. Jameson argues that "we might say that 'use value' is the realm of difference and differentiation as such, whereas 'exchange value' will ... come to be described as the realm of identities" (232). From this follows his claim that "what this terminological usage means in Marx is that henceforth value as such and 'exchange value' are synonymous" (232). Spivak demonstrates that simple equivalence is clearly not the case; nevertheless, after all she seems to arrive at the very same destination as Jameson with his emphasis on the spacial in the postmodern: time, a characteristic of a modernist episteme, is superseded by space as the organising metaphor of a postmodern episteme. Both time and space collapse into the instantaneous transactions of electronic capital. This fact leads Spivak to consider the possibility that value, as conceived in the Marxist critique, is irrelevant in such a context.

Jameson suggests that the conception of "four stages of value in *Capital*" must be distinguished from the labour theory of value formulated by classical economy after Adam Smith, an anthropology that "identifies the value of a produced commodity in the amount of labor time it contains" (232). This leads him to distinguish between the first and subsequent volumes of *Capital* in placing a greater emphasis on production, or more precisely, "the rather different problem of the production of *new value*" (232).⁵ Working similar ground to Spivak, exploring the metaphoricity and textuality of Marx's text, Jameson, however, forecloses on the radical potentials of the "total or expanded form of value" (232). Jameson argues that he "would have been tempted ... to correlate this peculiar third stage [of dialectical analysis; the sublation, or negation of

⁵ Compare Guillory's discussion of an "anthropology of needs," and political economy's shift in emphasis from consumption to production.

negation] with the symbol and the symbolic moment of thought" (235). However, while the suggestion is intriguing, it is pursued only as far as needed to support his argument for the nominalism of deconstruction (de Man), his qualified defence of de Man, and the "survival of Irony" (258) as a primary characteristic of the postmodern.

2. Telecommunication and the Collapse of the Dialectic of Value Into the Space/Time of Global Capital

Spivak, in contrast, pushes the third moment of dialectical analysis further only to emerge into the postmodern context where we find that it may be possible for circulation to transcend space and time in a way unimagined by Marx. Having arrived here, quoting Marx, she abruptly confronts the PostMarxist claim that the Marxist conception of the value-form is irrelevant in this new context:

If in its first dialectical "moment" circulation has the morphological potential of canceling Money back into Nature, in its third "moment" it is shown to run the risk of being itself sublated into *Mind*: "The continuity of production presupposes that circulation time has been sublated ... The nature of capital presupposes that it travels through the different phases of circulation not as it does in the idea-representation ... where one concept turns into the other at the speed of thought ... in no time, but rather as situations which are separated in terms of time." (120; *GR*, 548)

Marx makes a distinction here between the discrete movements and moments of labour and circulation necessary to capitalist processes, and the instantaneous motions of thought (taken together a kind of Foucault meets the *Matrix*). Money removed from circulation becomes a "simple natural object" (119). As a natural object, it is also "*banish[ed]* from the textuality of Value" (119-20). Textuality here is the structured system of "differentiation" (sign, signified, signifier) that forms the underpinnings of Derridean deconstruction with its origins in Saussurean linguistics; the value form too is structured in its internal composition. Marx describes the doubleness of the commodity in terms of the differential: "this double, *differentiated* existence must develop into a *difference*" (in Spivak; 115). These two poles between them form the thrust of Spivak's Marxist deconstruction, and both are driven by difference. Given an expanded provenance for the textual, for Spivak, the value form is characterised by indeterminacy, discontinuity, and rupture in much the same way as language. Marx, therefore, exposes the indeterminacy in political economy's narrative

of a unified money-form by positing a cognitive space that exceeds the temporal concatenations of circulation. At the same time, the continuist⁶ version of value circulation is further complicated by its own differential nature (necessarily producing indeterminacy) separate from the timeless realm of thought—"Marx's impossible limit for circulation" (*SR*; 126). Therefore, Spivak argues, "[b]y thus sublating circulation into Mind, production (of Value) as *continuist* totality would annul Value itself. For Value would not be value if it were not realized in consumption, strictly speaking, outside of the circuit of production" (120). In this way, Spivak emerges in the postmodern present, only to come abruptly up against the postMarxist claim for the irrelevance of the concept-metaphor of value in a postmodern context at the end of history:

Has the circulation time of capital been sublating into the speed of Mind (and more) within telecommunication? Has (the labor theory of) Value become obsolete in microelectronic capitalism? (120)

Of course, it is difficult to imagine what could be more fragmented by discrete hand-eye movements in time and space than computer work such as word-processing, today the machinery of the postmodern sweat-shop. As well, the global division of labour must be the factor determining the proximity of any social being to a supposed (virtual) pure state in which "circulation time attains the apparent instantaneity of thought" (*SR*; 123). The discontinuities and contradictions inherent to capital, the effacement in disclosure enacted by the value form, "[t]hese antagonistic forms" (*Capital* 199), fracture the seamless unity of such an instantaneity.

⁶ From Spivak's perspective, Marx's critique of the "concept-phenomenon money" is necessarily a critique of a "seemingly unified" concept. Even prior to her deconstructive-Marxist discovery that the economic text is marked by discontinuity, Marx himself discovers that the economic text is unstable and that instability is focussed on 'value': "[I]ifting the lid, Marx discovers that the pot of the economic is forever on the boil. What cooks is ... Value ... [I]n this uncovering Value is seen to escape the onto-phenomenal question [what is it?]" (*SR*; 110). A continuist version would unfold with seamless and linear rationality: "use-value is in play when a human being produces and uses up the product ... immediately. Exchange value emerges when one thing is substituted for another... Surplus-value is created when some value is produced for nothing" (111). Spivak is of course at pains to emphasise the inherent discontinuity of value, and she does this by invoking the "total or expanded field of value-coding" (*CPR*; 119).

At this historical moment, and in this theoretical limit, are exposed the fundamental disjunctions inherent in liberalism, liberal democracy, and capitalism. Some of these are the manifest disproportion between production and consumption, in other words the incommensurability of labour and desire with the money form, and the conflict between private interest and public good necessarily inflected by class. In an academic context, out of the antagonisms contained in the value form, emerge the relational disjunction between the economic and the cultural (Guillory; 316). Behind these lies the fundamental disjunction—masquerading as a unity—between use value and exchange value. This antagonistic “unity of differences” (*Capital* 199) is “complicit”[ous] rather than a simple unity, as Spivak says of the “opposition between the economic and the cultural” (*SR* 122).⁷ Liberalism responds to the “discrepancy between use value and exchange value” (Guillory; 301) by positing the “universality of economic commensurability” (317), and by defending the “rationality of the social order ... in the form ... of ‘equilibrium’ theory” (316). However, even as capital expends inordinate energy to maintain the appearance of social equilibrium and expends extravagant energy to promote the social internalisation of its ideology of universal commensurability, at the same time it is necessary that it maintain disparity at all costs precisely in order to appropriate surplus value to itself.

Altvater and Mahnkopf note the ability today of “money as money” to “overcome space and destroy time,” and thereby to “decouple” itself from the social. As never before, the owners of money are able to enclose a space free from social

⁷ Terry Eagleton points out, in his review of *CPR*, that simply acknowledging “complicity” does not necessarily make for revolutionary, or even transformative, politics. This criticism he generously distributes in equal portions to postmodernist thought, cultural studies, and postcolonial criticism (*London Observer*; 10 June, 02). Of course the translation of theory into practice is a perennial problem for Marxist thought generally, and by no means for Spivak, or perhaps even Eagleton, alone. Precisely the reason that this is so is that Marxism, and I would include Spivak here, is not so cynical as to deny “an ‘other’ to what we have at present” (Eagleton). In other words Marxism’s perennial problem speaks in its favour. My dissertation, for its part, appreciates the critical value of Althusser’s idea that theoretical production can be a dual engagement of theory and practice. In a context described as the “information age,” such a notion may have even more practical value today than it had in 1968.

responsibility precisely because today technology, telecommunications and the computer, as Spivak argues, empower “circulation time ... [with] the apparent instantaneity of thought” (SR; 123). However, value’s apparent escape from the circuit of production is in practice unachievable as a consequence of the contradictory impulses that drive capital to produce two types of surplus-value: absolute surplus-value and relative surplus-value.⁸ The production of “relative surplus-value”—the result of technological innovation—is made possible by capital investment in research and development. However, as Spivak argues, “[s]ince the production and realization of relative surplus-value ... increase capital expenditure in an indefinite spiral, there is the contradictory drive within capitalism to produce more absolute and less relative surplus-value as part of its crisis management” (123). Consequently global capital preserves a technological disparity between the so-called “developed” nations, the sources of relative surplus-value, and the “developing” nations with their pools of cheap labour, the sources of absolute surplus-value: “the continuity of production ensured by that attainment of apparent coincidence [microelectronic circulation] must be broken up by capital ... [by] keep[ing] the labor reserves in the comprador countries outside of this instantaneity.... [Therefore] it is in the ‘interest’ of capital to preserve the comprador theatre in a state of relatively primitive labor legislation and environmental regulation” (123).

⁸ Marx makes a distinction between “absolute surplus-value” and “relative surplus-value.” The production of absolute surplus-value presupposes the division of the working day into “necessary labour” (in which the individual “appropriates natural objects for his own livelihood” C.1.643) and “surplus labour” as that labour beyond the necessary which capital appropriates to itself (C.1.645). If the length of the working day is given, then the only way for capital to maximise surplus-value is through capital investment in technological innovation. Through technical innovation capital produces relative surplus-value: relative surplus-value “presupposes that the working day is already divided into two parts, necessary labour and surplus labour. In order to prolong the surplus labour, the necessary labour is shortened by methods for producing the equivalent of the wage of labour in a shorter time. The production of absolute surplus-value turns exclusively on the length of the working day, whereas the production of relative surplus-value completely revolutionizes the technical processes of labour and the groupings into which society is divided” (C. 1.645)

Uneven development is not restricted to the Third world. Any furtive journey through any of the Canadian enclaves of grinding poverty, where a sign that declares, "Keep out Indian Country," does not block access, demonstrates this instantly. Nor is it restricted to any of the other islands of limited entitlement and disenfranchisement that punctuate the Canadian social matrix generally. As universities are increasingly forced into alignment with the market, microelectronic technology functions today in very much the same way to control the kinds of work intellectual workers pursue within universities, in part through a transcoding of the categories with which we conceptualise our activities. Sheila Slaughter, in "National Higher Education Policies in a Global Economy," notes that, while funding has been massively cut for postsecondary education (in the United Kingdom; Canada; Australia; and United States), "what money was available was concentrated in technoscience and market-related fields in what amounted to a higher education version of supply-side economics" (56). Technoscience, such as telecommunications and biotechnology, "makes impossible the separation of science and technology, basic and applied research, discovery and innovation ... Technoscience is at once science and product. It collapses the distinction between knowledge and commodity: Knowledge becomes commodity" (56). The context here is of course a privileged one; however, in Marxist terms absolute surplus-value and relative surplus-value remain tools available to Capital for the management of crisis, and, as expected, the cost of doing business and responsibility for the consequences of expropriating surplus value from labour, is offloaded elsewhere. As Spivak points out, technologically empowered circulation time at the speed of thought, and the subsequent need for time and risk management mark the location of crisis.

In this way capital reinforces the international division of labour to serve its own interests. At the same time, an important management problem for capital is the

“*management of time*,” and these two are intimately interconnected, as Spivak’s examples demonstrate. Telecommunications and the computer supposedly offer global capital the possibility of resolving time management problems such as predictability, intelligibility, and efficiency. One of Spivak’s sources declares, “[w]e had this amorphous, unorganised, mostly invisible market prior to 1971” (127). However, taking predictability for example, it hardly seems to have been improved at all by advances in information technology as any of the economic crises in the last decade clearly show: the Asian financial collapse and the 2001 recession in the U.S. took both economists and CEOs by surprise. But then, as Spivak demonstrates, what is suppressed in the economic narrative, “between ‘time’ and ‘risk’ in the management game” is crisis (129).

What is also repressed in the economic narrative is exploitation. Harvard business management professor, Theodore Levitt, provides an account that accurately represents the ideology behind Canada’s own local experience of global finance in the numbing regularity of foreign buyouts of Canadian resource companies, manufacturing, and much more:

“The most endangered companies in the rapidly evolving world tend to be those that dominate rather small domestic markets with high value-added products for which there are smaller markets elsewhere. With transportation costs ... proportionately low, distant competitors will now enter the now-sheltered markets of those companies with goods produced more cheaply under scale-efficient conditions” (Levitt in Spivak; 126)

For a Canadian example of this same narrative of diminishing returns for labour, a social deficit disguised as competitive advantage, one might insert here CEO of Nortel John Roth’s 2000-2001 crusade against the supposed “brain-drain” produced by Canada’s protectionist policies and tax structure. As Spivak points out, the only costs mentioned in Levitt’s technocratic fable are transportation costs—the social costs are

written out.⁹ The “epistemic violence” of global trade is concealed here in euphemism expressed as the search for “scale-efficient conditions.” Scale-efficient conditions clearly represents the necessity of recouping the costs of generating relative surplus-value (“high value-added”) by maximising absolute surplus-value in offshore locations with weak or non-existent labour codes—or by reproducing those conditions locally. Therefore, what is suppressed in the economic is precisely the “epistemic violence of imperialism as crisis-management” (emphasis added; 128).

“Today money is simply electronic impulses. With the speed of light ... it moves effortlessly between distant centers ... A change of ten basic points in the price of a bond causes an instant and massive shift of money from London to Tokyo. The system has profound impact on the way companies operate throughout the world,” declares Levitt (in Spivak 126). If “profound impact” means substantive social change, then to what extent does this new technology translate into a paradigm shift in matching social technologies from the industrial age capital of Marx’s day to today’s postmodern microelectronic capital? “Has (the labor theory of) Value become obsolete in microelectronic capitalism?” (120). Marx points out that the peasant serf worked his field three days for himself, then his lord’s fields for three “compulsory and gratuitous” days. He then argues, “the paid and unpaid parts of labour were sensibly separated ... in time and space ... In point of fact ... whether a man works three days ... for himself ... and three days for nothing on the estate of his lord, or whether he works in the factory or the workshop six hours daily for himself and six for his employer, comes to the same, although in the latter case the paid and unpaid portions of labour are

⁹ Nevertheless, the example of transportation only serves to further support Spivak’s point. John Anderson points out (1995), “under NAFTA, Mexican truckers paid \$7 a day will be allowed to haul freight in the United States (and, I would add, Canada). Teamster drivers earn up to U.S. \$17.16 an hour. In this way, NAFTA permits companies to exploit Mexican drivers to move international freight now hauled by American drivers who receive a decent wage” (*Re-Shaping Work*, 122). Levitt cloaks a social deficit in technocratic double-speak—as Anderson argues in his example, “competitive advantage” enshrined in NAFTA and the other globalising economic agreements can only mean a “race to the bottom” for labour.

inseparably mixed up with each other, and the nature of the whole transaction is completely masked by the *intervention of a contract* and the *pay received*" ("Value, Price, and Profit" 410-11). The apparent collapse of time and space in the postmodern context does not mean a substantive change in the conditions of labour either in the historical transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism, or in the transition from these to microelectronic capital, as Spivak's, and any number of similar examples show. The above also demonstrates that the supposed instantaneity of microelectronic capital only renders more glaring the discrepancy between a fallacious unity—in time and space—both celebrated and feared by the capitalist, and the subjection of labour to the spacio-temporal regime of global capital in the timed expropriation of surplus-value. The handing of a child from one parent to another at the gates of computer chip manufacturer Intel's Mexican machiladora factory marks the chronometric rhythms of exploited labour as a shift change and the fragmentation of family life. Anwar Shaikh demonstrates the descriptive power of value for unlocking the hidden imperatives of exploitation as functional determinants in the motions of capital:

Consider the fact that when capitalists evaluate methods of production, they do so not only on the basis of anticipated prices of the plant, equipment, materials, and labour-power, but also on the anticipated performance of the labour process associated with this method ... and finally on the estimated conditions of sale. Therefore, the profits they evaluate are themselves potential profits based on the potential creation of value and surplus-value in production, and on their estimated realization in circulation. So we may say that, *even in thought*, surplus-value regulates profit. Moreover, for this potential itself to be made real, actual value and surplus-value will have to be produced and then realized, so that *in practice also*, surplus-value regulates profit. (297; emphasis in original)

So, even in thought the need for predictability is governed by the inter-relational transformations of the value-form.

Global economic deregulation and the "harmonization" of markets continue to maximise disparity and reinforce the international division of labour as their desired effects. An article in the 23 October 1983 *New York Times*, "The Wiring of Wall Street,"

uncritically documents microelectronic capital's impressive ability to generate profit in a remarkably short space of time. Spivak exposes the disparity, and exploitation, concealed beneath the euphemism, exposing the management of crisis in a contrast: "whereas Lehman Brothers, thanks to computers, 'earned about \$2 million for ... 15 minutes work,' the entire economic text would not be what it is if it could not write itself as a palimpsest upon another text where a woman in Sri Lanka has to work 2,287 minutes to buy a T-shirt. The 'postmodern' and 'premodern' are inscribed together" (129). "Has the circulation time of capital been sublated into the speed of Mind (and more) within telecommunication? Has (the labor theory of) Value become obsolete in microelectronic capitalism?" (120). Apparently not if the manifest contradictions concealed in the value form itself continue to manifest themselves in the incommensurability of labour and desire with the money form, the conflict between private interest and public good—necessarily troubled by class conflict—and the problem of the relational disjunction "between the economic and the cultural" (Guillory; 316). Concealed within the value-form is a rupture and discontinuity producing contradiction, and this is irresolvable by technology, however instantaneous that technology may appear to be.

If in fact the critical relevance, or irrelevance, of value hinges on the possibility that "the circulation time of capital [has] been sublated into the speed of Mind ... within telecommunication" (120), then we might consider Marx's own thoughts on the analytical "method of political economy," alternative analytical method, and the perceptual process itself in the *Grundrisse*. Marx argues, political economy (before liberalism as such) begins with what it believes to be "the real and concrete" (100), "population." However, this representation of a "living whole" stripped of its determining moments "would be a chaotic representation of the whole" (384). Rather, "specific" determining moments—production, distribution, exchange and consumption—are not

“identical but ... they are members of a totality, *differences* within a unity” (emphasis added; 383). Each “specific moment” “determines” the others in the social process of circulation: “A specific production thus determines specific consumption, distribution, exchange, and the *specific interrelationships of these moments* (383-4). Rather than beginning with the “postulated concrete,” an abstraction after all, and proceeding from it to “ever thinner abstractions,” the movement is from analytical concepts grounded in “actual conditions” and back up to the “rich totality of many definitions and relations” (385). However, note that this movement does not reach toward some privileged access to the “real and concrete”; rather the movement is from the “simplest definitions” to this rich totality which is itself composed of both “definitions” (the conceptual) and “relations” (social process). This interrelation between the purely abstract (ideas, mathematics) and the perceptual interaction with the concrete also marks the difficult relation between theory and practice. Therefore, Marx is always mindful of the “tautologous” nature of the relationship between the perceptual and the concrete disclosed in the relationship between the “self-creating idea” and the external world, just as he is critical of the tautologous claims of political economy.¹⁰ Marx’s example is a telling one:

Take ... the simplest economic category, e.g., exchange value; to this is subordinated population, a population which produces in given conditions; also particular types of family, community or state, etc. It can never exist except as an abstract, one-sided relation of an already given concrete living whole. As a category, on the other hand, exchange value leads an antediluvian existence. Hence, for that consciousness ... for which conceptual thought is the real person and thus the conceptual world as such the true reality—the movement of categories seems the true act of production—which, unfortunately only gets its impulse from outside—whose result is the world; and this—but this again is tautologous—is correct in so far as concrete totality, a thought totality, a thought *concretum*, is in fact a product of thought, of understanding; in no way however a product of the self-creating idea, which thinks itself outside or beyond

¹⁰ For example, because price is the money form of “labour objectified in a commodity ... the expression of the equivalence of a commodity with the quantity of money whose name is that commodity’s price is a tautology” (C; 195-6). Political economy, and liberalism ever after, routinely writes labour out of the equation in favour of this tautological equivalence.

perception and imagination, but the working-out of perception and imagination into concepts. The whole, as it comes into the head as a totality of thought, is a product of the thinking brain, which assimilates the world to itself in the only way possible to it... (385-6)

In contrast, Marx situates his method on the productive edge of a paradox:

Hegel ... fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the result of thought concentrated and absorbed in itself, itself its own motive power, whereas the method of mounting from the abstract to the concrete is only that whereby thought appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete. In no way the genesis of the concrete itself. ("Grundrisse"; 385).

The ability of instantaneous thought, or "the speed of mind," which technology now tries to emulate, or even supercede, to apprehend the world is determined by this fundamental gap or indeterminacy between conceptual thought, perceptual process, and "true reality." This disjunction also marks the difficult passage from theory to practice.

To an extent then, the real connection between the percept and the concrete—and practice—is the theoretical, but in a particular way. Louis Althusser, in *Reading Capital*, builds on the spirit of this conception in demonstrating how it is that theoretical activity apprehends the real, or "appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete," and in so doing translates theory into practice:

In the history of the revolutions of a science, every upheaval in the theoretical practice is correlated with a transformation in the definition of the object, and therefore with a difference which can be assigned to the *object* of the theory itself. (155)

Althusser appears to push somewhat further Marx's own implication that the concept ("theoretical production") actually conditions reality (the object) itself.

It is necessary to place this back into a social context to see how theoretical production, the abstract, influences material practice. Marx argues that "the most universal abstractions are generally formed by the richest concrete development" (389). In terms of labour, Marx's example, the "abstract idea of labour in general[,] is not just the intellectual result of a concrete totality of labour-tasks" (389). Rather, the

most highly developed bourgeois societies are structured by a multiplicity of forms of labour “in which individuals readily move from one task to another and the particular kind of task is to them fortuitous and so a matter of indifference. Here labour, not merely as category but in reality, has become a means for the creation of wealth in general and has ceased to be joined ... in a special relation with individuals” (389). For this reason,

The abstraction of the category ‘labour,’ ‘labour in general,’ ... the starting point of modern economy, is first realized in practice. The simplest abstraction, that is, that to which the modern economy gives pre-eminence, and which expresses a primeval relation valid for all forms of society, realizes itself practically as a category of the most modern society only in this abstraction. (“Grundrisse”; 389)

It is in this way that the conceptual conditions the concrete in the historical process: “[t]o that degree the progress of abstract thought, rising from the simplest to the combination, would represent the true historical process” (387). However, “in ... theoretical method the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as a presupposition” (386). The presumed objective connection between the analytical being and the concrete is conditioned by subjective, perceptual activity, and determined by its historical origin in material practice.

It is for these reasons that Marx sees the liberal commercial system as a “great advance [because it] ... located the source of wealth not in the object but in subjective activity” (388). In a sense, the historical progression toward bourgeois society is one in which the social totality itself becomes a theoretician. However, even as liberalism socialises labour, at the same time its dominant ideology is the positing of a “monetary system ... [which] places wealth quite objectively outside itself in money” (388). Liberalism continues to objectify particular experience in the “most efficient and abstract coding of value, the economic” (Spivak; 245-6) by positing the abstract itself as objective. In the *Grundrisse* (section 3, “The Method of Political Economy”), Marx

critiques Hegelian philosophy at the same time as he critiques “bourgeois economics” (passage quoted above: “Hegel ... fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the result of thought concentrated and absorbed in itself”). To an extent Hegel’s philosophy of the “self-creating idea” is similar to the liberal economics that posits “the simplest economic category, e.g., exchange value,” and *then* subordinates to this abstract category “population ... which produces in *given conditions* ... *particular* types of family, community or state, etc.” (385). In other words, liberal economics writes the material (“*given conditions* ... [and the] *particular*”) the material out in favour of the ideal, and abstract. Again, the instantaneity of thought, or “the speed of mind,” in its effort to apprehend the world is determined by a fundamental gap or disjunction between conceptual thought and “true reality” (385-6), or the particular and material which is incapable of transcending time in the same way as mind or technology.¹¹ The fact that the owners of money are able to enclose to themselves a space free from social responsibility precisely because today technology, telecommunications and the computer, empower “circulation time ... [with] the apparent instantaneity of thought” (SR; 123) can be termed virtual exchange. That capital even approaches such a possibility represents only the latest and most spectacular instance of social discordance manifest in the widening separation between realms of experience in capitalist culture. The privatisation of virtual circulation sets itself off by contrast from

¹¹ It is of course possible that Althusser’s apparent collapse of theory into practice with his idea of theoretical production, mirrors the claim that today’s technology renders possible the sublation of circulation time into the speed of mind, thus rendering the value form, comprised of interrelated but discrete aspects, irrelevant. However, Althusser’s reading is more nuanced, and this collapse is only apparent in much the same way as Adorno’s description of dialectical motion (“duality of the moments”) reproduces in thought the contradictions of modern experience without collapsing categories in such a way as to write those contradictions out. Furthermore, in chapter 6 of *Capital*, Marx points out that if the owner of labour-power were to sell his or her labour “*once and for all*” then he would be “converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity” (271). Time comprised of discrete moments is, therefore, at least from the point of view of labour, crucial to the exchange process: the owner of labour “must constantly treat his labour-power as his own property, his own commodity, and he can do this only by placing it at the disposal of the buyer, i.e. handing it over to the buyer for him to consume, for a *definite period of time, temporarily*” (emphasis added; 271).

the social spaces in which production, distribution, exchange and consumption—are not “identical but ... are members of a totality, *differences within a unity*” (*Grundrisse*; emphasis added; 383). The technological movement toward the instantaneous matches the general social tendency toward monoculture¹² where it meets resistance from difference. At the level of political engagement, where concepts are generated in order to “manufacture consent” and manage crisis, liberal academics also theorise mind.

The Levitt article in fact makes a distinction between two kinds of mind, “the multinational mind” and “the globalizing mind.” The former is obsolete and flawed because relativistic (“too ... respectful” of domestic markets) and too sentimental apparently: “the multinational mind, warped into circumspection and timidity by years of stumbles and transnational troubles, now rarely challenges existing overseas practices. More often it considers any departure from inherited domestic routines as mindless, disrespectful, or impossible. *It is the mind of a bygone day*” (126-7). Levitt then substantively agrees with Fukuyama that liberalism’s failures (corrected now by the globalising mind) result from a lack of determination (xi). While the “stable democracies” are prone to “injustice or serious social problems” (xi), these have nothing to do with inherent contradiction. Rather, they are the consequence of an “incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality on which modern democracy is founded, rather than of flaws in the principles themselves” (xi). Again, Levitt’s is a utilitarian anthropology of needs in which universal commensurability, “money as a unified concept” (Spivak; 125), masks the “epistemic violence of the universalising global market” (126). Money, according to Levitt’s

¹² The example of biology is not just an analogy, or a parallel, but rather functions as a synecdoche for monoculture in the larger social context. Just as dairy herds in the “developed” world are the offspring of the genetic material of a few bulls, for example, political choice in this country is reduced to a small herd of five or six parties all of whom, including the social democratic one, espouse liberal economic positions on virtually everything.

narrative of “scarcity,” mediates the desire by which “people and nations ... optimise their conditions through trade,” and globalisation satisfies the “ancient motivation—to make one’s money go as far as possible. This is universal—not simply a motivation but actually a need” (126-7). “[U]niversal” economic equivalence mimics social and cultural universality, transcoding universal commensurability as social “equality.” Furthermore, as Spivak argues, Levitt’s use of the term ‘value-added’ articulates, “the unified continuist version that would be consonant with the Marxian definition of value relieved of its historical, ethical, or philosophical charge” (126).

The reintroduction here of need, the affective, brings us back to the claim introduced earlier that the aesthetic analogy can also be characterized as an affective analogy, and Spivak’s claim for the utility of “this idea of value-producing/value-coding/code-exchanging as being human,” and its ability to encompass a range of human experience: “affective value, cognitive value, indeed ‘cultural’ value” (*OTM*; 281).¹³ It is necessary nonetheless to attend to her cautionary qualification of “a system of general (universal) equivalence” that would reproduce liberalism’s ideological gesture of economic equivalence (*CPR*; 107). (Of course, pushing a critique to the point that it comes to resemble the object of critique is not without interest from either a Marxist, or a deconstructive perspective. Both perspectives theorise the ways in which a repressed other intimately inhabits a dominant structure.) The continued everyday

¹³ Marx refers to the expanded form of value as “defective” (see Chapter Five, “Value: Economic Determinism, or Language Game” pg. 277); however, his description of labour-power of course necessarily includes the affective: “We mean by labour-power ... the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being” (*C*; 270). At the risk of being reductive, Marx’s critique of political economy is a form of deconstruction, and as this simple example demonstrates, this Marxist-deconstruction already includes much that Spivak claims here for the expanded form of value. In that case, it is necessary to ask what is new and original in Spivak’s Marxist-deconstruction. However, Spivak’s claim for the critical potential of the expanded form gives insight into why exactly Marx considered the expanded form defective, as well as insight into how the expanded form can function as a critical tool in today’s context. There is no question that her recontextualising of Marx in terms of contemporary feminist and postcolonial issues is invaluable. For this dissertation, Spivak is an important figure in a long line of critics readapting Marxist tools in a rapidly changing economic and social context in order to pick Capital’s locks.

use of the term 'value'—"value for the money," "value-added"—is of course in a narrow sense its superficial occurrence; however, its persistent linguistic currency is inextricably imbricated with its history and ideological uses ("This is how economic reductionism operates. The disavowal of the economic is its tacit and legitimising collaborator" *SR* 126). Beneath the surface of appearances, "[e]xchange-value ... the species term of Value, is ... a parasite of use-value" (*SR*; 118). This imbrication at work beneath the surface of appearances becomes manifest in the struggle between liberalism/capitalism and its repressed other—that is the repressed alternative represented by socialism and Marxism's confrontation through persistent critique. For example, liberalism seeks to reconfigure social, economic, and environmental crisis as a time management problem, managing the impossibility of predictive certainty by concealing it in the fiction of the miraculous, "instantaneous" power of technology to forecast and pull us through in the nick of time. However, as Spivak notes, even as liberalism engages in such subterfuge, "high Marxist theory contests the labor theory of value by bracketing time as a vehicle of change" (127). She refers here to Piero Sraffa, and his successors, who reject the value form as a logically inconsistent concept. Nevertheless Spivak argues, "to set the labor theory of value aside is to forget the textual and axiological implications of a materialist predication of the subject" (130). It is in the spirit of this claim that this dissertation next considers both the historical debate over the value of value as a critical concept, and the utility of the "total or expanded field of value-coding" (*CPR*; 119)—in that order.

3. The Value of 'Value': The Value Controversy and the Advent of Poststructuralism

Susan Himmelweit and Simon Mohun note that an "interpretation of Marx's transformation procedure as a 'problem' provides the starting-point for much of the modern criticism of Marx's value theory" (251). The difficulty of the theory of value to account for how it is that a "transformation of values into prices of production and of surplus-value into profits, interest, and so on" (Bandyopadhyay; 103) occurs leads its critics to reject it as "internally inconsistent," and therefore "redundant" (Himmelweit and Mohun; 252). Piero Sraffa's *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* (1960) is one of the primary touchstones for this critique, and appears again in Ian Steedman's *Marx After Sraffa*, for example. In his introduction to *The Value Controversy* Steedman argues that Sraffa "demonstrat[ed] that the theoretical analysis of wages, profits, and prices within a surplus approach, was entirely independent of any 'labour theory of value,'" and that a "[r]ejection of any kind of 'labour theory of value' can ... be rooted firmly *within the surplus approach itself*" (12-13). Steedman notes that Marx showed that "commodity prices will not be proportional ... to the quantities of labour required for their production" (14). The ratio Marx uses to represent the rate of profit, according to Steedman, is the very same ratio that represents this lack of proportionality:

... if prices are not proportional to labour contents then the ratio ... [rate of profit $r = S/C + V$, where S, C, and V denote the aggregate amounts of labour required] in which both the surplus product and the total capital advanced are 'valued' in terms of labour contents, will not be equal ... to the ratio of surplus product to total capital advanced, where both are 'valued' in terms of prices. This latter ratio is, however, precisely what is *meant* by the rate of profit. Thus [the above ratio] is *not* the rate of profit, contrary to Marx's assertion; Marx's argument concerning the rate of profit and normal prices is *internally inconsistent*. (14)

For Steedman, a “physical quantities version of ... surplus analysis” (16) rectifies this supposed inconsistency. If we take as “given ... the *physical* quantities of outputs and inputs, including labour time,”

First, those data suffice to determine ... the rate of profit and the prices of production. *Second*, the rate of profit does not ... depend on all those data, but only on real wages and the direct and indirect conditions of production of those wage goods. The production conditions of commodities which neither enter the real-wage bundle directly, nor are used in producing commodities which do so enter, have *no* influence on the rate of profit. *Third*, no quantities of embodied labour play any necessary role in the determination of either the rate of profit or prices of production: embodied-labour quantities are entirely redundant, even within a surplus-based theory. (15)

Marx’s analysis discloses the disjunction between labour and the rate of profit and prices, and thus necessarily opens up the question of value to include much more than merely wages, prices, and profit. In order to characterise this as logical inconsistency, Steedman, on the other hand, places his emphasis on “*physical* quantities of outputs and inputs,” and concludes, “quantities of labour embodied in ... a commodity are determined precisely by the physical quantities we took as data. But those same data suffice to determine the rate of profit and prices of production: hence embodied-labour quantities are necessarily redundant” (15). Anwar Shaikh, in “The Poverty of Algebra,” notes the numerous occurrences of the word ‘determine’ in Steedman’s argument, and asks the obvious question: “the physical production data *determine* values, and in conjunction with the real wage also *determine* prices of production. But what then determines this physical production data?” (280). The answer is clear:

In Marx ... it is the labour process. It is human productive activity, the actual performance of labour, that transforms ‘inputs’ into ‘outputs’, and it is only when this labour is successful that we have any ‘physical production data’ at all. Moreover, if the labour process is a process of producing commodities, then it is one in which value is materialized in the form of use-values. Thus both ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’ are the use-forms of materialized value, and we can then say that in the *real* process, it is *values that determine the ‘physical production data’*. (280)

The subjectivity of an assembly-line worker, as worker, is reduced in Steedman's argument to aggregate quantities of labour-time—according to this argument these quantities are redundant anyway—and the physical quantities of outputs and inputs (15). The worker interested in resisting exploitation through *self-determination*, individually or as a member of the labour movement, will find no encouragement in the Sraffian approach,¹⁴ particularly if this approach does not include what Spivak refers to as the “axiological implications of a materialist predication of the subject” (130). This materialist predication (Marxist), defined as the “possibility that labour be super-adequate to itself,” does not stop with the implied exploitation of labour; rather, Marxism, as a consequence of such implications, is committed to social transformation and change. Spivak grounds this possibility in the critical and transformative potentials disclosed in the value form, hence her term “axio-teleology,” a term that properly inflects the Marxist labour theory of value (an axiology) with its teleological charge of revolutionary change. Whether or not Spivak, as a practitioner of deconstruction, grounds the revolutionary potentials of Marxism in another sense is a question worth attention (see Terry Eagleton's review of *CPR* discussed above; notes 7 and 2, chpt 4). To be fair, Steedman argues that physical inputs and outputs are taken as “given” for the sake of argument here. That is, they are taken as given for the express purpose of “examining profits and prices and not ... as given in any more fundamental sense” (15). Steedman admits that while the “physical-quantities approach” in fact cannot “capture all that Marxist economists refer to when they discuss the labour process”—for example in discussions of exploitation—nevertheless a “surplus approach” would “provide a clear framework that can be used to *discipline* such discussion” (16). He notes that, in terms of exploitation, Marxist discussion has

¹⁴ The Sraffian perspective is identified as neo-Ricardian by its critics, and by defenders of the labour theory of value.

used the term in “rather a narrow, technical” sense, in other words in its sense as surplus labour (17).

The reductive generalisation about Marxist discussion aside, Steedman sidesteps the issue of what the explanatory power of the physical quantities approach would be in terms of the violence of production (exploitation) itself. The violence of production has at its service many diverse technological means that discipline the labouring subject; however, the disciplining of the labouring subject in all its forms with the purpose of extracting surplus labour is no more or less than the external manifestation (its form) of the exploitation that is inherent (its content) in the value form itself. This is precisely what this “narrow technical” sense of ‘exploitation’ represents. However, the two do not exist in isolation from each other. Nevertheless, Steedman rejects the labour theory of value, and only notes in passing the “everyday, multidimensional meaning” of exploitation, ostensibly to prove that Marxist writers are primarily interested in this narrow, technical sense because it explains the outward manifestation of exploitation as profit: “If Marxists are to present a superior theory they must ... stop imagining that the existence of (narrowly defined) exploitation *explains* the existence of profit” (17).

However, as Jairus Banaji argues (as discussed above), the value-process is a two dimensional relation between “the representation of the commodity as money, and ... the representation of (private) individual labour as social labour” (32). Therefore, on the one hand, the appearance of the commodity as money (exchange value) is a “surface-relation ... a ‘relation among things’”; on the other hand, there is the “inner relation a ‘relation among persons’” (32). The labour theory of value is a highly efficient tool for capturing the complexity of this relation between essence and appearance, content and form: “in the social process of exchange a surface relation, exchange-value, becomes the form of appearance of an inner relation, the relation which

connects individual labour to the total social labour” (32). It is not surprising, then, that Steedman, in rejecting the labour theory of value, is forced, on the one hand, to emphasise in repeated parentheses that the exploitation he discusses is “(narrowly defined).” Consequently, he avoids giving any argument for the utility of a “surplus approach to profits and prices” (16) as a tool for the analysis of the “multidimensional meaning” of exploitation. A resolution to Steedman’s dilemma is captured by Banaji’s description of the interdependence of form and content, as two manifestations of value, as they function in the value-process:

Although inseparable as qualitative [substance of value] and quantitative [magnitude of value] aspects respectively, they belong to the same dimension of the value-process, the dimension of the inner content [of value] as a process within which individual labour is connected to and becomes part of total social labour. On the other hand, this ‘content’ is logically inseparable from its specific ‘form’; or ... it only becomes something real *through its form*, which is the representation of the commodity as money. (33)

However, this represents a resolution only to the extent that it represents more completely a relation that is inherently contradictory—a contradiction that coalesces around the concepts ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ in Banerji’s analysis. In other words, there is no resolution, only conflict and enforced compliance. In Shaikh’s words, this represents the “characteristic” contradiction of capitalism as the “contradiction between private independently undertaken labours and the social division of labour” (294). In that sense the “[dis]proportion” disclosed by Marx’s labour theory of value more accurately represents the manifest disproportion between the concrete and its essence. It is Steedman’s own analysis that reduces the complexity of the interrelation between this form and its content to the narrowly technical. Steedman notes, “in Marx’s writing the term ‘value’ often conveys *more than* “the quantity of embodied labour” (18; emphasis in original). However, “surplus-appropriation theory” avoids this something more (because “Marx often uses the term with just this simple meaning”), while the value-form, on the other hand, necessarily encompasses both the qualitative and

quantitative—and both are necessary if a critical perspective is going to give a complete account of the “effects of a major technical advance, such as the introduction of microprocessors” (19). The incompleteness of Steedman’s account is betrayed in his concluding remarks in which the stated goal for such an analysis is the “patient analysis of the likely effects of such an advance on wages, profits, and relative prices” (19). In other words, as Shaikh argues, the emphasis on inputs and outputs reduces analysis to the realm of appearance. “[T]he surplus analysis of production and distribution and the theory of effective demand” (19) would, according to Steedman, resolve the “[dis]proportion” disclosed by Marx’s labour theory of value; however, it would only function as one “amongst other sources” of analysis, but these other sources are not explored.

Shaikh demonstrates how it is that Steedman’s analysis reproduces the assumptions of neo-Ricardian economics, and those of orthodox economics. Because it is “human productive activity” that determines physical production data, and because commodity production is the materialisation of value in the form of use-values, then “we can say that in the *real* process, it is *values that determine the ‘physical production data’*” (280). As already discussed, neo-Ricardians “tend to view production as a process, as physical data, instead of a labour process in which human labour is objectified in use-values” (281). As Shaikh points out, the neo-Ricardians’ emphasis on physical data is characteristic of their confusing “the real process with its appropriation in thought”: the “physical *data* are then a conceptual summary of the real determination, and if we ... use the data to conceptually *calculate* values, we only capture in thought their real magnitudes. Such a calculation no more determines these values than does the calculation of the mass of the earth determine either the earth or its mass” (281). (To this extent, Shaikh’s perspective follows an Althusserian line.) This confusion between algebra (physical data) and concrete process—the “failure ... to

distinguish real and conceptual determination”—marks a neo-Ricardian perspective as an “idealist method” (281).

Neo-Ricardians interpret a price-value deviation—the so-called transformation problem—as proof of the inconsistency of a labour theory of value. Again, this deviation does not represent an inconsistency in Marxist logic; rather, the Marxist labour theory of value represents the critical reconstruction of the contradictions that inhabit the real processes of capitalism itself. The source of this discrepancy, as Shaikh clearly demonstrates, follows from the fact that “the relative autonomy of the sphere of circulation necessarily expresses itself as the relative autonomy of price magnitudes from value magnitudes” (286). In a simple model of production (“an analytical device only”), he divides total social production into three “branches”: “means of production, workers’ articles of consumption, and capitalists’ articles of consumption” (284). I will not reproduce the subtleties of this argument here, but simply quote pertinent passages in order to set up my argument. Because a rise in total price above total value in the first branch, means of production

“is the same thing as the rise in the sum of prices, [this] produces an exactly equal rise in the total cost-price of all three branches” (284). But if the sum of cost-price rises as much as the sum of prices, the difference between the two, which is the sum of profits, is not changed at all. It follows therefore that though the first branch can alter its own profits by altering its price, other things being equal, this cannot in any way give rise to any change in the sum of profits. What is gained by one capitalist as capital-value, in the form of profits, is exactly offset by what is lost by the capitalist class as a whole as capital-value, in the form of constant capital. The transfers of value therefore remain within the circuit of capital, so that within this circuit the net transfer of value is zero. (284)

In the second branch, “considering a change in the form of value alone, the value of labour-power and hence the real wage are held constant, so that any rise in the price of workers’ means of subsistence is also a rise in the variable capital advanced by capitalists in all three branches for the purchase of labour-power” (284-5). Changes in profit in the second branch are at the “expense of the profits of the remaining two

branches, because what [they] ... gain ... as capital-value in the form of profits is also lost by the capitalist class as a whole as capital-value in the form of variable capital”

(285). Therefore, as with the first branch, “the transfers of value remain internal to the circuit of capital, with the consequence that the net transfer is always zero” (285).

In the third branch, however, things are different:

A change in total price here, say a fall in total price below value, holding all other prices constant, means an equivalent fall in its profit below surplus-value, and ... an equal fall in the overall sum of prices. Thus far, this is similar to the previous two cases. But from here on the analysis differs, because the loss in *capital-value* due to profits being below surplus-value in the third branch appears as a gain in *revenue-value* to the capitalists who buy these articles of consumption. Though this loss in capital-value is indeed compensated by a corresponding gain elsewhere in social reproduction, this compensating effect disappears from the purview of the circuit of capital and is therefore not ‘charged’, so to speak, against the fall in profit. It is this transfer of value between the circuit of capital and the circuit of revenue, through the process of exchange, that explains why price-value deviations can give rise to deviations between the sum of profits and the sum of surplus-values, *without violating the law of the conservation of value through exchange.* (285)

Shaikh argues that the same results can be shown to apply in expanded reproduction as it does in the above example of simple reproduction, and that “this general form ... hold[s] true for any price-value deviations” (285).

This not only demonstrates that the sphere of circulation enjoys a “relative autonomy” from the realm of production, but more importantly “*this independence is strictly limited*”; furthermore, “value categories themselves provide the limits to the variations in their money-expressions” (286). In other words the “variations in the form of value are thus shown to be conditioned and limited by the very structure of value itself” (290). Shaikh contends that this relative autonomy (placed on a graph “in the relatively autonomous mirror of circulation, the transformed rate of profit appears as a *displaced image of the value rate of profit*” 290) distinguishes his embodied labour theory of value from neo-Ricardian “equilibrium analysis.” However, his claims themselves seem to imply, at the very least, a kind of equilibrium.

For example, Shaikh distinguishes what he calls Marx's conception of "tendential regulation" (292) from Steedman and the neo-Ricardians' hankering after equilibrium. Also lost in the neo-Ricardian emphasis on equilibrium, in terms of scientific analysis, is the abstraction "from some aspect of the real" necessary to a social science grounded in material conditions: "In bourgeois social science, however, abstractions tend to be idealizations, not [particular and material] typifications" (291). For example, neo-Ricardians assume "something like perfect competition," whereas Marx speaks of competition as a "war." "Tendential regulation" is meant to capture the way in which the "moving contradiction that is capitalist commodity production" is nevertheless able to function as a process in spite of the internal contradiction that masquerades as equilibrium in the external realm of appearance. Neo-Ricardians focus on money, price, and profit, "the immediate regulators of reproduction" (293). Socialist method abstracts from this material realm of appearance to that which lies beneath: "Money prices and profits are the immediate regulators of reproduction, and the very object of the law of value is to discover their inner laws" (293).

According to Shaikh, important to Steedman's argument is a "uniform rate of profit" (293). Shaikh demonstrates the impossibility of imposing logical predictability (which is what neo-Ricardians attempt to do in rejecting Marx's theory of value) on something that is driven by logical contradiction: "capitalists know that capitalism is an unplanned society, in which they are free to take their chances producing commodities in the hope of making a profit. And they certainly know that there is no guarantee they will receive this profit ... They therefore know that prices and profits fluctuate constantly, and that there is never at any moment a *uniform* rate of profit, so that prices of production never exist as such" (293). In this way he demonstrates the futility of attempting to resolve price-value deviations in a system that is inherently contradictory:

If one assumes that there is no contradiction between private independently undertaken labours and the social division of labour, so that the articulation of labour is *immediate*, then one can ... equally assume that prices of production and the uniform rate of profit obtain directly in circulation. *But then the characteristic contradiction of capitalism has been spirited away altogether.* Once you replace the concept of tendential regulation with that of equilibrium, you have switched from [analytical] abstraction as typification [apprehending real conditions] to abstraction as idealization. (294)

Shaikh's represents then a convincing response to the claim that the labour theory of value is inconsistent because it cannot account for price-value deviations. Shaikh amply demonstrates that this is not the case. The extent to which his notion of tendential regulation itself represents a form of equilibrium is reduced by Shaikh's expression above of the fundamental contradiction between private labour and the social division of labour, and his emphasis on materialist method, or "scientific abstraction" from material conditions. Neo-Ricardians reject the theory of value in favour of the quantifiable and predictable; yet, capitalism, as Althusser argues, "measures a distance and an internal dislocation in the real" (17). The theory of value exposes this dislocation. At the core of this contradiction lies the production of two kinds of use-value: "Marx's distinction between use-values produced for direct use and converted into commodities only when exchanged, and use-values produced for exchange and hence produced as commodities" (300).

This is an important distinction as it also involves the disjunction between the qualitative and quantitative (272) as a consequence of the process of abstraction that finds concrete labour transformed into abstract labour, and the transformation¹⁵ of use-value into exchange value. In pre-exchange production the "concrete *qualities* of ... labour ... result in the concrete forms of ... use-values" (272; emphasis added). In

¹⁵ 'Transformation' is a useful descriptive Marxist term for actual socio-economic transitions of an historic nature, as well as those changes that take place synchronically, or those that are inherent at the same time as they are teleologically immanent. Spivak's use of the term 'transcoding' places more emphasis on the semiotic, and is therefore the marker of a Marxist-deconstructive methodology.

commodity production “abstract labour has its origin in the process whereby a use-value becomes a commodity” (273):

As a product, a use-value is the result of concrete labour. This means that the social process of equating different use-values and hence abstracting from their concrete qualities is at the same time a social process of abstracting from the concrete qualities of the labours whose results are these use-values. It follows that the very same set of social relations that endows use-values with the common quantitative property of exchange-value also endows the labour that produces this concrete use-value with the capacity to produce a common abstract quantity. Thus labour too acquires the aspect of abstract labour, and from this point of view all commodity-producing labour becomes qualitatively alike and quantitatively comparable. (272-3)

The qualitative nature of labour at its origin comes close to being subsumed in the language here. What prevents this qualitative likeness and quantitative comparability from representing an equilibrium model is the originary rupture at the heart of the transformation of concrete into abstract labour—the process of abstraction from the “concrete *qualities*” of use value and labour in the labour process. Shaikh argues that the “weakness of [the neo-Ricardians’] conceptual structure, misleads them into concluding that the two magnitudes are irreconcilable” (299). From the perspective of my work here, the irreconcilability of a rupture at its origin, in conflict with the presumed unity of the form of appearance of value, is precisely the point. This is argued elsewhere in this dissertation in the context of John Guillory’s discussion of the historical origins of value in political economy. As Spivak argues, “the complexity of the notion of use-value ... problematizes the origin of the chain of value” (*OTM*; 114); as a consequence use value necessarily haunts the entire continuum of value. This “pre-originary” aspect of use value represents a rupture at an origin that is not an origin, or use value in its future anterior, always already, aspect. In this aspect, the pre-originary, use-value represents one of the pure realms of freedom (a “realm of necessity,” that can be seen as a realm of freedom nonetheless). As previously discussed, the pre-originary and post-teleological bracket all attempts at rational planning (that is, those

conditions of possibility—a realm of necessity and a realm of freedom—that between them transect the relationships between humans, and nature and the individual with society, with “pure nature and pure humanity as limits to rational planning at either side” (*CPR*; 328).

Again, what prevents Shaikh’s critique from reproducing liberalism’s repressions is his attention to the two forms of use-value identified by Marx: “Marx’s distinction between use-values produced for direct use and converted into commodities only when exchanged, and use-values produced for exchange and hence produced as commodities” (300). The pre-originary, future anterior aspect of value exists prior to use-value produced for direct use. Shaikh argues that Himmelweit and Mohun miss this very distinction. He claims that, in “Real Abstractions and Anomalous Assumptions,” Himmelweit and Mohun “fully accept the neo-Ricardian argument on the redundancy and inconsistency of the concept of value, an argument they concede is ‘well-founded’ as long as value is conceived of as ‘embodied labour’” (299). These two authors do in fact claim, “in their own terms the Sraffians are clearly correct” (253). As the qualification indicates, Himmelweit and Mohun distinguish themselves from Ricardians, and the distinction is between a “determination of value” and a “determination by value”:

The former means the mere functional determination of one quantity (values) by other quantities (input coefficients and labour input vectors). The latter encapsulates the method whereby the relations of commodity production are such that input coefficients and labour input vectors can be specified. For it is only through the exchange of products that individual labours are commensurated and socially necessary labour-times established. And this is critical. For what is being counterposed here is on the one hand an understanding of values as mere derivatives of physical quantities required for production, and on the other hand an understanding of the social quantification of production requirements posited on the value abstraction. (253-4)

The emphasis here is on production in exchange and social quantification with no mention of the qualitative aspects of concrete and abstract labour. This represents a

repression of the qualitative nature of concrete labour. Shaikh contends that Himmelweit and Mohun's argument only applies to "use-values produced for direct use and converted into commodities only when exchanged" (300). Although these two authors are, of course, perfectly aware of the distinction between concrete labour and abstract labour they do claim that for "Marx ... 'value' is the product of abstract labour" (233). Nevertheless, this description demonstrates full awareness of the transformation of concrete labour into abstract labour: "Accordingly, value is a category of commodity production, whose *form* is exchange-value" (233). However, in spite of the fact that Shaikh's criticism misrepresents these authors, what is more crucial here is Himmelweit and Mohun's tendency to expunge from the Marxist critique the crucial inhabitation of the chain of value by use-value (as described above by Spivak). For example, because the process of abstraction "pre-empts" the question of the origin of exchange-value:

There can thus be no a priori determination of abstract labour, for not until commodities are actually exchanged on the market can the products of individual producers satisfy the needs of others. It is the process of exchange on the market that manifests the social character of individual labours, establishes the social connections between independent commodity producers, and thereby determines that the value realized in exchange (exchange-value) is the form of appearance of that labour, and only that labour, which is socially necessary for the production of the commodity in question. Hence value is measured not in units of embodied labour-time, but rather in units of measured 'socially necessary labour-time'. Thus the reduction of labour to abstract labour can be done only by the market; the value of a commodity has to be expressed, and then only *after* the event, in the use-value of another commodity. (233)

The authors are at pains here to distinguish their abstract labour perspective from the embodied labour perspective of Ricardians, Sraffians, and other Marxists such as Shaikh. However, while the above is a good description of the process of abstraction as it takes place within the circuit of exchange, the description conveys no sense of that which escapes the circuit of capital—that is use-value's potential existence outside of exchange, and as we will argue later on, affective use-values. Simon Mohun argues

in his contribution to *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, “there can be no *a priori* determination of abstract labour” (2). Capitalism’s extravagant repressions serve to naturalise appropriation and exploitation, and abstract labour is necessarily *determined* by what capital represses: concrete labour producing direct use-value. While one can appreciate the emphasis on the social in Himmelweit and Mohun’s description above, the social as conceived threatens to become a theoretical abstraction. That the “value of a commodity *has to be expressed ... only after the event*” (233; emphasis added) is less a matter of expression than a matter of repression: the repression of use-value in the future anterior, the product of concrete labour.

Simon Mohun, in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, argues that Shaikh’s “argument is of the same genus” as Steedman’s to the extent that he argues from an “embodied labour” perspective that “focuses on the derivation of prices from labour times” (Bottomore *et al* 2). Banaji, and Himmelweit and Mohun, on the other hand, approaching the problem from an abstract labour perspective, focus on the “ways in which Marx used the results of his confrontation with Hegel to break with Ricardian political economy and to determine a dialectical resolution of the difficulties in a formal logic approach to the derivation of prices” (2). The editors of *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* note that the embodied labour perspective “tends to see emphasis on dialectics and method as misplaced and metaphysical” (2). These are important distinctions all too often interpreted as internecine quibbling, certainly by Marxism’s critics; however, as with the cynical claim that today’s growing resistance to global hegemony (APEC, Vancouver; Seattle; Summit of the Americas, Quebec) is fragmentary and lacks unity, this socialising “adjustment” is more a sign of Marxism’s continuing critical vitality. This is as true as ever in today’s information age, where we find that technology today empowers global capital as never before. Nevertheless, while the above critics all differ in the extent to which they emphasise the need to find a

“resolution” to the transformation problem, they all see it as a problem needing resolution, even if that resolution is expressed as the “inherently contradictory” nature of capitalism, and articulates a method that finally “captures the movement of reality” (Himmelweit and Mohun 264). In the Ricardian tradition the transformation problem is simply a logical inconsistency requiring solution (“contradiction cannot be contained within Ricardo’s framework” Himmelweit and Mohun 265). For Sraffians the transformation problem requires the rejection of Marxist value (“values are irrelevant; the only commensuration is that of capitalist competition, and production is a black box technology of input-output coefficients” 265). The embodied labour perspective and abstract labour perspective both recognise “disjuncture” as the logical attribute of the interrelated aspects of value in the contradictory moments of capitalist relations. They differ, at the very least, in the extent to which they endorse a modification of Marx’s conception of value (Himmelweit and Mohun), or endorse it fully as an interdependent “system of concepts ... [that] can indeed be extended and concretised to deal with existing arguments and historical evidence” (Shaikh; 268). In the latter case “it is Marxian economics that will inevitably be altered, perhaps decisively, as it is critically appropriated into Marx’s conceptual structure” (268). The object of the above arguments is the disjunction between the theory of value as an explanation for the “transformation of values into prices of production and of surplus-value into profits, interest, and so on” (Bandyopadhyay; 103). The problem is not just finding a critical tool for describing social relations, but a predictive tool as well. Presumably these arguments might, then, theorise both the economic and the non-economic. On the other hand, if there is nothing outside of the economic, and this is certainly the way free market liberalism presents itself today, then capitalism truly is deterministic and authoritarian. While the non-economic is strongly implied in the above arguments, they nevertheless tend to emphasise the primacy of the economic as the object of value

analysis. (This is perhaps not surprising considering that most of the contributors to *The Value Controversy* are economists.) As Diane Elson points out, while Marx considered that his distinction between concrete labour and abstract labour distinguished his theory of value from that of Ricardo, nevertheless he did not necessarily see them as opposites: “The body of the commodity, which serves as the equivalent, always figures as the embodiment of abstract human labour” (*Capital*.I.150). Emphasising one form of labour over the other as a strategy for recuperating ‘value’ as a critical concept creates then a false opposition. Marx in fact conceives of the relations between the aspects of value as a “unity of differences”:

commodities as use-values confront money as exchange values. On the other hand, both sides of this opposition are commodities, hence themselves unities of use-value and value. But this unity of differences is expressed at two opposite poles, and at each pole in an opposite way. (*Capital*. I.199)

Elson contends that “the object of Marx’s theory is not price at all” (123). The object of Marx’s concern with “price [and] ... its relation to the magnitude of value” is precisely labour (123)—the source of her distinction between a labour theory of value (Ricardian) and “The Value Theory of Labour,” (the title of her paper). Elson too argues for the relative autonomy of the sphere of production (labour) from the sphere of circulation (money relations). As a consequence, “the experience of capitalist exploitation is fragmentary and disconnected” (171). The value form is a critical tool with the ability to expose this fragmentation and the disjunction inherent in the relation between these two realms: “Marx’s theory of value ... provide[s] a basis for showing the link between money relations and labour process relations in the process of exploitation” (172). For Elson, Marx’s ‘value’ is indispensable for political action: to regard “Marx’s theory of value as a proof of exploitation ... [has] the merit of seeing that theory as a *political* intervention” (116). However, she warns that the danger of such a proposition is “that it poses that politics in a way that is closer to the ‘natural right’

politics of 'Ricardian socialism' or German Social Democracy, than the politics of Marx" (116). That is to say, it "has no satisfactory answer to the claim that exploitation in capitalism can perfectly well be understood in terms of the appropriation of *surplus product*, with no need to bring in value at all" (116). She cites Steedman here. This is an important warning considering the disastrous capitulation today of successive social democratic governments in the West to global neo-liberalism and its ideology of inevitability. For example, Margaret Thatcher's conservatives expunged the social compromises of liberalism, the "post-war settlement," from the public memory; Tony Blair's Labour government in Britain capitalises on that obliteration by filling the vacuum with the discourse of "free" market inevitability. The example of New Zealand in some ways better represents an analogue to Canada's own situation. The devastation produced by social engineering on such a vast scale is well documented (see O'Brien and Wilkes Chpt 5, 230) here. As the example of New Zealand clearly shows, while the free market is neither free nor inevitable, the damage done to the social fabric by such social restructuring is extensive, and can be virtually irreversible. On the other hand, rejecting the proposition that Marx's value theory provides a proof of exploitation has the danger of "de-politiciz[ing] that theory" (116). What is at stake is political intervention in the form of an alternative beyond that offered by social democracy's collusion with capitalism as a comforting road-house on the parched trail to market absolutism and, in universities, academic capitalism.

Chapter Five: Poststructuralist-Marxism: Its Critics, Its Inhabitations, And The “Diversified Field of Value”

1. Structuralism in the Future Anterior, and the Textuality of Value

King. Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown.
Here, cousin,
On this side my hand, and on that side thine.
Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen and full of water.
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs whilst you mount up on high.
Richard the Second (IV.1.185-193)

“the simple fact that the commodity exists doubly, in one aspect as a specific product whose natural form of existence ideally contains (latently contains) its exchange value, and in the other aspect as manifest exchange value (money), in which all connection with the natural form of the product is stripped away again—this double, *differentiated* existence must develop into a *difference*, and the difference into *antithesis* and *contradiction*.
(Grundrisse; 147)

[S]ince one case of use-value can be that of the worker wishing to consume the (affect of the) work itself, that necessary possibility renders indeterminate the “materialist” predication of the subject as labor-power or super-adequation as calibrated and organized by the logic of capital.
(Spivak; 118)

Elson’s is in part a critique of Althusser and structuralist Marxism. At the risk of over-generalising and problematic historicising, she represents in my argument a bridge between the value controversies taking place in a structuralist context and the controversy over value in a post-structuralist context. Her differences with Althusser focus on the determinism of structuralist Marxism:

If the ‘structure’ really is ‘in dominance’; if the independent variables are simply ‘given’, and the dependent variables uniquely determined by them; of [sic]

capital really is 'dominant subject'; then we are left without a material basis for political action. (173)

Political agency is neutralised because “the relentlessly unfolding dialectic of the capital-logic school [Althusser] ... analyse[s] capitalist exploitation without using concepts which contain *within them* the recognition of the possibility of conscious collective action against that exploitation” (173). It may be true that the Althusserian perspective “attenuates” the relationship between theory and class struggle. At the same time, Althusser’s structuralism exhibits many of the markers that we have come to recognise as poststructuralist. Certainly his ideas and strategies have been re-appropriated by poststructuralist discourse (New Historicism in the 1980’s for example. See Spivak in Veese; 288).

Elson’s argument, grounded in a close reading of Marx, has a poststructuralist tone if only because the critical strategies that Marx deploys, and many of the concerns of his texts, are those that we have come to identify as poststructuralist. In a general sense, poststructuralism continues the critique of Enlightenment assumptions begun by Marx and Freud etc. This unfolding critique is not simply a matter of similar concerns, but it is, as well, a matter of method. For example, Elson discusses Marx’s methodological delving beneath appearances, “not to go *outside* the form, but to go *inside* the form looking for factors to explain it, to probe beneath its immediately apparent appearance” (142). Althusser, in *Reading Capital*, is much concerned with this very distinction between inside and outside, subject and object (with considerably more subtlety than the E.P. Thompson Elson looks to for support as an antidote to Althusser).

Althusser’s Marxist deconstruction of “all the forms of ... empiricism sublimated in the ‘theory of knowledge’ which dominates Western philosophy” argues for a “break with its problematic of subject (*cogito*) and object” (184). Marx inaugurates an

epistemological revolution that goes beyond the “empirical confusion between the object of knowledge and the real object,” a theoretical transformation of the empiricist claim that there is a “*real* identity between the object of knowledge and the real object” (156). Althusser is closely aligned with Marx in this. For example, closely paraphrasing Marx he argues, Marx “rejected the Hegelian confusion which identifies the real object with the object of knowledge.... Against this confusion, Marx defends the *distinction* between the *real object* (the real-concrete the real totality, which ‘*survives in its independence, after as before, outside the head ...*’) and the *object of knowledge*, a product of the thought which produces it in itself as a thought-concrete ... as a *thought-object*, absolutely distinct from the real-object” (40-1). The causal relation between the conceptual realm and the real is subtle and apparently highly tenuous: if the real object “is the absolute reference point for the process of knowledge which is concerned with it—the deepening of the knowledge of this real object is achieved by a *labour of theoretical transformation* which necessarily affects the *object of knowledge*, since it is only applied to the latter” (156). Althusser claims, “[a]s Marx says profoundly, the *real object*, of which knowledge is to be acquired ... *remains what it is*, after as before the process of knowledge which involves it” (156).

In these passages from the *Grundrisse*, Marx is primarily concerned with establishing the groundwork for a critical methodology distinct from the method of earlier economists, the inverse of a method in which “the whole representation [that is “the living whole”] dissolved into abstract definitions” (385). This point has been discussed earlier in terms of Marx’s methodology. Marx’s discussion of analytical method (“the method of mounting from the abstract to the concrete is only that whereby thought appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete. In no way the genesis of the concrete itself”) is closely connected to a model of perceptual process at fundamental levels of cognitive activity. Analytical agency at higher levels of

activity is thus grounded in more basic perceptual functions closer to the concrete.

Marx identifies political economy's achievement in its locating the "source of wealth not in the object but in a subjective activity," which for Marx is not "money-making" but labour itself as the "simplest abstraction" (*Grundrisse*; 104-5). In this way Marx demonstrates how it is that political economy achieves the isolation of "the abstract universality of wealth-creating activity ... [that is] labour as past, objectified labour" (104) not simply in its theory, but liberal economics achieves this in its practice as well, as his discussion of the United States as the most developed bourgeois society shows (105).¹ Of course, the ultimate object of Marx's analysis of the connection between the conceptual and the concrete, theory and practice, is political agency directed toward revolutionary change.

I would argue that in regard to their conclusions about political agency Elson and Althusser do not differ nearly as much as Elson would suggest. Here is Althusser:

... the fact that the process of production of a knowledge necessarily proceeds by the constant transformation of its (conceptual) object; that it is precisely the effect of this transformation, which is the same thing as the history of knowledge, that it produces a *new* knowledge (a new object of knowledge) which still concerns the *real object*, knowledge of which is deepened precisely by this reorganization of the object of knowledge. (156)

Quite clearly knowledge of the real is mediated by the production of the necessary conceptual tools; the "object of knowledge" is certainly not the thing itself. Making a disarmingly simple point about perceptual process ("the thinking brain ... assimilates the world to itself in the only way possible to it"), Marx is able to deconstruct and reconstruct prevalent assumptions about subject and object—permanently

¹ Labour as a category, and "labour in reality" are no longer "organically linked with particular individuals"; rather, labour as an abstraction becomes most generalised in complex socio-economic contexts in which "one thing appears as common to many, to all" (104). Particularity gives way to the general, the "most general abstraction," because in complex social formations "individuals can ... transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference" (104). In this way liberal economics' theoretical category, labour, is also "true in practice" (105).

destabilizing those assumptions. Althusser remarks that Marx “has difficulty imagining what he is saying” (156). These passages in the *Grundrisse* do in fact convey this sense of struggle; writing as though thinking out loud, Marx represents the cognitive struggle to think the paradox of the perceptual—by its very nature “tautologous”—and in so doing reproduces the cognitive struggle to theorise the subject/object dichotomy otherwise:

for that consciousness ... for which conceptual thought is the real person and thus the conceptual world as such the true reality—the movement of categories seems the true act of production—which, unfortunately only gets its impulse from outside—whose result is the world; and this—but this again is tautologous—is correct in so far as concrete totality, a thought totality, a thought *concretum*, is in fact a product of thought, of understanding; in no way however a product of the self-creating idea, which thinks itself outside or beyond perception and imagination, but the working-out of perception and imagination into concepts. The whole, as it comes into the head as a totality of thought, is a product of the thinking brain which assimilates the world to itself in the only way possible to it, a way which differs from the artistic, religious, practical and intellectual assimilation of this world. The real subject continues to exist independently outside the mind; as long, that is, as the mind operates only speculatively, theoretically. Hence even in the theoretical method the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as a presupposition. (“*Grundrisse*”; 385-6)

Marx reproduces here a revolution in thought whereby our assumptions about a discrete subject and object become repolarised so that individual subjectivity is forced to resituate its perceptual intention toward the real and concrete which in turn is not the object, but is itself subject. For theory, alienated from the concrete and hence from practice, the real social subject is “kept in mind as a presupposition.” However, the most that even a “scientifically correct method” can achieve from perceptual and imaginative process proceeding from abstract definitions is a “*reproduction* of the concrete in the course of thinking” (emphasis added; 385).

Marx is not being fuzzy or imprecise; rather, he reconceptualises subjectivity in its relations with the object, and, as a consequence, the supple relationship between theory and practice in a much altered historical and social context. This oscillating repolarisation is not static, but productively destabilised in a way that we might suggest

is analogous to Marx's description of commodity exchange, the salient characteristic of the new historical context: "this unity of differences is expressed at two opposite poles, and at each pole in an opposite way" (C; 199).² In terms of method, engagement with the concrete is exerted in two directions. One begins with the "real and concrete," in all its multiplicity of "determinations," and reduces that analytically to the "simplest definitions" (384). Analysis is then reversed and moves in the opposite direction from simpler ideas and abstractions in order to reconstruct the "rich totality of many definitions and relations" of the real and concrete social whole. The description is not literal, but figuratively captures the critical attitude necessary in order not to confuse the *motion of thought* itself with the real (Hegel's "illusion"). The critical tool produced reconfigures traditional oppositions between subject and object, theory and practice. Marx situates his method between objective idealism and subjective idealism with particular emphasis placed on the material: "the method of mounting from the abstract to the concrete is only that whereby thought appropriates the concrete, to reproduce it as intellectually concrete. In no way the genesis of the concrete itself" (385).

The above passages distinguish between two kinds of knowledge production (idealist and materialist) that in turn mark the oscillating interrelationship between theory and practice; in fact practice only becomes possible as a consequence of grounding the conceptual in the concrete. (Not the same as Jameson's "'think[ing] ... positively *and* negatively all at once ... without attenuating ... the force of either judgment'" *CPR*; 326.) The process of conceptual production, theoretical production in Althusser, suggests that practical engagement with the real can never achieve any more than a "reproduction of the concrete" (385). Nevertheless, Marx emphasises the

² In exchange the commodity has two aspects, commodity and money. This opposition is the external expression of the internal opposition between use-value and value: "In this opposition, commodities as use-values confront money as exchange-value. On the other hand, both sides of this opposition are commodities, hence themselves unities of use-value and value. But this unity of differences is expressed at two opposite poles, and at each pole in a different way" (C; 199).

materialist potentials of reconfiguring and redirecting conceptual energy otherwise than the necessarily solipsistic (“tautologous”) tendencies of perceptual process itself, or the products of the “self-creating idea.” The paradox of perceptual process means that analytical “appropriation” of the real and concrete, nevertheless only “reproduces it as *intellectually concrete*” (emphasis added; 385). The problem then is the possibility of practice.

The materialist emphasis, and the necessary connection between theory and practice, is in a sense a product of historical development itself. Historical development has created social conditions such that “the richest concrete development” produces the “most universal abstractions,” abstractions such as exchange value, or the simple category labour (389). According to Marx, in the capitalist context labour is not connected to the particular or the individual, but becomes “the abstract general concept of wealth-generating activity” (389). Such a context is the now familiar one in which “individuals readily move from one task to another and the particular kind of task is ... a matter of indifference” (389). Historical development aids Marx in maintaining a balance between objective and subjective idealism, and allows him the latitude of a supple interplay between theory and practice. Rather than discrete functions attached to thought and the real respectively in bipolar fashion, theory and practice are, to an extent, similar to commodity exchange in that they are a “unity of differences ... expressed at two opposite poles, and at each pole in an opposite way.” In fully developed capitalist economies the category of labour, abstract nonetheless, is not realised as a theoretical abstraction, but is “*first realized in practice*” (emphasis added; 389). Labour, the “simplest abstraction,” is not merely the construct of theoretical analysis; rather, in a context in which “the most universal abstractions are generally formed by the richest concrete development,” it is first realised in practice:

The simplest abstraction, that is, that to which the modern economy gives pre-eminence [labour], and which expresses a primeval relation valid for all forms of society, realizes itself practically as a category of the most modern society only in this abstraction. (389)

The real and concrete in developed capitalist society manifests itself paradoxically in an abstraction, this “*abstract* general concept of wealth-generating activity” (emphasis added; 389). The emphasis here, in this “unity of differences,” is more properly on difference, as the product of labour is value internally conflicted and marked by contradiction. In an academic context, the false oppositions between theory and practice, conceptual and material, is reflected in the marginal status of the “ivory tower” university perceived to be preoccupied with intellectual abstractions and detached (“unaccountable”) from practical concerns in the world outside. At a historical juncture in which the contradictions disclosed in the value form increasingly condition all social relations, Marx brings to view the disguised complexity of such oppositions, and in so doing provides a critical tool with the power to resist the imperatives of academic capitalism.

Where Marx very precisely re-situates conceptual activity relative to the material and concrete, producing a decentred “thought *concretum*” we might say; Althusser, on the other hand, re-reflects Marx’s theory of conceptual production to expand the reach of the conceptual itself. In a proto-poststructuralist move, the textual nature of the concrete is expanded in order that the engagement of theory with the real takes place in the realm of theoretical practice itself. It seems, in fact, a subtle departure from the provenance established by Marx. For Marx, unfolding history produces conditions favourable for the emergence of significant abstract categorical determinants such as exchange value and labour; Althusser’s structuralism, on the other hand, places more emphasis on the synchronic in order to expand the reach of theoretical practice into the textual spaces of the concrete (the “new object of knowledge”).

Althusser notes that Marx abandons “the empiricist distinction between pure essence and impure phenomenon” (192). He argues that in its “language” *Capital* “revokes the distinction between inside and outside, and substitutes for it the distinction between the concept and the real, or between the object (of knowledge) and the real object” (emphasis added; 192). However, this is after all merely a “*conception of scientific practice*” (emphasis added): “it is one thing to develop this concept and quite another to set it to work in order to solve the unprecedented theoretical problem of the production of the concept of the effectivity of a structure on its elements” (192). Consequently the problem becomes one of setting the conceptual to work, of translating theory into political engagement. In his concluding remarks, Althusser argues Marx “*practis[es]*” this very concept “in the use he makes of the ‘*Darstellung* [representation; *mise en scène*]” (192). Marx puts conceptual production to critical work by way of an “*extremely precise ... language of metaphors which are nevertheless almost perfect concepts*” (emphasis added; 192):

Marx presents the capitalist system as a mechanism, a machinery, a machine, a construction ... or as the complexity of a ‘social metabolism’ ... In every case, the ordinary distinctions between outside and inside disappear, along with the ‘intimate’ links within the phenomena as opposed to their visible disorder: we find a ... new quasi-concept ... freed from the empiricist antinomies of phenomenal subjectivity and essential interiority; we find an objective system governed in its most concrete determinations by the laws of its *erection (montage)* and *machinery*, by the specifications of its concept. Now we can recall that highly symptomatic term ‘*Darstellung*’, compare it with this ‘machinery’ and take it literally, as the very existence of this machinery in its effects: the mode of existence of the stage direction (*mise en scène*) of the theatre which is simultaneously its own stage, its own script, its own actors, the theatre whose spectators can, on occasion, be spectators only because they are first of all forced to be its actors, caught by the constraints of a script and parts whose authors they cannot be, since it is in essence *an authorless theatre*. (192-3)

Therefore the effectivity of a structure is determined by the production of metaphor (granted they are qualified as “almost perfect concepts”); we might say the “quasi-concept” metonymically reproduces the effectivity of a “structure in dominance” (in

Althusser's well known formulation) in which subjectivity is decentred. In a similar sense to the status of independent and dependent variables—an important distinction for locating the potential for political agency—Elson argues, “Althusser's ‘structural causality’ ... puts the independent variables one stage back, behind the ‘structure.’” (131).

Decentred subjectivity and an expanded conception of textuality—as Althusser's passage above demonstrates—are two of the familiar markers of diverse forms of poststructuralist (and postmodernist) discourse. Many of course argue that this resort to figurative language represents a weak claim to political engagement:

[t]his practice ... takes place entirely within thought. It works upon a theoretical object, never coming face to face with the real object as such.... Theoretical practice needs no external guarantees ... since every science possesses internal modes of proof ... Governed by the interior requirements of knowledge, not by extra-theoretical exigencies, interests of society or class; autonomous therefore, not part of the superstructure, but following its own developmental course some way removed from the vicissitudes of social history; theoretical or scientific practice is distinct from ideological practice, distinct too from political practice and economic practice. They are all, nevertheless, equally practices, types of production. (Bottomore *et al*; 16)

However, in ignoring Althusser's claim that “we find an objective system governed in its most concrete determinations ... by the specifications of its concept,” metaphor in fact, this passage understates the power of language as the primary medium of perceptual process to transform the “real” in turn. As Spivak correctly argues, a theory of ideology is “necessary for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation” (*CPR*; 252). If there is any doubt of this, we need only look to the politically polarised battles fought over the ideological functions of language. Marx's own critique of the concept metaphors of political economy, and the power of those concepts to affect our lives, is proof of this.

2. The Conceptual in Theory: the Real World

University, Academic Capitalism, and Accommodation as Practice

“A sentence is but a chev’ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turn’d outward.”³

Both Marx and Althusser demonstrate the power of language, as the primary medium of perceptual process, to transform the “real” in turn. It may seem unnecessary to support this simple point by example; nevertheless, it is necessary to contextualise the claim by contemporary example. In the context of the contemporary university, Canadian scholar Michael Keefer, in *Lunar Perspectives*, documents the consequences of the ideological abuses of the term ‘political correctness’:

Since the late 1980’s, what Henry Louis Gates has called the American “cultural left” has been under attack by a powerful coalition of forces in government agencies, in right-wing corporate foundations, and in the media (a combination forcibly reminiscent of that which made possible the witch-hunting career of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950’s). Yet when in 1990 this attack ripened into the political correctness debate, one of the most commonly repeated claims of neoconservative polemicists was that they were exposing and resisting a “new McCarthyism” of the left. (27-8)

As Keefer demonstrates, the history of the term ‘political correctness,’ and the manner in which it was appropriated and redeployed by the political right is particularly instructive:

A historical analogy capable of illuminating what was happening was thus cleverly pre-empted by writers who apparently felt they could assume a readership too ... ill-informed to find their misappropriation of it objectionable.... the association of McCarthyism with political correctness appears to have stuck. Detached from any reference to the well-orchestrated witch-hunts of the late 1940’s and 1950’s, the label of a “new McCarthyism” is doubly useful to neoconservative polemicists: while smearing a wide range of opponents as sleazy and authoritarian, it blocks any application of the term to their own activities. (27-8)

As Keefer points out, the term ‘political correctness’ has a venerable history with origins in leftist politics “first gain[ing] widespread currency during the 1930’s in Stalinist

³ *Twelfth Night* III.1.11-13.

discourse" (28). The term resurfaces in the 1960's in the Black Panther movement. Subsequently, African-American and feminist political activists use the term in the 1970's and 80's, but, Keefer argues, "as a form of ironic self-reproach" (28). However, "[I]ts appropriation by the Bush Republicans and by neoconservative writers in the popular press was ... an 'Orwellian inversion': a phrase that was used in ironic self-deprecation by people striving to better the position of women, working people, and minority groups is now applied in a reflex manner to forestall serious discussion of the conditions that make their efforts necessary" (29). The ideological power of this expression is derived from the suppression of its history. While Keefer suggests that the use of the term peaked in about 1996, at the time of my writing here we see every day the remarkable power it has in mainstream usage to block—as soon as used—any meaningful debate. The expression is used every day uncritically, and the set of assumptions that have been coded into it are also accepted uncritically. Its use has had lasting consequences for universities: in his introduction, Keefer notes there is "a widespread perception stemming largely from the outcries over 'political correctness' in American and Canadian universities that began in the late 1980's ... leaving behind a widespread distrust of scholars in the humanities" (vi). Such ideologically loaded language continues to aggravate the social alienation of universities.

This dissertation takes the position that the language deployed in debates about education is ideologically coded, and that the history of that coding is crucial to resisting its negative effects. A key expression that occurs regularly in education debates is 'value.' The word, in everyday use, is similar to 'excellence' (as Readings describes it above) in the sense that to an extent it has no real referent. On the other hand, even when value is used to describe higher order social qualities (the value of the Western tradition; the value of a liberal arts education) its history determines that there is always an economic connotation, particularly at a historical juncture in which

potentially everything has an economic value. The university is a particularly salient example due to the increasing difficulty of concealing the fact that the university, and its higher values, cannot escape the event horizon of the economy. There is then external discord between 'value,' in the sense of higher qualities, and 'value' in its economic sense, a disjunction that is a reflection of the contradictions that inhabit the value form itself. As stated before, the contradictions inherent in the value form surface at the level of appearance in the conflict between the cultural and the economic. In the larger social context, throughout the 1980's and 90's the left largely lost the language battle, the battle for hearts and minds waged through the medium of metaphor and language, and in the mainstream media decisively.

In the larger social context—of which universities are an integral part—we might look to the example of New Zealand and the role that language played in the transformation of social democracy (Fordist) into (post-Fordist) "authoritarian populism," as O'Brien and Wilkes term the enforced social re-engineering of New Zealand to match the demands of market absolutism:

The widespread propaganda war waged by [the] Labour [party] during the 1980's directed its efforts towards the goal of making the concept of the market 'natural', as if those who resisted the shift from the state-centred society to the market-centred society were opposing the laws of nature themselves. The inevitability of the market solution was the central message of the war of words which rained down ... from Treasury, the Reserve Bank, the Treasury benches, and their allies in the business community. The attack on state spending, on budget deficits and ... on the role of the state as societal overlord in many traditional areas, was not simply a struggle with budgetary considerations at the structural level. *It was as much an attempt to shift our general understandings about human consciousness—the things that motivate people and explain human behaviour—as it was an attack on more general political values.* (emphasis added; 24-25)

A war of words from above calculated to naturalise market forces and generate a widespread sense of crisis is more than familiar to Canadians. The authors cogently argue, "[t]his broad shift in political culture underpins the more specific changes at the level of policy and little sense can be made of other more specific movements without

taking this cultural shift seriously" (25).⁴ It is necessary then to keep this cultural shift—and precisely how it was achieved—in mind when considering the specific details of the enforced transformation of New Zealand's education system. The attendant shift to a market model in education has had disastrous, if predictable, consequences for the public school system in New Zealand. Murray Dobbin, in the CBC radio documentary *Revisiting New Zealand's Revolution*, points out,

[n]o area of public policy went through such gut-wrenching change as did education. The whole primary and secondary system was transformed from a neighbourhood school model to a competitive model with the stroke of a pen. Every school became a charter school: a locally run private school model in a publicly funded system. Parents suddenly had the choice of which school their kids would go to, and schools were obliged to compete for students who brought their funding dollars with them. The effect was dramatic. Schools in wealthier areas got the reputation for being excellent, and ... moderate-income parents scrambled to get their kids into those schools. (CBC Ideas; 2001-05-05)

As expected, the fiction of a classless society is exposed here for what it is.

In the perpetual antagonism between competitive individualism and cooperation, and private versus public, the weight of public policy shifts toward the former as "Parents ... began *identifying with a social class* at the expense of the neighbourhood school" (CBC Ideas; emphasis added). John Minto, parent, teacher, and an activist with a coalition attempting to reverse the market model in education, explains how manufactured and managed public perception translates into resource allocations that in turn reinforce class disparity:

⁴ While O'Brien and Wilkes discuss here motivations much closer to the surface than Althusser is interested in—considering his purposes—nevertheless, this suggests a defensible example of the utility for Althusser's situating of "structural causality" ... [with] independent variables one stage back, behind the 'structure.'" That is, it is important if one is interested in accounting for motivations at levels beneath full consciousness, particularly motivations driven by language at those levels. Of course, Althusser takes from Jacques Lacan the notion of "the linguistic, rather than primarily sexual, structure of the unconscious" (Bottomore *et al*; 402). And it is necessary to account for motivational mechanisms at these levels when we have empirical evidence daily of the power of words to block certain lines of argument the instant they are deployed. Thousands of years of human history document the organised violence of wealth and power to protect and promote its own interests through concerted group action; yet, today we witness the miraculous victory over such aggression with the simple use of the term 'conspiracy theory'—any public debate over the organised action of dominant minority interests is effectively neutralised the instant it is deployed. The fact that Althusser locates "independent variables" behind the structure also presents the possibility for independent action at other levels.

Many schools prospered, but many more went out of business and ended up in a near state of collapse. Schools in poorer communities ... sank or struggled because they didn't have the expertise to run themselves. As the school struggled with its management, with its board of trustees, [and] its finances, they would come under severe criticism ... teacher moral would go down, and sometimes teaching quality would drop, and the school would be on the skids. ... The right revelled in doing that. Schools in wealthier communities, money just poured into them, and if you go to these schools now you find the most amazing facilities ... wonderful buildings, wonderful classrooms ... whereas schools in the middle of [?] ... have suffered because they haven't had growing roles ... and the first priority for funding was made growing roles to implement the market model, and so you've got schools looking pretty blooming shabby because the money's been siphoned off by wealthy schools in wealthy communities. (CBC Ideas)

This reciprocating process, in which the war of words produces the desired effects in a self-fulfilling spiral, is more than familiar in the Canadian context, whether in public broadcasting, public health care, or public education. In this way a crisis in education is manufactured in the public imagination: funding is slashed, a confrontational antagonism is imposed between teachers and the government (corporations, banks, business and other vested interests from the private sector feign detached observer status—that is, as objective witnesses with a high degree of interest—to the “inefficiency” of state intervention), and lo and behold a crisis in education becomes manifest in shabby infrastructure, “poor performance,” and public demand for public education drops while the supply of privately funded schools, or publicly funded private schools, increases to match demand. A parallel charter school system has been implemented and actively encouraged by government in resource rich Alberta, and in May 2001 the Harris government of Ontario announced that it would incrementally phase in a publicly funded, private school system.

Althusser's “theoretical anti-humanism” appears to reduce human agency, human beings, to “supports, [and] effects, of the structure and relations of the social formation” (Bottomore *et al*; 17); nevertheless, the apparently weak claim for the effectivity of theory as a mode of production that produces concepts and metaphors (as

almost perfect concepts) amongst other social practices, is not as weak as it might seem—if the above examples demonstrate anything at all. The examples of “political correctness,” and the terminology deployed in debates over education (“choice,” “competitive advantage,” “merit,” “excellence,” accountability,” “relevance” etc.) more than support Althusser’s claim for the power of the concept (in the following quotation “surplus-value”) to “*directly affect ... the structure of the object whose future is at stake in the simple act of naming*” (146; emphasis added).

The “crisis” in education is often presented in terms of the relationship between an inside (ivory tower university) and the “real” world outside. According to Althusser, Marx’s epistemological break with the assumptions of empiricism (in all its forms throughout the history of classical philosophy) “revokes the distinction between inside and outside, and substitutes for it the distinction between the concept and the real, or between the object (of knowledge) and the real object” (192) as presupposition. Marx complicates the empiricist conception of knowledge, presented as a “process that takes place between a given object and a given subject” (35), in such a way that “the ordinary distinctions between outside and inside disappear” (193). (This is achieved through “the use he makes of the ‘Darstellung’” expressed in a language of metaphor that nonetheless can be taken “literally” as the existence of “this machinery [of capitalism] in its effects” 192-3.) Empiricist knowledge (idealism) is structured in a way “which thinks the knowledge of [the] ... real object itself as a *real part* of the real object to be known. This part may be called essential, internal, hidden” (37). The empiricist operation of knowledge “is performed outside the object—being the deed of an active subject”; however, “[f]or the empiricist conception of knowledge, the whole of knowledge is thus invested in *the real*, and knowledge never arises except as a *relation inside its real object between the really distinct parts of that object*”—parts such as the inessential and essence, surface and depth, outside and inside (38-9). Therefore,

Marx's radical transformation of the very conceptual framework of empiricist-idealism that underpins the capitalist world-view, through the deployment of each "precise ... metaphor... *almost perfect concepts*.... [mobilises] a new quasi-concept ... freed from the empiricist antinomies of phenomenal subjectivity and essential interiority" (192-3). The Marxist deconstruction represents then a radical transformation of an ostensibly untroubled epistemological/ontological distinction.

That the Canadian university continues to be spatially constructed in this way—constructed through its concepts—is evidence that the empiricist-idealist program deconstructed by Althusser, reading Marx, is still a dominant paradigm. And this paradigm continues to be a primary ideological instrument deployed by powerful minorities with a vested interest in harnessing universities to a very narrow program indeed. We will consider this reductive program, and its effects on tertiary education, in some detail prior to considering further Althusser's structuralist/poststructuralist reading of Marx, and Elson's critique of it. In a general sense, Donald Fischer and Kjell Rubenson, in "The Changing Political Economy: The Private and Public Lives of Canadian Universities," caution that,

Privatization continues to be the overwhelming trend [in Canadian universities]... Our universities are becoming more corporate, more technocratic, more utilitarian, and far more concerned with selling products than with education. Jointly designing curriculum with private donors, the differentiation between teaching and research internally, and the reliance on non-tenure-track sessional or part-time labor are already established trends. Full cost recovery is a major theme. The marketing of programs at profit-making rates to foreign elites will become the norm. In short, the very essence of the university in Canada will change in ways that undermine some of the best parts of the tradition that emphasized national norms and public service. (96)

Driving this social re-engineering is "a new, economic ... imperative that places importance on highly developed human capital, science, and technology to support Canada's needs for economic restructuring and greater international competitiveness" (79). In short, "Federal and provincial policy documents see education and training as a

way of making Canada more able to compete in a time of globalization and economic restructuring" (82), and "financial stringency and government policy stressing the vocational role of the tertiary sector have created a climate for change"(91). "For the most part, universities have translated the signals and then taken the initiative," the authors laconically note (91). The link between postsecondary education and work "has become the key issue and a major battleground between competing ideologies and interests" (82). The dominant paradigm discussed above is encoded in government policy documents that "express a strong need to establish closer ties with the labor market and '[to adapt] education [inside] to the *real* requirements of the labour market [the "real" outside], ... making it more *relevant*, and ... [to] ease ... the transition into the workplace" (emphasis added; 82). Again this is an empiricist paradigm that—in spite of its claims to dissolving boundaries and borders—reinforces an inside/outside dichotomy based on the assumption that knowledge "is performed outside the object—being the deed of an active subject"; and, "[f]or the empiricist conception of knowledge, the whole of knowledge is thus invested in *the real*, and knowledge never arises except as a *relation inside its real object between the really distinct parts of that object*"—parts such as the inessential and essence, surface and depth, outside and inside (Althusser; 38-9). The empiricist paradigm continues to be an important conceptual principle even today in the postmodern contemporary. As a dominant discourse adapts to the forms and vocabularies of a postmodern ethos, Enlightenment paradigms continue to persist depending on the purpose required. The following then, in part, considers the effect that an empiricist conceptual program has on the university. The widespread critique of supposedly residual conceptual distinctions such as subject/object, inside/outside, inessential and essence etc. has become routine in academic communities. However, an empiricist paradigm continues to manifest itself in the now familiar terms in university debates: accountability, relevance; basic, or pure, research as opposed to

applied research; “choice, “competitive advantage,” “merit,” “excellence,” accountability,” “relevance” etc. And, of course value is just such an expression.

The accelerating tendency toward vocationalism and the increasing professionalisation of the Canadian postsecondary system is producing the “ most pronounced change in our universities ... [the] trend to more and more differentiation” (Fischer and Rubenson; 96). This differentiation is manifest in the increasing divide between teaching and research, but also in the unashamed acceptance of an overtly “hierarchical division of labour” (universal accessibility has always been largely a liberal fiction in practice anyway)—for example, the increased reliance on “part-time or sessional instructors to do much of the teaching work once done by tenure-track professors” (96). Greater differentiation arises then out of the more general division between “education and training, or ‘pure’ versus applied/professional” (96). The term “pure” signals the empiricist-idealism implicit in the very categories used to reconstruct the Canadian university. Drawing on my own experience teaching “composition” (and literature) to the “professional” colleges as part of my “professional” training as a graduate student, I suggest that this categorical discrimination is easily as corrosive and absurd as the false opposition between so-called objective knowledge, and so-called subjective knowledge. The common associations of objective knowledge, as most people would concede, are “useful,” “outside,” “scientific,” “professional,” “commerce,” “business,” “good.” Subjective knowledge is associated with “useless,” “interior,” “arts and humanities,” no job in the “real world,” “bad.” An indicator of its status in the mainstream, this opposition is to a large extent uncritically accepted by many undergraduates, even students of the humanities.

Althusser argues, Marx thinks the “*purity of the concept*, [as] the purity of a knowledge adequate to its object” (192). Again this represents Marx laying bare the code, and reconfiguring the concepts of empiricist-idealist reality “presented as a two-

level reality, inside and outside, the inside being identified with the pure essence and the outside with a phenomenon, sometimes purely subjective, the state of mind of a 'consciousness', sometimes impure, because it is foreign to the essence" (191). Marx, in turning the conceptual field ("the empiricist distinction between pure essence and impure phenomenon" 192) inside out and then complicating the result further, practices the "truth that *interiority* is nothing but the '*concept*', that it is not the *real* 'interior' of the phenomenon, but knowledge of it" (191). The dynamics of this conflict of the concepts is focused in and through the socially situated university. One model for the socially situated university is the institutional manufactory, isolated and (self)alienated as we find it today, projecting useful information to the outside. Another possible model could be the university as simply one of the more visible concentrations (*in situ*, its buildings etc.) of an entire society dedicated to "lifelong learning" throughout all its structures—all of society as university. In the latter model, all false dichotomies of useful/useless and outside/inside are complicated, though always available to analytical discrimination. Or might this simply represent the possibility of an ideological resolution to the conflict of the categories at the end of history, ideological in its reduction of heterogeneity and diversity? But then, of course, the breaking down of disciplinary and institutional boundaries, expressed through the ambivalent promise of interdisciplinarity, is a program promoted by both the left and the right. However, what we say and what we do are very different things.

The latter model of a possible university, the institutional enclave dissolved and distributed throughout the social continuum, represents the promise implicit in "interdisciplinarity." In theory interdisciplinarity promises permeable disciplinary boundaries, and a dissolving of the boundaries between the university and the outside. However, as Fischer and Rubenson demonstrate, studying the postsecondary system

of British Columbia, interdisciplinarity can be driven by internalised accommodation to external pressure for change exerted from particular constituencies outside:

The trend across the system is toward more interdisciplinarity and more applied programming. At SFU, the tradition of interdisciplinarity has been extended into new graduate programs such as environmental toxicology, which are geared to provide people with certification or professional requirements for the local job market. U Vic has a strong commitment to interdisciplinarity, which is demonstrated by the rise of the applied and professional fields ... and exciting initiatives such as the computer science master's degree in software engineering. Universities take accountability to the external world more seriously than they have done before. All three universities defined themselves as being more responsive, more willing to take the initiative and be proactive. Inevitably, administrators were aware of the political-economic pressure to change but were clear that neither government or [sic] industry had pushed them in a particular direction. Rather, financial stringency and government policy stressing the vocational role of the tertiary sector have created a climate for change. For the most part, universities have translated the signals and then taken the initiative.... (91)

Borrowing a term from current business-speak, a certain "convergence" of factors, deliberately applied, greatly improves this seemingly benign, seemingly non-coercive "climate for change." And, of course, the dominant social response to a constellation of issues is that, out of a range of alternatives, only certain responses are worth pursuing, and these select responses are inevitable. Certainly, one of the more important factors contributing to universities "tak[ing] the initiative" is funding cuts to education. As the language of the authors here suggests, the operating principle at work in creating a climate for change is "manufacturing consent."

The accelerating trend to professionalisation within academic communities themselves contributes to change in certain approved directions: "our universities have become more corporate. At one level, administration has become a separate career, producing a culture at odds with the traditional, collegial definition of university life" (92). The "fundamental autonomy" of university governance and process is undermined by "external pressure to focus on relevance and accountability" (92). At stake are the "pursuit of learning, critical thinking, and basic research all ... under threat ... [as]

instrumental and functional objectives displace the concern with autonomy and a separation of powers within society” (92). Approaching this problem of a separation of powers from a somewhat different if decidedly related angle, Sheila Slaughter, in “National Higher Education Policies in a Global Economy,” notes that, while funding has been massively cut for postsecondary education, “what money was available was concentrated in technoscience and market-related fields in what amounted to a higher education version of supply-side economics” (56). It is important to note here the manner in which technoscience functions to assist capital in transcoding the conceptual categories with which we order our lives. Technoscience, such as telecommunications and biotechnology, “makes impossible the separation of science and technology, basic and applied research, discovery and innovation ... Technoscience is at once science and product. It collapses the distinction between knowledge and commodity: Knowledge becomes commodity” (56). Technoscience produces such ruptures in the social fabric generally. In the new “global spatio-temporal regime” (309) technology enhances money’s ability to “decouple” itself from the social (see Chapter Three above; 105). Again, such external manifestations of social rupture are reflections of the contradictions inherent in the value form materialising in the realm of appearance. No longer are there any borders, boundaries, or limits—as the advertising industry endlessly repeats today—as these collapse into the event horizon of free-market liberalism. Is this collapse of knowledge diversity into the homogenising black hole of economics the promise of interdisciplinarity fulfilled?

A related factor greatly facilitating change toward a market model of tertiary education (“The dominant political culture [on campus] has created a more atomized, individualistic, competitive kind of atmosphere on campus.... a market competition mentality,” as one student describes it) is corporate-linking, as Janice Newson, in her conclusion to *Universities and Globalization*, argues: “the emergence in universities of

an assertive, corporate-styled management ... has become a crucial organizational tool for overseeing and implementing such things as restructuring and corporate-linking projects" (302). The new management structures of universities are predisposed to "accommodate the funding policies passed down by governments and the new financial climate that encourages privatisation, corporate linking, and the commercialisation of university activities and services" (302). And, of course, none of this takes place as if it were compelled by some inevitable natural force beyond our control; corporate-linking is strategic and consciously applied by dominant elites who promote it as though it were an inevitable force of nature:

Such groups vary across nations, but in several of the countries discussed in this book, organizations have been created over the past decade and a half that bring together university presidents, as the "CEOs" of their institutions, and the CEOs of the major national corporations. Such organizations were formed in 1979, in the United States, called The Business-Higher Education Forum; and in 1983, in Canada, called The Corporate-Higher Education Forum. *Through written reports and other activities, these organizations shape public policy and use their political influence within the university sector to bring about many of the changes that have been critically examined here. (emphasis added; n.311)*

As already noted, Tom D' Aquino of the Business Council on National Issues has stepped up the Council's presence in the private press in support of a reconstructed university more responsive to the needs of global capital. Full-page spreads in the liberal, private press (*Globe and Mail*) stand in for meaningful public debate. This occurs in a general context in which electoral participation in democratic process disproportionately favours such minority-interest lobby groups as the Business Council on National Issues, and in a context in which the electorate, as with every other social sector, is subject to the extortionate practices of corporate elites. Nevertheless, in the current climate strategies such as interdisciplinarity present invaluable opportunities for redirecting the very changes taking place into more egalitarian social channels; on the other hand, in the current climate interdisciplinarity may be little more than a tool in the hands of the forces acting to realign the university with the market. Rather than

producing more permeable boundaries between inside and outside, interdisciplinarity may only reinforce the reality of structural disparity masquerading as social relevance, equality, and accessibility.⁵ Althusser's reading of Marx presents the possibility of a conceptual practice with the power to counteract the ideological activities of corporatism, precisely by deconstructing the conceptual frame currently mobilised in reconstructing our world in terms of inside and outside on a hierarchical axis. This is not to suggest that there is only one correct critical perspective; however as long as the academic community continues to be motivated by "adaptation and accommodation"—by not publicly resisting the very concepts by which they are being actively reconstructed in the public imagination—then public policy will continue to be managed privately for them from outside.

Newson, arguing for a "repositioning [of] the local through alternative strategies," suggests that crucial to such a repositioning as well is the way that knowledge workers see themselves. The 1997 strike by faculty and librarians at York University, as Newson experienced it, had the effect on the strikers of a "remarkable release of energy ... [and] collective catharsis" (295). Deterioration in "salaries and working conditions" and "repeated budget-cutting cycles," a shifting of resources to programs believed to be more profitable, a "more 'corporate style' approach to the management of the university," and a "decreasing involvement of faculty members and librarians in university decision making," because occurring incrementally, failed to incite faculty and librarians to direct action (298). However, it was only when "the strike

⁵ It is worth noting here how the liberal doctrine of accessibility is being tuned to match the shift toward academic capitalism in the absence of the countervailing measures associated with the post-war settlement stage of liberalism. In fact, Slaughter notes, policy changes in all four of the countries she studied has increased accessibility to postsecondary education, but only in a certain sense. That is, there has been a move toward "increased student access at lower government cost per student" (65). In all four countries, Canada included, increased access has, of course, been achieved by increasing tuition at the expense of grants and other forms of government support, and by offloading costs onto students in the form of student loans. The rules for student loans (who qualifies, qualifies for what disbursements, and payback schedules) have become increasingly constraining, so it is no wonder that accessibility for large numbers of students means one, or even two, jobs on top of their student loans.

pulled the faculty and librarians out of university buildings,” that the public was fully confronted with these issues. At the same time, the strike suddenly focussed issues previously submerged in academic routine and increasingly heavy work loads, and roused faculty and librarians to the “deeper implications,” the cumulative consequences of a “gradual process of accommodation to what the university was becoming over the previous decade or more” (298). A spatial inversion in fact between inside and outside, “this political polarization that isolated the administration in ... a university building while faculty members and librarians took over the grounds and entrances” (299), contributed to the “dramatic shift of perspective that came from leaving the buildings and walking on picket lines” (298). A literal shift of spatial point-of-view not only presented an opportunity for these knowledge workers to reflect on how academic identities are inscribed by institutional structures and disciplinary practices embodied in actual infrastructure, but also presented the invaluable opportunity to “focus media attention and to get a public airing on what was happening inside universities from the point of view of the frontline academic staff” (299).⁶

⁶ For comparative purposes we might again consider Bill Readings’ response to the “legitimation crisis” of the university: “dwelling in [the] ruins [of the postmodern university] is not despair or cynicism, it is simply the abandonment of the religious attitude towards political action” (184). Readings’ essay begins with a very funny parody warmed further by biographical anecdote: “In the 1970s we were (at least I was) inclined to believe that a mixture of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and semiotics might prove sufficiently volatile to fuel Molotov cocktails. The combination is now sufficiently stabilized to be available over the counter from your local literature department, under a variety of brand names or under the generic label ‘cultural studies’” (169). The very important element of truth here is that oppositional perspectives are “appropriated” by, and assimilated into academic practices. In this way their ability to effect positive change outside of postsecondary institutions is neutralised. However, Readings, in fact, cynically trivialises the very real social impact of direct “political action.” The York strike and other actions demonstrate the need for direct action. A more valuable stance is one in which academics are politicised in their everyday practices, not just at the end of a collective agreement. Spivak argues for an activist attitude toward pedagogy—the “classroom as intervention”—and a critical perspective to match: to “critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit is the deconstructive stance” (*OTM*; 284). What distinguishes Readings and Spivak more than anything else then, as their perspectives on how the academic subject is situated within the institutional matrix are not that different, is their attitude to the very real impact of direct action. This is the difference between the critical toolbox of the liberal, postmodern critic, for whom the “combination [is] ... sufficiently stabilized,” and the deconstructive-Marxist critic prepared to act on the belief that the critical “mixture” still contains a degree of volatility translatable into an activism with more than sufficient magnitude to meet the force of reactionary change that *is* being imposed from without with support from within.

Newson found that the strike at York generated solidarity not only at the local level but also at the national and international levels, leading her to argue, “the new forms of communication that are assigned a key role in promoting globalization have become, at the same time, the instruments for engaging a wider constituency in these locally based political struggles. Although some have argued, globalization gives reign to social, political, and economic forces that undermine and disempower the local, globalization also amplifies local responses and makes it possible to create a broader base of political support for them and the social, political, and economic projects that *these responses* represent” (300). Newson is not advocating strikes as the “only or even the primary way of pursuing alternatives to the negative changes in universities” (301). She identifies two reasons for reservations here: if collective bargaining or strikes merely serve to “preserv[e] ... the professional benefits and status of ... academic staff” then meaningful change will be foreclosed (301); more importantly, confrontation between organised labour and management serves to fragment the possibility of an “effective and united *sectoral* challenge to the instigators of the changes in universities ... that is, to governments, corporate elites, and various ‘third-party’ lobbying groups” (302). These limitations aside, Newson considers collective bargaining to be an effective means of “promot[ing] a political consciousness about the implications to the university of these changes and a renewed commitment to its public-serving purposes” (302). Most importantly, Newson argues that one of the strategic successes of the York experience was “to place the issues in a broader context” than merely that of a workers’ strike “over terms and conditions of employment” (304).

Interestingly, Newson is legitimately “sceptical about the effectiveness of academic writing for generating a heightened political consciousness” (303); nevertheless, academic analysis and writing generates “a rich resource for developing political interventions that can modify, reshape, and even reverse the ‘single-path’

model of globalism” (303). Through “careful, systematic analysis and examination of evidence,” the academic community can expose globalisation as a “politically and economically directed project” mobilised by “particular interests and particular agents” (303), not a faceless and inevitable natural force—at the same time, systematic analysis discloses to public view the diversity concealed in the dominant version of a homogeneous globalism.

Events leading into the new millennium present no better opportunity for the academic community to resist aggressively the discursive authoritarianism of globalism. This can be achieved by decolonising the conceptual and discursive field colonised by market ideology, and by reinscribing it with the social content displaced by market discourse. Such decolonising strategies lie behind the work of Claire Polster and Janice Newson. In “Don’t Count Your Blessings: The Social Accomplishments of Performance Indicators,” these critics argue for the necessity of “engag[ing] in a conceptual, as opposed to technical, examination of performance indicators ... [in order to] display the potential weaknesses, if not dangers, of accommodation strategies” (174). Furthermore, they stress the need for “strategies that address the political and economic relations that have promoted and are promoted by a performance-based conception of accountability” (174). Like the Cowbird exploiting the nesting instincts of another species, Liberalism has always been adept at transcoding the cooperative, communitarian essence of the social with the conceptual code of the free-market (neither free nor fair, and manifestly anti-social). As Newson clearly demonstrates, the energies of unfolding historical change can be redirected: “the endpoint of globalization has not yet been reached, the situation remains open, and the university still has a very important responsibility to ‘serve the public interest’” (309).

The idea of the “service university” represents a wide field of conceptual struggle, and it is the kind of expression that few antagonists in education debates

would reject out of hand. However, the simple invocation of the name “service university” obviously means different things to different constituencies in the practical context of political struggle in an undemocratic system:

Current rhetoric about the service university concept notwithstanding ... the policies adopted by governments and institutions to increase the “service” profile of universities focus almost exclusively on providing services to corporations, either as producers of goods or as employers, and to government agencies that contract research services. In fact, service to corporations and government is seen to be synonymous with serving “society.” Students are part of the constituency to be served but largely and primarily as potential employees, not as citizens. (312n)

The negative consequences of the colonisation of social space by market ideology and market discourse, its possession and privatisation, are not difficult to imagine when increasingly students are “treat[ed] more as consumers in full bloom than as developing citizens,” as Len Findlay argues in “‘Speaking Truth to Power?’: American Usage, Canadian Literary Studies, and Policies for the Public Good in Canada” (298). Findlay’s pointed observation clearly exposes the danger of such ideological impositions: the potential embodied in Canada’s future citizens is foreclosed. Exposed here is liberalism’s destructive purge of the responsibility that history demands of successive generations of social beings.⁷ In liberal democracy’s dark vision of history the social conscience is expunged of the past, and the future is still-born.

Accountability is one of a constellation of key conceptual tags promiscuously circulated in education debates. The term ‘service,’ as commonly used today, deceitfully implies accountability to a public constituency. Polster and Newson note the increasing dominance of a “common conception of accountability and its achievement

⁷ Walter Benjamin effectively conveys a sense of the kind of responsibility that history demands of succeeding generations of social beings: “There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply” (Benjamin; 254). This sense of responsibility demanded by history is daily expunged from the social conscience by liberal discourse. At the same time, Benjamin also alerts us to the dangers that a vision of “redeemer ... future generations” (260) has for sapping revolutionary energy here and now. This is the danger that, for Benjamin in his day, Social Democracy represented, a danger that sadly much social democratic policy continues to offer today.

through performance indicators” (173). And, of course, performance indicators are one of the strategies of accommodation that universities are forced to adopt in the face of massive underfunding by governments. Systematic analysis indicates a growing managerialism and corporatism in national universities around the world harnessed to the “broader project ... [of] developing a *globalized knowledge industry*” (174). The primary reason that Polster and Newson advocate an engagement with the conceptual as opposed to the mere technical “measurement protocols of performance indicators” is precisely because of the ways the conceptual nature of these protocols “intrinsically re-order the social relations of academic work” (175).

For example, analysis in Britain and Canada shows that performance indicators “contribute to the centralization of management” (176). At the same time “performance indicators provide ‘the basis to structure decisions about programme, work priorities, and allocation *outside the settings* ... in which the work is actually conducted” (176). This, of course, is the true reality of interdisciplinarity in the market driven university. The ostensible purpose of interdisciplinarity is to render artificial boundaries between inside and outside permeable to more supple and dynamic intellectual inquiry—both inside the university and in its relationships with the world outside. In reality the weakening of departmental autonomy within the walls is part of a “constellation of changes” that restructure and reassert hierarchical relations between inside and outside in order to comply with economic imperatives: “performance indicators ... base local level decision making on comparisons with other institutions and ... shift control upward and outward, by making it possible to decide on and control priorities and activities from ‘the outside’” (177). Similar findings in both Britain and Canada demonstrate that the use of performance indicators transforms and reasserts hierarchical structures not only between universities, but also within university walls, between research faculty and teaching faculty:

Less than ten years after Maurice Kogan (1986) declared that “highly managerial systems of accountability” are “alien” to the British (school) system ... Maureen McNeil (1995) reports that performance assessment systems have become almost a routine feature of decision making in British higher education ... McNeil describes effects within British institutions similar to those that Cassin and Morgan (1992) report in Canada: the invention of an accounting system for rating faculty members’ and academic units’ publication productivity, the favoring of research that attracts funding, competition within institutions and among institutions for “high producers” of fundable research, increasing teaching loads of less “productive” faculty members to allow the “more productive” to concentrate on research, and an associated deterioration of the conditions of teaching. (177)

A progression from a deterioration in the conditions of teaching to a deterioration in the quality of teaching itself may be difficult to determine after all (certainly beyond the power of performance indicators); however, the false separation of what ought to be mutually reinforcing activities for individual faculty—teaching and research—has to produce a deficit in teaching quality.

Polster and Newson note that the loss of autonomy of both individual faculty and the university is related to the growing sense that knowledge production is “increasingly central to economic development and political reorganization” (181). There is a growing sense of the importance of “knowledge workers in achieving industrial and national competitiveness in the context of globalisation” (181). However, “effective regulation” of knowledge production presents challenges: knowledge is “difficult to ‘trap’ so that it can be” appropriated to the uses of those with a “proprietary stake in it” (181); and “while knowledge already developed can be separated from the producer, the ability to produce it cannot” (181). This fact presents both opportunity and danger for knowledge workers. On the one hand, performance indicators offer a solution to these challenges, and a method for “maintain[ing] the involvement and commitment” of knowledge workers in order to ensure that they are “psychologically and materially preoccupied with institutional requirements rather than with their own interests and projects” (182). For example, Polson and Newson note the “significant

change in ... working conditions of researchers, engineers, and technicians ... at the National Research Council (NRC) of Canada” (182). Changes, such as the implementation of time sheets and “strategic assessments” (“Biologists, for example, were subjected to eleven strategic assessments in a single year”), are consciously designed to “transform ... NRC scientists from being oriented toward a traditional conception of pure and basic research to a more market-oriented conception” (182).

Polster and Newson suggest that, while certain trends are visible here and now, determining exactly how policies and trends will eventually unfold can only be guessed at. There are important reasons for this. For example, the simple fact that increasing emphasis is now focused on the importance of knowledge production, and where that work takes place, presents considerable opportunity for resisting current pressure to transform universities in ways that serve very narrow interests. In other words, the more emphasis that is placed on the importance of intellectual labour the more systemic contradictions and systemic exclusions are exposed, and this too represents an opportunity. For the time being, the results of Slaughter’s research into the global restructuring of postsecondary education in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States amply demonstrates what direction current policies and tendencies favour at present, and how they will continue to unfold in the absence of any kind of meaningful resistance:

[A]ll four countries instituted policies that encouraged commercial research and development and business/vocational curricula, emphasizing the value of higher education to national economic activity and displaying a preference for market and market-like activity on the part of faculty and institutions. With regard to access, higher education policies encouraged greater student enrolment, but at a lower national cost. Rather than financing students, all countries raised tuition fees and switched from heavy reliance on grants to greater use of loans. In terms of curricula, national policies exhibited a strong preference for departments and colleges with relevance to the market. The four countries moved away from basic research toward applied or entrepreneurial research. All began integrating higher education into broad government planning processes, processes that focus primarily on economic development. In short, national policies in all four countries moved decisively toward academic

capitalism, which refers to the movement by universities toward the market to secure external funds. This shift is most noticeably seen in large research universities that have developed commercial arms and links with industries to exploit intellectual capital to generate funds for universities. (46)

Hierarchical structures within universities and between universities, and access increasingly determined by class, clearly represent some of the unfolding tendencies in education policy (there are the usual attempts to disguise the negative consequences of disparity caused by economic imperatives by way of philanthropic gestures; however, these resemble what geology, seeking to explain the imbalance between recurrent catastrophe and the status quo, calls punctuated equilibrium. That is to say, they are functional to the system). Any extrapolating from such general tendencies would also have to take into account resistance from those who are excluded from the dominant agenda by the processes and policies of an “inescapably homogenizing” globalisation.

And, in fact, one reason that Polster and Newson emphasise the indeterminacy of current trends is precisely in the interest of reasserting the underestimated capacity that the local and social has to redirect the energies of unfolding globalisation. There is every indication that “the development of a globalized knowledge industry that will be regulated through international employment standards and accrediting bodies, trade agreements containing intellectual property rights clauses, supranational higher education councils, and the like” (183) is being harnessed to the narrow imperatives of the market at a rapid pace. However, as the authors point out, the process remains open to “new opportunities for teaching and research innovation” (183). The simple fact that knowledge production is perceived to be “central ... to economic competitiveness [and that] ... knowledge has acquired increasing economic and political value” (181) represents a tremendous opportunity for knowledge workers. However, there is ambivalence here too:

Although mutually reinforcing ... managerialism and corporatism reference potentially conflicting and contradictory social projects ... For one thing, regulation through institutional and political administration [managerialism] ... is not necessarily in the interest of those who would benefit from regulation through the market. So ... university administrators may have an interest in controlling the research activities of the faculty to ensure that the financial benefits of university-corporate collaborations fall to the university while, on the other hand, the “entrepreneurial spirit” being encouraged in the faculty of universities may lead faculty members to want to pursue corporate linkages independent of institutional interference. (184)

Quite clearly then the opportunity that arises out of the perceived importance of knowledge production to an unfolding global political and economic order is contingent on where knowledge producers perceive their own interests to lie. As the Polster and Newson study demonstrates, the ability to make choices arises out of the new opportunities that current change produces; however, meaningful alternatives might become increasingly more difficult to bring into play the more new global structures are allowed to assert their dominance unchallenged. Meaningful alternatives are increasingly less likely as institutional and bureaucratic structures become consolidated globally, and, this global consolidation is strengthened through the conceptual frameworks that are designed to reinforce such structures. This underscores the danger that a simple strategy of accommodation to these imposed changes, accommodation on the part of universities and their individual faculty complements, may prove disastrous.

That there is this openness and opportunity arises out of the fact that the ultimate effects of globalisation remain to be seen. Of greatest consequence, to predict “that any particular ‘effect’ will necessarily come to pass” is directly contingent, as Polster and Newson argue, on social reality: “In order for these possibilities to appear ‘in the material world,’ ... they must be taken up by social agents” (184). And, of course, it is here in this sense that Polster and Newson locate the greatest opportunity

for knowledge workers to redirect the energies of global change back to the uses of the local and the social:

We believe that strategies to mitigate [sic] against the dangers of performance indicators must be located in the social foundations of performance indicators rather than in their technical foundations, because their potential for reordering the social relations of academic work is contained in social rather than in technical processes. We have pointed to a number of contradictions and conflicts in these social relations as the reordering process unfolds. Effective strategies will be those that can successfully exploit these conflicts and contradictions as points of intervention, to disrupt the reordering processes or to alter them in ways that will remove or minimize the dangers. (186)

Clearly the way in which globalisation unfolds depends on many things; nevertheless, as Polster and Newson argue, how it unfolds in an academic context depends in large part on whether the responses of knowledge workers to structural change is substantially resistant and activist, or whether academics passively accommodate externally imposed change destructively conceived as inevitable.

In terms of a general strategy for resisting the privatisation of globalisation, Newson argues we must “help to recover, rather than annihilate, locality, regionality, and the nation as meaningful and effective sites of social, cultural, political, and economic inventiveness in the face of globalization” (304). This contrasts dramatically with the passivity of Bill Readings’ postmodernist strategy of “dwelling in the ruins” of the (idea of the) university in the face of what he takes completely for granted as the “evacuation of the nation-state as cultural form” (172): “To inhabit the ruins of the university must be to practice an institutional pragmatism that recognizes this threat [Freud’s “traumatic return of repressed memory”] rather than seeks to redeem epistemological uncertainty by recourse to the plenitude of aesthetic sensation.... What I mean by dwelling in the ruins is not despair or cynicism, it is simply the abandonment of the religious attitude towards political action” (184).

However, the problem with simply dwelling in the ruins is that “academic capitalism” is threatening to raze those ruins to their foundations in favour of

conference centres and industrial parks (the notion of “centres of excellence” Readings so effectively exposes as conceptually empty), and an education system completely reconstructed in the image of the market. Capitalism to date has in general demonstrated very little or no interest in conservation (in the energy sector, for example, in the context of environmental degradation threatening catastrophe, George Bush Jr’s response to the most recent, newly minted “energy crisis” is not conservation, but increased supply.) Even taking Readings’ qualifier ‘religious attitude[s]’ into account as just that, a qualifier, there is something far less activist in his “institutional pragmatism”—not simply a matter of tone—than Newson’s pragmatic activism and her call to “recover” the local, the national, the cultural, the social: “rather than simply representing national, regional, and local diversity as that which is being reconstructed by globalization, globalization is highlighted as a process that is and can be contoured by national, regional, and local variations” (305). Again, Readings takes the dereferentialization of culture (173) and the demise of the nation-state for granted—and he takes for granted the futility of their recovery, or conservation.

The architectural metaphor, and all its various tales of reconstruction, suggests several paths the university might take in response to its new role in the emerging world order: completely new structure, just letting the ruined edifice crumble as though eroded by natural forces, or strategic conservation. Newson’s proposed strategy of resisting global hegemony by persistently critiquing its conceptual formations is, nevertheless, pragmatically connected to the material. She cites critics who

... eschew abstract constructions of globalization that reinforce its inescapably homogenizing effects, and they focus instead on the experiences of concrete, historically based societies and institutions. The detailed examinations of how specific societies and local institutions are responding to and interacting with this change process not only contribute to intellectual understandings of the phenomena, but also provide strategically valuable information. For example, without ignoring or underestimating the broad sweep of globalization, these studies show how the processes of change in which “real” societies and institutions are engaged are contingent, unfolding, and indeterminate, and thus

open up renewed possibilities for world-building. They show how globalization can take various forms and can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and they expose points at which crucial choices are being made where political pressure can be applied and alternatives pursued. (305)

This emphasis on the conceptual, diversity, openness, and indeterminacy—the contingent is comprised of these every bit as much as of stone and brick—is an important one. Readings' suggestion that we live in the ruins of a university in transition makes sense only as far as it goes. In other words, the "broad sweep of globalization" cannot be underestimated. On the other hand globalisation is not a natural force; it is a social process. Therefore, abandoning a "religious" attitude to political action is in fact good advice; on the other hand, abandoning political action in the face of the "inevitable" will be disastrous for more than just universities.

For a more specific example of an area becoming increasingly crucial to universities in which intellectual workers can proactively engage and transform the energies of globalisation, Newson cites Polster's work in the area of patents and intellectual property rights:

Polster's (1997a) work ... offers strategies for intervening in the political arena in which these [intellectual property] regimes are being shaped. She proposes that universities reverse the dual trend toward, on the one hand, increasing their reliance on corporations as the purchasers of research activities and teaching programs and, on the other competing with private sector knowledge providers by commercialising their own activities. Instead, she proposes two related strategies—community economic development (CED) and the "science shop" concept—to accomplish a double purpose. First and most important, these strategies would enable universities locally and on a national and international level to ally themselves with an increasing number of concerned groups and organizations (including nongovernmental organizations [NGOs] to preserve the "knowledge commons" in the face of increasing pressures toward the ownership of the world's knowledge resources by commercially motivated private sector corporations. Second, these strategies would enable locally based universities to become genuinely engaged in "serving" the broader needs of society at large. (307-8)

In terms of the power that the conceptual, in language form, has to shape the social, Newson concludes with two words much used in debates around tertiary education and elsewhere—accountability and empowerment—that "globalization discourse" deploys

to “legitimate sweeping changes to social practices, social institutions, and whole societies in order to support the form of globalism that the discourse advances” (309). Compelling universities to become more accountable is more than a little “disingenuous” in a context in which manifestly “*unaccountable bodies*,” such as the WTO, IMF etc., gather to themselves political powers that “supersede those of elected governments” (309). The beneficiaries of this massive privatisation of democratic process are not workers who are in fact *disempowered* by corporate restructuring, “whose jobs are restructured out of existence by managers guided by strategic plans” (308). Nor does the term ‘empowerment’ fairly describe “whole communities whose economies are swept away by multinational corporations that absorb local industries and small businesses into their latest mergers” (308-9).

In fact, as Newson argues, the university is accountable, but accountable to much more than the narrow market imperatives being imposed on it from outside. But then, the inside/outside dichotomy is marked by contradiction and instability after all. For example, the reality behind North American claims to deregulate protectionist borders in the interest of free-trade is false when those borders are at the same time commensurately re-regulated to disproportionately restrict the free movement of selected kinds of people across those same borders. These borders, of course, function metonymically in terms of similar effects in all social spheres subject to the law of the market. It is, in part, this contradiction that Newson captures in her claim that universities must be accountable. Fair and equitable access to the benefits of the knowledge that should flow symbiotically both ways between inside and outside is compromised when postsecondary education is restricted and limited to a supply-side economic model “directed toward [what is euphemistically called] national ‘wealth creation,’ and away from its traditional concern with the liberal education of undergraduates” (Slaughter; 56). Every day universities are challenged to be

“accountable”; however, this narrow, intellectually inhibiting conception of national wealth—impoverished in fact—is what is meant when the charge is made. As Newson argues, knowledge workers can no longer hide behind pretensions to intellectual detachment. Precisely because knowledge production is perceived to be crucial to emerging global structures, intellectual workers need to be prepared to act on the knowledge that they are accountable to far more than an economic regime:

... as the knowledge produced in university laboratories and research units becomes the tool for economic, ecological, and human resource exploitation on a global scale, the university is pressed to examine its conscience and to take a position on the uses to which this knowledge is being put. Given the challenges currently facing the world, it is unconscionable for the university to function as the community of “objective” intellectuals and to claim neutrality when biotechnology successes that are developed in university labs are put to work for agribusinesses and multinational pharmaceutical companies, forcing small farmers out of business and peasant villages into starvation. The university-in-the-midst-of-globalization is in a unique position to be an outspoken advocate for revitalizing democracy and for pursuing social justice in the face of changes that threaten both. (310)

Again, Polster and Newson argue for the importance of engaging with “a *conceptual*, as opposed to technical, examination of performance indicators ... [in order to] display the potential weaknesses, if not dangers, of accommodation strategies and argue for strategies that address the political and economic relations that have promoted and are promoted by a performance-based *conception* of accountability” (emphasis added; 174).

This excursion into the specific details of the university in transformation demonstrates how a liberal-empiricist epistemology plays itself out in the conceptual reconstruction of the university in the image of the market by way of a battery of key conceptual operators that encode distinctions whose purpose is to maximise disparity and reinforce privileged access. What follows further elaborates Althusser’s reading of Marx, and the importance of the conceptual—and an expanded conception of the textuality of value—to an activist epistemology. Without representing it as a tidy,

seamless evolutionary historical progression from something imperfect to something respectable at last, the specifics of the university in transformation serves as a bridge in my argument between structuralist-Marxism and Spivak's deconstructive-Marxism.

3. The Value Controversy Continued: Building Political Action Into the Conceptual Frame

As Elson plausibly argues, “Althusser’s ‘structural causality’ ... puts the independent variables one stage back, behind the ‘structure’” (131).⁸ Elson attempts to recapture the potential for political agency from this remote causality, and the determinism of the Althusserian system; however, as noted earlier, Elson and Althusser are not as much at odds when it comes to the problem of political engagement as Elson believes. Elson distances her approach from structuralist-Marxism by substituting an organicist conception of determination in place of Althusser’s structure in dominance. At the same time, Elson articulates an analytical practice—and makes a claim for its political efficacy—that is not that far removed from the conceptual deconstructions, and the strategically expanded sphere of textuality as practiced by Althusser and Marx. What follows also continues Elson’s critical engagement with the post-Sraffian, neo-Ricardian rejection of the value-form as a useful critical tool.

Elson argues, “Marx’s concept of the mode of production in the *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is not one of independent variables determining dependent variables.... There is a tendency to misread value as ‘exchange-value’ or ‘price’, and to mistake this for a statement of a relation between a dependent and an independent variable—a labour theory of value, in short” (132). In *Capital* “labour-time, value, and exchange-value (price) are not three discretely distinct variables, nor are they identical with one another”(135). The problem of relations

⁸ Spivak delineates the region of calculated ambiguity that Althusser conceptualises, and why: “Yet ... the empirical subject, the intending subject, the self even, must be constantly assumed in radical calculations. Thus in ... ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ ... Althusser must inhabit that unavoidable middle ground [between the “sub-individual” at one end and the “great aggregative apparatuses” at the other], and assume a subject even as he uses ‘a more scientific language’ to describe abstract average labor or labor-power (*CPR*; 253).

among them is in part one of measurement. This problem is, in part, even more complex when *concrete labour* is only *qualitatively* different, and yet, at the same time, “labour ... materialised in the exchange value of commodities and measured in time units” must not be confused with “the direct physical activity of individuals” (Marx in Elson 138-9). Furthermore, what then is the nature of the relationship between these variables (aspects) when the “social necessity of labour in a capitalist economy cannot be determined independent of the price-form: hence values cannot be calculated or observed independently of prices” (136)? If values cannot be measured or observed independently of price, then the question arises: “what are we to make of Marx’s repeated statements that labour-time is the measure of value?” (136).

Elson argues, “in *Capital* Marx does not highlight the conceptual distinction which he makes between an ‘immanent’ or ‘intrinsic’ measure, and an ‘external’ measure, which is the mode of appearance of the ‘immanent’ measure”; this distinction is, however, “implicit” (Elson; 137). In the passage in question Marx argues,

Money as the measure of value is the necessary form of appearance of the measure of value which is immanent in commodities, namely labour-time. (*Capital* 1.188)

For Elson, Marx means that while labour time is the measure of value, “the value of a commodity is measurable as *pure quantity* because it is an objectification of *abstract labour*” (emphasis added; 138). But then again, diverse *concrete* labours are only *qualitatively* different. Moreover, as Elson points out, “we cannot, in the actual labour-time we can observe, separate the abstract from the concrete aspect” (138).

Consequently, “the argument that labour-time is the (immanent) measure of value entails that labour-time *cannot* be the medium of measurement” (138). The only way it can be, Elson argues, is if one arbitrarily assumes that “there is no qualitative difference between different kinds of labour, an assumption Marx precisely refuses to make with his insistence on the importance of the form of labour” (138).

Of course, it is “*money*, and not labour-time, which functions as the social standard of measurement, in Marx’s *Capital*, as in capitalist society itself” (138). On the other hand, as has been discussed in another context earlier in this dissertation, “money in itself does not make the products of labour commensurable. They are only commensurable insofar as they are objectifications of the abstract aspect of labour” (138). Marx’s labour-time magnitudes do not refer to “directly observable labour-time magnitudes”; rather his equations, according to Elson, “are always couched in money terms, *never* in terms of hours of labour-time” (139). This is because Marx is most interested in exposing the “intrinsic character, or substance, of the directly observable money magnitudes” (139). That is, Marx’s purpose goes beyond the simple calculation of values and prices: “The reason why Marx does not simply work at the level of money is that he wants to uncover social relations, such as the rate of surplus-value, which do not directly appear in money form” (139). In this way the Marxist theory of value also exposes the contradictions—falsely identified as a logical inconsistency, the so-called transformation problem—produced as a consequence of the fact that “the relative autonomy of the sphere of circulation necessarily expresses itself as the relative autonomy of price magnitudes from value magnitudes” (Shaikh 286).

While these claims are not uncontested, as the debate between neoRicardians and their opponents such as Shaikh demonstrates, Elson’s argument at this point is a relatively standard interpretation of the dynamics of the value-form. However, Elson proceeds to shift emphasis in a direction that distinguishes her argument from the more economistic arguments of the critics discussed earlier in the context of the neoRicardian debates. Elson argues that, on the one hand, “in a capitalist economy (labour)-time becomes money in a more than purely metaphorical sense” (139). Furthermore,

Labour-time and money are not posed as discretely distinct variables which have to be brought into correspondence. Rather the relation between them is posed as one of both continuity and difference. (139)

Reading *Capital*, Spivak exploits the deconstructive potentials of Marx's own discussions of the "double, *differentiated* existence [of the commodity that] must develop into a *difference*" with several important implications, not least of which are implications for institutionalised intellectual labour and education (*Spivak Reader*, 115).

Elson continues by arguing that, while (labour)-time becomes money in a more than purely metaphorical sense, nevertheless,

... the metaphors used to characterise this relation are not mechanical ('articulation'), nor mathematical/logical ('correspondence', 'approximation') but chemical and biological terms ('crystallisation', 'incarnation', 'embodiment', 'metabolism', 'metamorphosis'). The idea they carry is that of 'change of form'. (139)

Of course it is mechanical metaphors that Althusser refers to in his conclusion to *Reading Capital* ("the capitalist system as a mechanism, a machinery, a machine, a construction"). But then again, the "machinery in its effects," in Althusser's Stoic-deconstruction, is "governed" by the "symptomatic" concept-metaphor *Darstellung*, the "stage direction of the theatre ... whose spectators can, on occasion, be spectators only because they are first of all forced to be its actors, caught by the constraints of a script and parts whose authors they cannot be, since it is in essence *an authorless theatre*" (193). Clearly targeting Althusser, Elson rejects the "mathematico-logical method of specifying independent and dependent variables, and their relation" (141). This method "can only identify static structures, and is forced to pose a qualitative change as a sudden discontinuity, a quantum leap between structures" (141)—and of course central to Althusser's thesis is that Marx's method represents an "epistemological *rupture* with classical economics" (149).

Instead Elson emphasises a method of analysis, historical materialism, that more appropriately accounts for "change of form" as "a process, a qualitatively

changing continuum ... 'a different kind of logic, appropriate to phenomena which are always in movement'" (141). (Elson presents the example of Robinson Crusoe of which Marx says, "Crusoe contains 'all the essential determinants of value' ... but [Elson notes] he quite clearly does not mean that Robinson Crusoe's labour is objectified as value" 142.) The question of determination is decisive for the possibility of political action. Critics of the relevance of the value form such as Steedman and Cutler *et al*, according to Elson, "take for granted that any theory requires separable determining factors, discretely distinct from what they are supposed to determine" (131). Althusser, defending value, "does not break with that view [his structural causality] ... merely puts the independent variables one stage back, behind the 'structure'" (131). Not surprisingly then, in refuting these critics of value (Steedman, Cutler, and neoRicardians before them), "determinants are not independent variables, but are simply aspects, one-sided abstractions singled out as a way of analysing the form" (142).

Marx argues, "[w]hat exclusively determines the magnitude of value of any article is therefore the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production" (C. 318; Elson 132). However, as Elson argues, it is wrong to conclude from this that value is the same as exchange value, or the same as price, and it is "not the *same* as a quantity of socially necessary labour-time" (132). To repeat, Marx argues the determining moments in capitalist exchange are not "identical but ... they are members of a totality, *differences within a unity*" (emphasis added; 383). In terms of these differences, "value is not the *same* as a quantity of socially necessary labour-time: it is an objectification or materialisation of a certain aspect of that labour-time, its aspect of being simply an expenditure of human labour power in general, i.e. *abstract labour*" (Elson; emphasis added; 132). In terms of its other aspect, concrete labour, Marx writes "[n]ot an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of

commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects” (132). As Elson points out, “[c]onsidered simply as physical objects, commodities are objectifications of concrete labour not abstract labour” (133). Elson notes the “peculiarity” of Marx’s conception of the objectification of abstract labour and uses Marx’s passage on “phantomlike objectivity” to convey her more organic conception of how it is that the different “aspects” of the value form are determined, or are determining, in Marx. Reproduced here first is the passage from *Capital*:

“Let us look at the residue of the products of labour. There is nothing left of them in each case but the same phantomlike objectivity; they are merely congealed quantities of homogeneous human labour.... All these things now tell us is that human labour-power has been expended to produce them, human labour is accumulated in them. As crystals of this social substance, which is common to them all, they are values—commodity values.” (*Capital* 1.1. 128; Elson; 133)

From this Elson argues,

We should note the chemical metaphors—‘congealed’, ‘crystals’—which occur repeatedly in Chapter 1, Vol.I. For they indicate something of the character of Marx’s concept of determination. The quantity of socially necessary labour-time does not determine the magnitude of value in the logical or mathematical sense of an independent variable determining a dependent variable, (or in the sense of defining the meaning of the term ‘magnitude of value’), but in the sense that the quantity of a chemical substance in its fluid form determines the magnitude of its crystalline or jellied form. There is a continuity as well as a difference between what determines and what is determined. (133)

While (labour)-time may become money in a more than purely metaphorical sense, it is the flux of chemical process—as metaphorical analogy—that accounts for the transformations and determinations of the value form. This presents certain problems. For one, it “does not pose determinants completely independent of what is determined” (139). However, this neither means that Marx’s theory of value is incoherent, nor that it is circular (139). Seeking an explanation for the “‘origins’ of phenomena in factors

external to them” is necessary for economic or sociological models (139).⁹ However, according to Elson, this “*was not Marx’s project*”; rather, Marx “saw the determination of social forms as an historical process; a process eventuating through time in which every precipitated form becomes in turn dissolved, changes into a new form, a process whose dynamic is internal to it, which has no external ‘cause’” (139–40). It is important to Elson’s argument for the activist potentials of the value form that the determination of social forms are not located outside of the process. Nevertheless, how it is that “forms are crystallised and might re-dissolve” remains a problem needing explanation (141).

Working this through requires an understanding of what Marx means exactly when he says that the substance of value is objectified abstract labour. That is, if commodities are made equivalent to one another through exchange—“a common element of identical magnitude exists in two different things”—what is this “common element,” and what then is the nature of this equivalence? Marx’s analysis begins with the commodity and proceeds from there to “exchange value to value and its substance” (151). The charge of logical inconsistency from critics of the value form, the transformation problem, stems from this progression, the problem of equivalence, and the question of what it is that drives its moments (151).

The problem of equivalence raises a question: as what do commodities become exchangeable? Neo-classical economists explain the exchange process “in terms of commodity owners commensurating different commodities in terms of the satisfaction they bring,” that is “commodities become equivalents as yielders of utility” (155).

⁹ For example, “modern economics, whether the Sraffian or neo-classical variety, prefers to side-step this question [in what relation do commodities stand in the social process that enables one commodity to become the universal equivalent] by not treating the formation of exchange-values as a social process at all. It assumes exchangeability and focuses almost exclusively on the question of consistency. The central question it asks is whether a set of exchange-values (prices) can be deduced from given premises which will be consistent with some criterion set by the economist.” However, this proving equilibrium in exchange, “refer[s] ... to the formal solution of an arithmomorphic model, not to the real world process of exchange” (155).

Confronting this critique, Elson directs us to Marx's rejection of "the reducibility of wants to a common want" (155). Therefore, the equivalence of commodities cannot be explained in terms of basic, subjective need, or use-value. (Elson points out, "Marx argued that it is in terms of *difference* that use-value is important, not in terms of *equivalence* (155)). Consequently, Marx "argued that a *purely* subjective approach to the exchange process could not capture certain crucial features of it" (155). On the other hand, Marx clearly acknowledges, "the process of exchange is composed of individual, subjective acts": "Commodities cannot themselves go to market" (*Capital*.I.178). This "crucial ambivalence" captures "*both* the subjective, individual and the social, general aspects of the process": while it requires individual subjective agency to bring commodities into exchange, nevertheless exchange "magnitudes vary ... independently of the will, foreknowledge and actions of the exchangers" (Elson 156). This productive ambivalence provides the solution to the problem of equivalence and why the common element is value:

It is ... for this reason that he treats the equivalence of commodities ... as a *substantial* equivalence. That is, Marx does not treat this equivalence as a matter of some common characteristic in terms of which commodities are commensurated by their owners; but in terms of a unifying 'common element' or 'substance' which the commodities themselves embody, and which is designated by the separate category 'value'. The equivalence of commodities is explained in terms of the nature of this substance, not in terms of subjective commensuration by commodity owners. (157)

As well, this ambivalence is crucial for Elson's conception of political agency. Inserting her text between the lines of Marx's own discussion of 'substance' by analogy to chemical process, Elson argues,

Marx poses commodities as substantially equivalent in the same way that in natural science, light, heat and mechanical motion are posed as substantially equivalent, as forms which are interchangeable as embodiments of a common substance, which is self-activating ... Similarly different chemicals are posed as substantially equivalent as forms of self-activating matter. Only with such a concept is a materialist account of the process of transformation and conservation of energy and matter possible, an account ... proceeding with a dynamic internal to it, and requiring no extra-natural 'cause' (158)

This concept of equivalence is materialist and not idealist: “‘substance’ [is] understood in materialist terms—as an abstraction with a practical reality,” and because, as with energy and matter, this self-activating process is “not posed teleologically” (158). Elson places no emphasis on a historical movement toward a utopian future. In concert with a general trend characteristic of socialist thought in the latter part of the twentieth century, her emphasis is on resistance engaged from within the body of capital (capitalism is “simply too strong and dynamic a system” to accommodate revolution here and now, Canadian Leo Panich recently remarked on CBC Ideas). So rather than a “relation between a dependent and an independent variable ... we should understand it in terms of the way in which the inner character of some form regulates its representation at the level of appearance, its reflection” (167). Again, in Elson’s organic interpretation, transformation and determination of the moments within the value form function analogously to chemical processes, “[t]hus the molecular structure of a chemical substance regulates the representation of the substance in the form of a crystal, and the cell-structure of a living organism regulates the form of the organism’s body” (167).

Most important to Elson is the question of agency. Targeting both structuralist-Marxism and political economy, she argues, “Marx implicitly rejects the procedure of treating the process of capitalist exchange ‘as if’ agency could stem from some non-human source, a ‘structure’ or an ‘invisible hand’” (159). While the “form” of an organic metaphor taken from natural science captures the dynamics of a process, the “content of the relation must be posed in terms that capture its human essence” (159). As Elson argues, “the substance of value must be the human self-activity, the human energy, embodied in the commodities” as

“products of social activity, the result of expended human energy, *materialised labour*. As objectification of social labour, all commodities are crystallisations of the same substance” (Marx in Elson; 159)

There is, however, more to the metaphor than the simple conceptualisation—as mere analogy—of a process and the dynamics of its transformations. Of course, the form, “posed in terms that capture its naturalistic appearance,” and content, “posed in terms that capture its human essence,” are imbricated with, and partake of, the same critical ambivalence as do the “concept-metaphors” use-value and exchange-value. In fact, Marx identifies the exchange relation between two commodity owners as a “juridical relation ... whose form is the contract” (178). The content of this exchange relation is not determined by “eternal ideas” of justice, or nature; rather its content is “determined by the economic relation” (178).

Spivak identifies this productive ambivalence as the textuality of value. Coded into the critical antecedents of Spivak’s term “concept-metaphor,” is Marx’s (by way of Althusser) articulation of the inherent instability of subject and object, and the role that the conceptual plays in mediating that instability. While the term captures the fundamental role that language plays in appropriating the real, at the same time, encoded within it, is the suggestion that language also plays a more significant role in influencing the human real in turn. Althusser certainly seems to qualify this: “the process of production of a knowledge necessarily proceeds by the constant transformation of its (*conceptual*) object; ... that it produces a *new* knowledge ... which *still concerns the real object* ... [Nevertheless] as Marx says ... the *real object* ... *remains what it is*” (emphasis added; 156). One hesitates to cite Bill Clinton here; however, the degree to which Althusser’s (Marx’s) formulation is qualified, as well as the causal relation between the real, the conceptual, and the conceptual object (“a new object of knowledge”) ultimately depends on what the definition of “is” is. This represents then a productive indeterminacy, but finally, after all, “the thinking brain

assimilates the world to itself in the only way possible to it" ("Grundrisse"; 386). "The real subject continues to exist independently outside the mind ... [and] even in theoretical method the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as a presupposition" (386). We can situate Althusser's (Marx's) expression of this existential-epistemological indeterminacy—knowledge "transform[s] its (*conceptual*) object"—into a context where we find that the social is to a large extent artificial, is "constructed." In this context, while the "real subject" can only exist as a universal abstraction—as a "presupposition"—the social in all its constructed and diverse particularity is, on the other hand, mediated and altered by the conceptual. This dissertation assumes then Althusser's more robust argument for the primarily "linguistic ... structure of the unconscious" (Bottomore *et al*; 402); at the same time this paper acknowledges Spivak's warning of the "control implicit in linguistic or semiotic reductionism" (SR; 118).

Elson argues that Marx "builds into" his analysis the "possibility of taking political action" (173). However, while socialists take political action for granted, "this possibility has all too often not been *built into the concepts* with which socialists have analysed the process of exploitation. Instead exploitation has been analysed as a closed system, and political action against it—class struggle—has been introduced, to impinge upon this system, from the outside" (emphasis added; 173). In other words, Elson makes a distinction between an analysis that merely "indicates *potential* space for political action," and one in which political action is built into the concepts of analysis (emphasis added; 173). It is curious, considering the emphasis that both Elson and Althusser place on the conceptual, and that both place on the necessity that activism is built into analytical language, that she targets Althusser as the main culprit on this point. It seems as though Elson is concentrating on structuralism itself as *the* target of her critique; and, as she responds to the wave of continental poststructuralist

philosophy making itself felt in Britain and America at this time, she locates such poststructuralist strategies in Marx and discounts similar strategies in Althusser.

Elson locates the space of political action within the frame of “crucial ambivalence” Marx exposes in the value-form itself. According to her, the problem with certain Marxist perspectives (Althusser primarily, but not solely) is that they concentrate their analysis exclusively on one aspect of value: the capitalist “domination of one aspect of labour, abstract labour, objectified as value” (174). This ignores the other aspects of value—use value and exchange value, the products of concrete labour and social labour respectively—and therefore, for perspectives such as Althusser’s, capital appears “to be the dominant subject, and individuals simply bearers of capitalist relations of production” (174). To repeat, for Elson, Marx “argued that a *purely* subjective approach to the exchange process could not capture certain crucial features of it” (155). On the other hand, Marx clearly acknowledges, “the process of exchange is composed of individual, subjective acts” (156). This “crucial ambivalence” then captures “*both* the subjective, individual and the social, general aspects of the process”: while it requires individual subjective agency to bring commodities into exchange, nevertheless exchange “magnitudes vary ... independently of the will, foreknowledge and actions of the exchangers” (*Capital*.I.167). What appears to Sraffians and neoRicardians as a logical inconsistency—the price-value discrepancy—is rather the site of productive ambivalence arising out of the fact that abstract labour is not dominant because it has completely “obliterat[ed]” the other aspects of value; rather, abstract labour is dominant because it “subsum[es]” the other aspects: “that subsumption is understood in terms of the mediation of the other aspects by the abstract aspect, the translation of the other aspects of labour into money form” (Elson174). Sraffian and neoRicardian critics of the value form yearn for a rational,

“arithmomorphic” (Spivak’s term) model—exploitation effaced in the disclosure of a seamless transformation of value into price.

However, as previously argued, the Marxist labour theory of value represents the critical reconstruction of the contradictions that inhabit the real processes of capitalism itself. As noted before, Shaikh locates the source of the price-value discrepancy in the fact that “the relative autonomy of the sphere of circulation necessarily expresses itself as the relative autonomy of price magnitudes from value magnitudes” (286). Contradiction presents the possibility of critique, and the relative autonomy of the different aspects of value opens the space of critique to activist political agency, as Elson argues, within the frame of the “crucial ambivalence” Marx exposes in the value-form:

... Marx’s analysis ... recognizes the *limits* to the tendency to reduce individuals to the bearers of value-forms. It does this by incorporating into the analysis the subjective, conscious, particular aspects of labour in the concepts of private and concrete labour; and the collective aspect of labour in the concept of social labour. The domination of the abstract aspect of labour, in the forms of value, is analysed, not in terms of the obliteration of other aspects of labour, but in terms of the subsumption of these other aspects to the abstract aspect. That subsumption is understood in terms of the mediation of the other aspects by the abstract aspect, the translation of the other aspects of labour into money form. But the subjective, conscious and collective aspects of labour are accorded, in [Marx’s] ... analysis a relative autonomy. In this way the argument of *Capital* ... incorporate[s] a material basis for political action. Subjective, conscious and collective aspects of human activity are accorded recognition. (174)

What is less clear is how the somewhat utopian potential that Elson envisions might actually be realised:

The political problem is to bring together these private, concrete and social aspects of labour without the mediation of the value forms, so as to create particular, conscious collective activity directed against exploitation. Marx’s theory of value has, built into it, this possibility. (174)

Even pre-market hunting and gathering cultures, as highly complex social cultures as any can be, use forms of exchange; so it is difficult to imagine what kind of a social space it would be in which labour is unmediated by the value forms. Would this

represent the collapse of the different aspects of value into a single category? And, if so what would be the form of mediation, or what this single category?

For the purpose of reflecting on the possibility of a utopian social space, what it might resemble, we might keep in mind both Elson's organic, or metabolic, reading of Marx ("the metaphors used to characterise [exchange relations] ... are ... chemical and biological terms ('crystallisation', 'incarnation', 'embodiment', 'metabolism', 'metamorphosis'" 139), and Althusser's related description of Marx's deployment of concept-metaphor ("the capitalist system as a ... 'social metabolism'" (192). Then we can read through this conceptual frame, as described by Spivak, Marx's "attempt ... to break into that pure outside—pre-originary and post-teleological—of pure nature and humanity.... This larger drama between nature and humanity, with pure nature and pure humanity as limits to rational planning at either side, *subsum[ing] the narrative of capital itself as one of its moments*. (CPR; 328; emphasis added). In a classic Marxist sense this openness and potential is implied in the logic of capital itself, in the *subsumption* of Capital itself by the teleological optimism ("pre-originary" and "post-teleological") of Socialism: the "inside of these two outsides ... described in ... *Capital 3* as 'governing the human metabolism with nature in a rational way ... instead of being dominated by it as a blind power'" (Spivak 328). What appears in Elson as a collapse of categories, is revealed here as an extraordinary articulation of the categories of the value form that nevertheless continue to exist in the future anterior, and the always already. If it is not pushing Spivak's Marxist-deconstructive reading too far out of the Marxist provenance, this articulation ("*La Brisure*")¹⁰ between inside and outside is similarly placed by Derrida under erasure: "the outside is the inside" (44).

¹⁰ Derrida strategically deploys the word *brisure* (hinge)—signifying both rupture and articulating joint, "difference and articulation"—to indicate the work of the trace in the dynamic of grammatology, "this writing of difference," such that "the hinge ... marks the impossibility that a sign, the unity of a signifier and a signified, be produced within the plenitude of a present and an absolute presence" (OG; 69).

We might leave this indeterminacy (Elson's conception of the potential of socialism realised) standing as the marker for the human potential, hope and optimism resident in the concepts and logic of the Marxist text. After all, it is capitalism itself that has the vested interest—nevermore necessary than today—in laying claim to the end of history, and a vested interest in the bankrupt claim that all human potential is now and forever fully realized in the “monotony of supply.” Of course human potential is not fully realised now and forever at all; rather, capitalism merely parodies a teleological utopian future in expanding GDPs, the exponentially increasing tempo of “development” spirals, and the unprecedented plundering and waste of the life-sustaining resources of the planet. And this too, capital's teleological thrust into progress¹¹ fully realised, is a parody, as Spivak demonstrates: “in any theoretical formulation, the horizon of full realization must be indefinitely and irreducibly postponed. On that horizon it is not utopia that may be glimpsed.... the practical moment is not a ‘fulfillment’” (SR; 132-3). For radical politics, apparently there can be

Derrida's description of the historical repression (by philosophy) of the trace resonates well here if we think of capitalism as “‘objective’ exteriority.... dreaming its plenitude”: “this trace is the opening of the first exteriority in general, the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other and of an inside to an outside: spacing. The outside, ‘spatial’ and ‘objective’ exteriority which we believe we know as the most familiar thing in the world, as familiarity itself, would not appear without the *grammé*, without *différance* as temporalization, without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present, without the relationship with death as the concrete structure of the living present. Metaphor would be forbidden” (70-1). Of course, without further developing the point, the correlation between Derrida and Marx remains no more than an intriguing homology between two descriptions of the repression of a conceptual category—and we leave that task to Spivak. Nevertheless, an intriguing affinity between Marx and Derrida is disclosed above in Spivak's deconstructive articulation (articulation in this Derridean sense) of capitalism's assumed role (“familiarity itself”) as “‘objective’ exteriority,” and the subsumption of that profoundly troubled exteriority by its repressed other—that is, socialism the presence-absence without which that objective exteriority “would not [could not] appear” (OG; 71). The question remains: what would the shape of a socialist future without capitalism be like? Can a socialist future exist without value?

¹¹ It is revealing that ‘progress’ is a word rarely used today; and it is certainly never used with the naivety that marked its use in the rosy bloom of the post-war period. The full impact of this fact in terms of the psychological health of optimism in the general population can only be guessed at. If we ignore small matters such as the growth of “patriot militias” of the left and right in the U.S., for example, (George W. Bush's top law man, Attorney General John Ashcroft, believes that the Second Amendment protects the right of citizens to overthrow by force of arms the government they loathe and fear; (*Globe and Mail*; Saturday 16 June, 2001), then one might interpret this, just as one might interpret declining voter turnout in all liberal democracies, as more evidence of the success and general well-being of liberal democracy.

no utopian fulfilment, but only a “practical politics of the open end” (n140). Such a formulation might very well compromise the activist potentials of Spivak’s deconstructive Marxism with a little too much emphasis on the “open end,” and not enough on “the practical moment.” This dissertation takes the position that struggle is an end in itself, but that struggle has value only if what is struggled against contains within it the promise of something that escapes the calculus of the inevitable. While human ingenuity proves daily that it can devise ever more sophisticated technological means of exploiting the natural environment, and increasingly sophisticated technologies for avoiding the consequences of that exploitation, mounting evidence suggests that we lack the social technologies necessary to use the tools. It is liberalism that claims that the necessary social technologies are now fully developed.

Elson endorses an expanded utility for the value form, and because labour power is marked by indeterminacy, value is therefore “textual,” as Spivak argues.¹² Elson argues for a reading of Marx that “incorporat[es] into the analysis the subjective, conscious, particular aspects of labour in the concepts of private and concrete labour; and the collective aspect of labour in the concept of social labour.” In this way, Marx “recognises the *limits* to the tendency to reduce individuals to bearers of value-forms” (174)—as does Spivak in her reading of a realm of necessity and a realm of freedom, the pre-originary and post-teleological. The fact that human beings are not “programmed biologically,” means “human labour becomes *indeterminate*” (Elson;

¹² As already noted, Spivak defines textuality in her discussion of social justice, and the “open-endedness” of the chain of value. The super-adequation of labour power (potentially free), and the possibility of social justice, beyond mere philosophical justice, leads to her claim that this “situation of open-endedness [represents] an insertion into textuality” (117). This means textuality in both a “narrow sense, that even ‘theoretical’ texts are produced in language,” as well as in an expanded sense “that ‘reality’ [itself] is a fabrication out of discontinuities and constitutive differences with ‘origins’ and ‘ends’ that are provisional and shifting” (SR; 113n). Indeterminacy is important to both Elson and Spivak, and in a deconstructive paradigm textuality is characterised by indeterminacy. She also cites de Man’s definition of textuality: “we call text any entity that can be considered from ... a double perspective: as a generative, open-ended, non-referential grammatical system and as a figural system closed off by a transcendental signification that subverts the grammatical code to which the text owes its existence” (n139-40).

emphasis added; 128). Therefore, Elson's reading represents an expansion of what can be encompassed by the Marxist critique of the value-form, the expanded utility that Spivak argues for. As Elson argues, "only with industrialisation does the fluidity of labour become immediately *apparent*, because the jobs that individuals do are obviously *not* completely determined by 'tradition', religion, family ties etc." (128). Nevertheless, she also suggests, a "notable exception is the sexual division of labour. The impression that this is determined by 'natural' biological factors is not completely undermined" (n175) by such socially constructed conditions. To repeat, Spivak notes these very limits at work in, this "larger drama between nature and humanity, with pure nature and pure humanity as limits to rational planning at either side, subsum[ing] the narrative of capital itself as one of its moments" (328). While Marx complicates the idealist paradigm, either speculative or empiricist, such that "reality ... can no longer be presented as a *two-level* reality, inside and outside" (Althusser; 191), the move is multivalent, a repeated flexing inside and out of the categories at the conceptual hinge, as Marx, at the same time, "attempt[s] ... to break into that pure outside—pre-originary and post-teleological—of pure nature and humanity" (328). From the above, Spivak gives credit to Elson for recognising the feminist potential of this "expansion of the textuality of value," and this potential is available precisely because the textuality of value can encompass "the dynamics of birth-growth-family-life reproduction" (SR; 119).

This expanded conception of "the 'materialist' predication of the subject as labor power" (119) is characterised by indeterminacy disclosed, as does the fact that "one case of use-value can be that of the worker wishing to consume the (affect of the) work itself" (118). Spivak's insertion of desire—"affectively necessary labor"—into the Marxist formulation of socially necessary labour discloses the indeterminacy of the

textual chain of value, and allows her to argue for this expanded utility.¹³ In her activist language, Spivak opens up the already supple critical tool articulated by Elson's reading of Marx by further demonstrating the textual nature of value, and the analytical utility of an expanded "textual chain of value" (SR; 118). Spivak's own activist criticism (acting up, acting out) achieves this through the deployment of hybridised poststructuralist strategies—and in part by way of a "certain forgotten Althusser" who attempted to "read Marx's text through the straining logic of the metaphors in the Marxian text" (113). Of course, as we have seen, Althusser's *Reading Capital* is concerned with more than merely reading through the metaphor in *Capital*, but is much concerned with demonstrating that Marx in fact does precisely what Elson argues Marxist criticism should do—what Marx's concept-metaphor of the value-form does in fact—and that is to "build [political action] into the analysis" (173), to build political agency into its concepts. Althusser is able to do just that in the practice of analysis and reading.

On the one hand, this dissertation shares Spivak's positioning of Althusser in opposition to "Anglo-United States continuist interests" (112). In the interest of a Canadian decentring of the Anglo-American imperial frame, I would include a complacent academic Marxism generally. More to the point, I emphasise the urgency of retaking lost ground in the propaganda wars. Althusser presents that possibility in a "philosophical practice [theoretical production] as an *intervention* in the theoretical domain" (Althusser in Spivak; n134) with the power to "*directly affect* ... the structure of

¹³ The difference between this and liberalism's "anthropology of needs" can be detected in Spivak's reinflection of Derrida's restricted notion, according to Spivak, of capital as "generally interest-bearing commercial capital. Hence surplus-value for him is the super-adequation of *capital* rather than a 'materialist' predication of the *subject* as superadequate to itself" (119), that is, the "subject defined by its capacity to produce more than itself" (emphasis in original; 112). And of course the materialist predication of the subject, the "definitive ... predication of the subject as labor-power," is necessarily characterised by indeterminacy and "discontinuity" (116-7). The "structural moment" when capital emerges as such, is, therefore, also the revolutionary moment of possibility that "the 'freeing' of labor-power may be a description of the social possibility of this predication" (117).

the object whose future is at stake *in the simple act of naming*" (RC; 146; emphasis added). In the words of Elson, "the possibility of taking political action" is built into Marx's labour theory of value (173). This possibility lies behind Newson and Polster's refusal to engage with the merely technical in favour of redeploying the "concept[ual]" as the best strategy for "display[ing] the potential weaknesses, if not dangers, of accommodation strategies [in order to deploy] ... strategies that address the political and economic relations that have promoted and are promoted by a performance-based conception of accountability [accountability in all its various forms]" (174). It is from here that we move on to consider Spivak's persistent critique of "a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit" (OTM; 284)—in the context of contemporary debates over the relevance of Marxist-poststructuralist hybridity.

4. Value: Economic Determinism or Language Game?

Jack Amariglio and Antonio Callari note an "apparent schism" between practitioners working in two areas of Marxist theoretical enquiry: theorists working with the "theory of value (the economics, if you will) on one side and [theorists of] the nature and role of subjectivity in historical materialism (an antieconomism) on the other" (186). These authors suggest that "many poststructuralist critics, even those influenced by Marxism, have been uninterested in or oblivious to the contours of ... economic theory ... conclud[ing] that Marxist economics has no insights into the question of subjectivity" (187). On the other side are the economic determinists, as Amariglio and Callari refer to them, who "show no ... interest in ... notions of 'decentered' subjects and the like as a substitute for the premise that unfragmented, rational choice is the obvious basis for all economic behaviour" (187). The economic determinist asserts the "primacy of the economy" and subjective consciousness as its "inevitable effect" (189).

A gulf, exacerbated by "traditional academic disciplinary separations," has become apparent between poststructuralist critics and practitioners of a more economically based Marxism. William Pietz goes so far as to suggest that "Poststructuralism has made for real theoretical advances in many areas, but it has not helped us read Marx. Indeed its principal contribution has been a certain semiological reading of Marxian theory that impedes any fruitful engagement with Marx's writing" (119). Pietz claims that the problem with the poststructuralist "revision" of Marx is that it "eliminates from Marxian analysis that materialism which ... is ... its greatest asset as a critical method" (119). This chapter presents a critique of Pietz's claims via Gayatri Spivak's "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value" (and other work); it demonstrates that a rigorous application of poststructuralist methodology to a reading

of Marx (and certainly deconstruction for one is informed by a certain semiotics), far from avoiding materialism or the economic, can be a fruitful engagement that enhances the critical-transformative potentials of both. The chapter explores the Marxist-deconstructive potentials of Spivak's reading of Marx's rearticulations, in *Capital*, of the classical economist's conception of "value."

William Pietz's critique of poststructuralist, "semiological reading[s] of Marxian theory" (119) shares Jameson's suspicion of "a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable" (6). Pietz identifies three poststructuralist, "semiological articulations of the theory of fetishism" (122): Baudrillardian "(122), Derridean post-Marxism (125), and "Lacanian variants" (125). He critiques each in turn for being rhetorical (121), "fascinat[ed] with signs" (123), merely concerned with "semantic indeterminacy" (125), and "pure difference, contingency, and chance" (125). Pietz tends to conflate a "certain semiological reading" with "poststructuralist theory" generally—as well as conflating poststructuralism and postmodernism (125). His examples are drawn from an analysis of Jean Baudrillard, Lacan as articulated through Althusser (Pietz targets what he sees as the determinism of the interpellated subject), and a seriously reductive reading of Derrida reconstituted as "Derridean post-Marx[ism]." Extrapolating from Derrida's *Glas*, Pietz determines that "Derridean post-Marxists would locate the fetish in semantic indeterminacy and the ambivalent oscillation (hence no dialectical resolution) between contrary determinations, a 'space' where codes and their logics break down in a materiality that is conceived in terms of pure difference, contingency, and chance" (125). Pietz repeatedly charges poststructuralism with being capriciously arbitrary: that is, for engaging in mere "aleatory play."

Indeed, Gayatri Spivak, taking a "deconstructivist-feminist-Marxist" position, does say that in taking the lid off the "economic text ... forever on the boil" (*SR*; 110) Marx discovers not a "unitary phenomenon," but a textual chain (Value—Money—Capital) "open" at both ends and "harbor[ing] discontinuities" (113-14). She further argues that Marx in the effort to "open up the seemingly unified phenomenon of Money.... seems to indicate the possibility of an indeterminacy rather than stop at a contradiction" (115). Her invocation of indeterminacy, openness, and discontinuity would appear to cohere with the terms of Pietz's critique. Furthermore, where Spivak suggests that Marx moves beyond mere contradiction, Pietz suggests that semiological post-Marxism, through such concepts, seeks to resolve the "contradiction in Marx's own argument: that between his historical determinism—his theory that the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production's own system must themselves drive it to dissolution—and the subjectivist voluntarism of his appeal to conscious class struggle" (126). In this way he suggests that such a resolution implies not only that poststructuralism ignores the Marxist "appeal" to revolutionary responsibility, but also that at best it represents a return to a puerile Hegelian notion of the dialectic and even forecloses the "need for dialectic" entirely.

For Pietz, in "these semiological readings ... the concept of materiality is ... either replaced altogether by a concept of objectified form, of the pure signifier, or else abstracted on a textualist model as sheer heterogeneity and contingency as the 'outside' of preexisting codes where semantic effects are produced by aleatory play among homologous structures and homophonic forms" (127). Of course, Derrida's strategic use of paronomasia, for example, is never so capricious or facile as this reductive hyperbole would suggest, nor are deconstructive strategies necessarily gratuitously based in arbitrarily chosen correspondences and similitude. As well, it is a crude simplification of the goals of deconstruction to suggest that its strategies simply

seek to "overcome" "all dualities between form and content, sign and referent, exchange value and use value, subject and object, difference and contradiction" (127). Nevertheless it is from this simplification that Pietz is able to lament that the "need for dialectic" is overcome as well (127).

Derrida aside, Spivak's own deconstruction is more interested in transformative political interventions than a simplistic "overcom[ing]" of oppositions, and, contrary to Pietz's critique, is very much interested in the "radical" potentialities of the dialectic methodology that Marx engages in order to open up the "seemingly unified phenomenon of Money" (115). Marx achieves this opening up, and the discovery of potential "indeterminacy," precisely through the "work of the negative ... the articulative driving force of the dialectical morphology" (115). In his inversion of Hegel, the "work of the negative" represents the Hegelian heritage that enables Marx's own dialectical materialism. Rather than seeking to achieve some final event—"all dualities ... 'overcome'"—Spivak engages with Marx's dialectical analysis in order to release the inclusive potentials, or expanded utility, of the institutional and social "coding of value":

... this idea of value-producing/value-coding/code-exchanging as being-human has many areas of operation. To "name" a few: affective value, cognitive value ... "cultural" value. (*OTM* 281)

Rather than a question of plenitude, destination, or an overcoming, for Spivak the "persistent critique of what one must inhabit ... involve[s] an incessant recoding of diversified fields of value" (61); it is rather "a question of developing a vigilance" (63). In a Foucauldian manner the subject is coextensive with "diversified fields of value"; in a deconstructive sense there is no "outside." Spivak notes the importance of value-coding in the work of not only Foucault, but Deleuze and Guattari who "attempted to extend the range of the Marxian argument from value by applying it to the production and appropriation of the value-form in affective and social rather than merely economic coding" (62), and Gayle Rubin's important essay, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the

'Political Economy' of Sex," in the "analysis of gender coding" (63). However, the critical stance of the politically engaged deconstructive-Marxist-feminist critic is that of a "staged intervention, always moving outside" (282) of any structure (institutional, cognitive, political, theoretical etc.). The "outside" is a metaphor for an incessant, unpredictable critique from the margins of "rational" dehumanised and dehumanising structures within which one is inextricably implicated:

Persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit is the deconstructive stance. (284).

Marx conceived of "four forms of value: the simple; the total or expanded; the general; and money" (75). The simple ("heuristic or accidental") takes the form in which a certain quantity of material is equal to a certain quantity of another: "20 yards of linen=one coat" (75). "The 'general,' where all value is economically expressed in terms of one commodity, is on its way to the money form" (75). Marx placed most emphasis on fully developed capital ("traffic in economic value-coding") as his object of analysis. In fact he referred to the total or expanded form as "defective"—that is, defective for the purpose of analysing economic value-coding. While the expanded form of value is defective for purposes of analysis in the economic sphere, for the purpose of analysis of capital "it is necessary for both the capitalist and critical activist to use the most logical form of value (general and then money) as his tool" (76). However, as Spivak argues, "in the analysis of contemporary capitalism in the broadest sense, taking patriarchy (traffic in affective value-coding) and neo-colonialism (traffic in epistemic-cognitive-political-institutional value-coding) into account, it is 'the Total or Expanded Form of Value,' with the critical capacity for analysis beyond the merely economic" (*OTM*; 76). Exploiting the potential of the expanded form of value moves analysis out from the "'economic in the last instance' -to the 'economic as the most abstract instance' in the

complex network of value codings" (282). Value reduced to the economic (extracting "value for the money," or enforcing "value-added" accounting in the realm of education, or any social sphere) represents a repression, or effacement of the operations of value-coding that lie outside of the merely economic.

This is not altered by the fact that economic liberalism today attaches its genetic marker to all aspects of social life. Inside and outside, complicated by complicity and imbrication, at the same time as difference, the "unity of differences" (C; 199) that comprise the value form, produces indeterminacy and openness throughout the textual fabric of value-coding structures. The genetic imperialism of the economic in the university context has already been discussed. For example, there is an accelerating trend toward disempowering faculty participation in the administration of universities in favour of professional, career administrators and managers. This diminishment, clearly represents the fossilisation of academic diversity as the interdisciplinary administration of the university by faculty *from many disciplines with an intimate knowledge of, and an ongoing stake in, both research and teaching* is displaced by administrators and managers from one or two related, disciplines: business management or commerce, and perhaps economics as well. I am characterising this colonising process as one of economic ossification as the genetic code of a single discipline, a single narrow economic ideology, displaces all competing alternatives. Heriberta Castanos-Lomnitz *et al*, in "Reshaping the Educational Agendas of Mexican Universities: the Impact of NAFTA," capture this effacement and reduction of social value in the context of the NAFTA harnessing of universities to the knowledge transfers required by globalisation, and the need for an enhanced "migratory flow" of knowledge workers:

National systems of higher education are called on to meet the workforce needs of these types of industries [micro-electronics, biotechnology, telecommunications, new materials science and technology etc.], but at any given time, their programs and structures do not simply mirror labor market projections and formulas. They [national systems of higher education] have

been shaped as much by their cultural, social, and political histories as by their economic context. (278)

Complicity between all social spheres, the general and the economic, requires the "analysis of capital (traffic in economic value-coding), which releases the abstract as such," and which, in turn, makes possible the analysis of contemporary capitalism in all the social structures it inhabits. Analysis by way of the expanded form of value would include "patriarchy (traffic in affective value-coding) and neocolonialism (traffic in epistemic-cognitive-political-institutional value-coding)" (76) precisely in order to capture the social whole.

The value form is that "'contentless and simple' thing.... which is not pure form, yet [is] perceptible only formally ... [and engenders] the possibility of mediations (through value-coding) so that exchange and sociality can exist" (61). The value form is "the possibility of ... mediation that makes possible in its turn all exchange, all communication, sociality itself" (61). It must be said that this expanded conception of the value form does not mean that the purely economic is rejected, as Spivak argues. In fact, importantly, the "Value-form in the general sense and in the narrow—the economic sphere ... being the latter—are irreducibly complicitous" (120). From within structural conditions of complicity are generated diversified fields of value relations at all levels of human experience; however, this complicity is not a conflation, not "'society' as [simply] an expression [a reflection] of the economy" (Amariglio 201). These structural conditions of complicity between the economic and all other social relations present the possibility of critique and resistance.

But does Spivak's description of the complicity between value in the general sense and economic value contain within it the potential for positive change? It is from within this space that, as Spivak argues, the Marxist-deconstructive philosophical position is the "impossible 'no' to a structure which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately"

(*OTM*; 281). If there is no possibility of escaping the structure, then is radical social transformation possible? Len Findlay, in "Composing Value, Valuing Composition," argues that Spivak's position may settle with a "version of the irreducible as virtual impotence" (16), that she may be too willing to "assert ... an absolute" rather than attend to the nuanced "relational nature" of Marx's text (17). Nevertheless, this dissertation takes the view that Spivak's emphasis on the fundamental ambiguity of use-value within the value form itself offers a critical opportunity for direct action and transformation. The question remains as to how much of this potential for transformative change is owing to Marx, or to Spivak's deconstructive reading of Marx, and perhaps finally that depends on the critic and how they put the tools to work in practice.

As Spivak argues, "it is use-value that puts the entire textual chain of Value into question" (118). This radical indeterminacy arises out of use-value's permitted status as "the normative inside place of the host" (118). At the same time as it leads a sanctioned existence, use-value is "banish[ed] ... as that which must be subtracted so that value can be defined" (118). This is similar to Guillory's description of political economy's historical repression of the aesthetic analogy. Spivak points out, "use-value, in the classic way of deconstructive levers, is both outside and inside of value-determinations" (*SR*; 118): outside because "'A thing can be a use-value without being a value,'" however, use-value is "not altogether outside the circuit of exchange" (118). Exchange-value is the "species term for the whole," yet, because it "does not yet dominate production as a whole," exchange-value becomes a "superfluity or a parasite of use-value"; hence use-value is both inside and outside. This "superfluity" of exchange-value at this point according to Marx can result in an "'accidental enlargement of the sphere of satisfactions, [and] enjoyments'" (118). Spivak suggests that "since one case of use-value can be that of the worker wishing to consume the

(affect of the) work itself, that necessary possibility renders indeterminate the 'materialist' predication of the subject as labor-power or super-adequation as calibrated and organized by the logic of capital.... [and] The question of affectively necessary labor brings in the attendant question of desire and thus questions in yet another way the mere philosophical justice of capital logic without necessarily shifting into utopian idealism" (118). This represents then a productive indeterminacy and a grounding in the material with considerable critical potential arising out of use-value's ambiguous status as banished host—very like the status of socialism itself as postmodern capital's banished other.

5. The School: the Productive Doubleness of Representation

Before concluding, we will briefly recall John Guillory's argument. Guillory, in *Cultural Capital*, as discussed earlier, argues "the problem of what is called canon formation is best understood as a problem in the constitution and distribution of cultural capital, or more specifically, a problem of access to the means of literary production and consumption. The 'means' in question are provided by the school, which regulates and distributes cultural capital *unequally* (ix). Guillory frames the problem of canon formation, the problem of access to postsecondary education and the cultural capital it produces, in materialist fashion, and in terms of institutional abuses of "representation." As noted earlier, the trend toward academic capitalism results in a seeming increase in accessibility with larger numbers of students in fact enrolling in postsecondary studies; however, at the same time financial responsibility is shifted onto the backs of students as skyrocketing tuition compensates for the financial shortfall created by government cuts to education, and funding for certain programs is cut at the expense of programs presumed to be more marketable. In short, accessibility in the market university conforms to a supply-side economic model with "efficiency" guaranteed by what the private sector calls "lean production" methods on the supply side: labour practices code named "flexible" such as increased teaching loads, a mobile workforce, a large pool of unemployed and underemployed PhD's compelled to conform to the dictates of "competitive" market individualism, and greater exploitation of sessional lecturers. On the "demand" side the increased "treating of students more as consumers in full bloom than as developing citizens" (Findlay; 298). I might call the latter the re-socialisation, in

the sociological sense, of students except that it represents a de-socialisation in fact, or anti-socialisation.

Guillory's account captures aspects of canon formation misconceived or elided by a "liberal pluralist" perspective that conflates "representation in the political sense—the relation of a representative to a constituency—and representation in the rather different sense of the relation between an image and what the image represents" (viii).

Guillory suggests that the literary syllabus is the means by which two types of knowledge are produced and disseminated, that is cultural capital in the form of "*linguistic capital*" and "*symbolic capital*" (ix). Linguistic capital is acquired through the attainment of "a socially credentialed and ... valued speech ... 'Standard English'" (ix). Symbolic capital is a "kind of knowledge-capital whose possession can be displayed upon request and which thereby entitles its possessor to the cultural and material rewards of the well-educated person" (ix). What in the context of the school is a fraught connection between representation in both (or more of) its senses, already explicit in these two forms of knowledge, becomes overtly manifest in the currency of English as the language of global business and manifest in the "*homogenizing forces of globalization ... one language in commerce, politics, ... on the internet*" and, in neo-liberal thought, one homogeneous culture (Findlay; 299; emphasis added).

Guillory looks to Pierre Bourdieu in order to make the distinction between material and cultural capital. The relation between these two is conditioned by the fact that the "double discourse of value" (use-value and exchange-value, aesthetics and economics) emerged in 18th century political economy as a way of describing how "exchange in the market ... function[s] as an epitome of social relations" (326). However, social relations translated through, or as, exchange in the market embody the "objective disharmony of these relations ... as the site of the commensuration of the incommensurable values objectified in every object" (326), and embody the

“disproportion of production and consumption” (325). However, the doubleness of value means that, while “it is not possible for any object *not* to have a relation to the market,” neither is it possible to reduce the “object to ... the quantum of exchange value” (325).

As a result, the doubleness of value, far from being the occasion of despair and fatalism, presents the opportunity for contesting and resisting the reduction of “the public good in Canada to a set of public goods” (Findlay; 304). Every commodity, as Guillory argues, is at the same time “also a ‘symbolic object’” (325), and therefore available to a revaluing within the representational field. For example, Len Findlay, in *“Speaking Truth to Power’?: American Usage, Canadian Literary Studies, and Policies for the Public Good in Canada,”* recontextualises the linguistic permutations of ‘diversity’ as an economic abstraction “diversification,” and in so doing re-(e)valuates and recovers the real social diversity repressed in its current reductive economic usage (293). The manifest incommensurability of the material and the cultural presents dangers, but also challenge and opportunity:

A key consideration here is diversity, a notion firmly linked to the economic discourse of diversification as well as to the politics of difference as practiced in the old and new humanities and perhaps preeminently in English literary studies. This linkage is beneficial, at least in so far as the inevitability of the economic gives humanists a permanent opportunity for moderating or vigorously contesting economic theory and practice and the values that attend them. Situating diversity both in relation to the current division of labour, including academic labour, and in relation to social differentiation and biological diversity creates another set of challenges and opportunities. (Findlay; 293)

Theoretical production, or knowledge production, is complicated by the fact that “Symbolic goods are a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object: their specifically cultural value and their commercial value remain relatively independent although the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration” (Bourdieu in Guillory; 325). The possibility of radical social transformation arises out of this fundamental incommensurability: in economic terms “the relative autonomy of ...

price magnitudes from value magnitudes” (Shaikh; 286), and the gap between them; that is the distinction “between an unquantifiable ‘use value’ and a quantifiable ‘exchange value’” (Guillory; 325), on another level, can be rephrased as the relative autonomy of the aesthetic (cultural capital) from the economic, thus opening the way for a “politicisation of difference” (Findlay; 293). If the *relative autonomy* of one category relative to another presents the possibility of resistance and transformation, so too does the sheer pervasiveness—“the inevitability of the economic”—of the market itself:

If the market is the omnipresent and inescapable horizon of social life, where the mirage of absolute commensurability always glitters, what this means most importantly is that the value-constitutive nature of struggle can be expressed not only at the site of exchange but in the inescapable relation of all aspects of social life to the economy. (Guillory 326)

This latter formulation clearly marks the expansion of a more traditional Marxist conception of value to an articulation of the “total or expanded form of value” (*SR* 119; *OTM* 281; *Capital*. I. 154) as the “inescapable relation of all aspects of social life to the economy” (Guillory; 326).

The problem of the relation of theory to practice, in terms of ensuring fair and egalitarian public access to cultural capital, as it is produced in and circulated from the school, is then intimately linked to the problem of representation in all its meanings. In other words, the problem of the relation of theory to practice is disclosed in effacement as disparity and disjunction in the meanings of ‘representation’ (effaced in the philanthropic¹⁴ intent of liberal pluralist canon formation). The question of diversity and difference, certainly in a context of profound inequality, lies at the heart of the problem of representation, in both its “political sense—the relation of a representative to a

¹⁴ The philanthropic gesture has a long history in liberal thought, certainly as a cosy method for assuaging guilt, as a propagandistic display of social responsibility; however, the primary function of philanthropy is of course that while secondarily it meliorates the ravages of industrialism and its *laissez faire* economic system, its primary function is to maintain intact the economic and ideological system that produces structural inequality in the first place.

constituency—and representation in the rather different sense of the relation between an image and what the image represents” (viii). As Findlay argues, the problem of translating resistance into social transformation will “always have linguistic, more broadly representational, and ethical components to it” (291). It is important to note here that any argument for the power of the conceptual, in language form, to shape the social, “in the act of naming,” must encompass these social components, and this is not a conflation in the interest of a feel-good, philanthropic critical practice self-condemned to institutional isolation, but through a more nuanced obligation “to be mindful of the duality [multivalence] of the moments” (Adorno; 1039) of the social totality (material and cultural; political representation and cultural representation; theory and practice etc). This has important implications for a country such as Canada with its own double discourse of colonialism. Canada’s evolving colonisation of the land’s indigenous population is the enabling factor in the nation’s simultaneously evolving independence from Britain through the historical process of decolonisation. Of course that same process of national decolonisation is compromised of late, as decolonisation appears after all to be a process of simple exchange as Canada complacently accommodates the enforced substitution of America for Britain as colonial patriarch.

Guillory cogently argues for the utility of the value form in order to make the necessary distinction between material and cultural capital, a necessary distinction if accessibility is to have any substantial meaning. This distinction contrasts with an ahistorical liberal pluralism (Barbara Herrnstein Smith’s *Contingencies of Value* is the exemplar here) that makes “*no distinction between cultural and material capital*” (xiv), and such a necessary distinction contrasts with liberal pluralism’s empty philanthropic gesture of conflating political representation with aesthetic representation¹⁵, a gesture

¹⁵ “If liberal pluralism has discovered that the cultural is always also the political (which it is), it has seldom escaped the trap of reducing the political to the cultural” (Guillory; 13).

with the ostensible goal of inclusion. As Guillory argues, historicizing the concept of value is crucial to understanding contemporary relations between the aesthetic, or cultural, and the economic (xiii). Understanding the history of the value form is crucial to the problem of political representation and its relation to the production and circulation of symbolic capital, and the school is a primary locus of such production. As Guillory points out, “access to the means of literary production” is provided by the school, and again the school distributes cultural capital unequally: “The largest context for analysing the school as an institution is therefore the *reproduction* of the social order, with all of its various inequities” (ix). The emphasis here on inequity, and therefore difference, is crucial. As we shall see, this is precisely what liberal thought forecloses on. Rather than the canonical aesthetic objects and their authors, the major role in the “system of reproduction” that reproduces an exclusionary canon is played by “the school itself, which regulates access to literary production by regulating access to literacy, to the practices of reading and writing” (ix).

The disjunction between representation in the realm of cultural production and the realm of political representation is played out in the school; however, the school itself is an institutional locus in which a general social discordance—in a context of global capitalist hegemony—between political representation and culture, in the broad sense, is heightened. That is to say, also disclosed here is the discord between the local and the global in the context of global capitalism. In this sense, the school is the largest context for “the *reproduction* of the [global] social order, with all of its various inequities” (ix). Within this context, class, race, and gender inflect the question of who represents whom in the study, interpretation, and dissemination of cultural representations themselves so inflected. However, Guillory notes “the relative absence of class as a working category of analysis in the canon debate” (viii). “If there exists a form of capital which is specifically symbolic or *cultural*, the production, exchange,

distribution, and consumption of this capital presupposes the division of society into groups that can be called classes" (viii), then the "fact of class determines whether and how individuals gain access to the means of literary production [and because the canon debate's concern with redressing inequality focuses on "the discrediting of judgment" xiv] ... the system regulating such access is a much more efficient mechanism of social exclusion than acts of judgment" (ix).

Guillory does not, however, "privileg[e] ... class over race and gender," but rather notes the impossibility of inferring "a process of exclusion from the canon from the category of class, a fact which explains why examples of excluded authors always happen to be those whose identities are marked by race or gender" (viii-ix). The reason for this is significant: "while it is easy enough to conceive of a self-affirmative racial or sexual identity, it makes very little sense to posit an affirmative lower-class identity, as such an identity would have to be grounded in the experience of deprivation per se" (13).

Exposed in the canon debate then, as the "preeminent ... expression of identity politics," is the "discrepancy between the theory of social identity and the practice of identity politics" (13). The danger in the practice of identity politics is "differences are sublimated in the constitution of a minority identity" such that "the differences or antagonisms that exist within and between dominated social groups tend to become the basis for the constitution of new social identities ... *rather than the occasion for an analysis of the systemic nature of social antagonisms*" (emphasis added; 12). Such politics "'tend ... to reduce radical politics to the expression of oppressed subjectivities,'" expressions grounded in "hierarchies of oppression" (Osborne in Guillory; 12). The risk here is heightened conflict between increasingly fragmented political agents (12). Much more significant than just the simple fact of political diversity—not dangerous in and of itself—is that such a politics risks making "group

demands readily recuperable by the competitive interest group politics of a liberal pluralism” (13). While class is incommensurable with race and gender, “the [very] incommensurability of different subject formations ... the condition for an accurate description of the systemic relations between race, class, and gender” (14) presents an opening to materialist critique; it also “confirms that the critique of the canon does indeed belong to a liberal pluralist discourse, within which ... the category of class has been systematically repressed” (14). The crucial point here is that race, gender, and class are not commensurable, and this incommensurability is registered in the distinction between simple domination, the concern of liberal feminism for example, and exploitation. The difference is one between tinkering with social formations that leave the system intact, and structural change of a more profound nature.

Spivak’s introduction to “Scattered Speculations on a Question of Value” begins by arguing, “One of the determinations of the question of value is the predication of the subject” (SR; 109).¹⁶ She makes the distinction between a “modern ‘idealist’” predication of the subject that “focuses on *domination*” and a materialist (Marxist) subject predication in which any “consideration of the question of value ... must ... examine Marx’s investigation of exploitation” (110). The idealist question of value only recognises “extra-economic coercion” (124), and thus leaves the economic system intact. As Guillory argues (above), the idealist version (liberal pluralism) systematically represses the category of class and reduces “radical politics to the expression of oppressed subjectivities.” In this way the idealist version stops at domination, and therefore “[e]conomic coercion as *exploitation* is hidden from sight in ‘the rest of the world’” (SR; 124). This represents a politics of (self)deception that is not merely blind to

¹⁶ “The modern ‘idealist’ predication of the subject is consciousness, Labor-power is a ‘materialist’ predication. Consciousness is not thought, but rather the subject’s irreducible intendedness towards the object. Correspondingly, labor-power is not work (labor), but rather the irreducible possibility that the subject be more than adequate—super-adequate—to itself, labor-power” (SP; 109).

the “epistemic violence of imperialism as crisis management,” or blind to the international division of labour, but is, at the same time, a politics that cheerfully accommodates oppositional critical strategies comfortably within the disciplinary framework of “literary studies in the narrow sense” (110).¹⁷ While both the left and the right are prone to such gestures,¹⁸ arguably it is liberal doctrine and economic liberalism with the vested interest in ideologically “disavow[ing] the economic” (125) when necessary.¹⁹

As Spivak points out, “[I]t is a paradox that capitalist humanism ... tacitly make its plans by the ‘materialist’ predication of Value, even as its official ideology offers the discourse of humanism as such” (122). We will remember here Peter Emberley’s liberal apologetic for extortionate greed concealed beneath his Platonic humanism and a discourse of the good, or Fukuyama’s similar deception encoded within the notion of

¹⁷ At best, “[c]oncentrating on the desire for the canon, on the complicity of old standards, and on epistemic violence, the practical perspective of the discipline of literary studies in the narrow sense need do no more than persistently clean up (or muddy) the ‘idealist’ field as it nourishes the question of value” (110). On the other hand, oppositional critical strategies comfortably esconced within academic walls is prone to “reactive nostalgia such as an unexamined adulation of working-class culture, an ostentatious rejection of elitist standards, a devotion to all non-Judeo-Christian mythologies, or the timid evocation of ‘poetry being written in Nicaragua’” (129).

¹⁸ “Marxist cultural studies in the first World cannot ask the question of Value within the ‘materialist’ predication of the subject, since the question would compel one to acknowledge that the text of exploitation might implicate Western cultural studies in the international division of labor” (122-3).

¹⁹ Spivak’s example from the *Harvard Business Review* effectively demonstrates how “economic reductionism” is aided by the “disavowal of the economic” through a euphemistic language—a universalising idealism—that occults the raw exploitation both at the local level and at the global level in the “developing” world (see full quotation on pg 180 in this paper). All “‘domestic’” markets subject to the predatory law of market competition, and subject to the “‘universal ... need’” to maximise wealth (“‘money’”), are colonised by “‘goods produced more cheaply under scale-efficient conditions’” (*SR*; 126)—the raw exploitation of labour, that plays the domestic off against the other, the local against the global, is concealed in such scientific, technocratic language as this. The author of Spivak’s example (Theodor Levitt of the Harvard Business School) can talk about the capture of market share in markets of scale, and the maximization of profit through the enforcement of scale-efficient conditions without ever mentioning labour or the communities in which it lives and works. As the editors of *Science as Culture* argue, the ideology of “New Times”—PostFordism’s putative supersession of Fordism as a simple consequence of “technical improvements respond[ing] to new market demands”—conceals the fact that the crisis of capitalism (in part a “decline of profitability”) is “more than anything a crisis of managerial authority over the labour process, for which new technology has been summoned to the rescue ... Yet the ‘New Times’ scenario, with its technical-market explanations, ignores the workers’ role in bringing about the crisis of Fordism, as well as the capitalist priorities embedded in technical innovation” (10). The primary capitalist priority concealed in the language of Spivak’s example is quite clearly exploitation.

'recognition,' that is, individual self-interest with a deceptive, saccharine coating of empathy. Guillory captures the gesture in the act in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's attempt to "reduce ... aesthetics to the terms of a general economy" (299). At first glance this appears to be an attempt at expanding the provenance of value to encompass the total or expanded form of value as conceived by Spivak. However, it is important to note here the difference between liberalism's seeming gesture of inclusion as it contrasts with the Marxist conception of value.

As Guillory points out, while liberal pluralism (Herrnstein Smith) attempts to "rediscover economic discourse as precisely what was formerly excluded from its [aesthetic] domain" (296), what it achieves in fact is an elision of the social rather than the expansion that Spivak refers to as "*affectively* necessary labor" (118). Simultaneously such a perspective strategically disavows a very important aspect of the economic. Herrnstein Smith argues, "Aesthetic value ... is the 'product of the dynamics of an economic system,' the circulation of 'use values'" (Guillory; 296). She also argues, "all exchangeable objects are defined as valued objects or "'goods' (that is as profits, satisfactions, gains, benefits, etc.) *only in relation to a particular state of a particular agent's personal economy*" (emphasis Guillory's; 299). Smith's purpose here is liberalism's familiar privileging of the sovereign individual, and the reduction of all communitarian value to a kind of economic equivalence. How this is achieved has important implications for the discipline of English particularly at a time when massive enrolments are simultaneously accompanied by a commensurate decline of accessibility, and particularly when it is crucial that in order to open the academic world to historically excluded groups that those doors are not closed through the deployment of what Spivak terms "epistemic violence." As Guillory effectively demonstrates, it is difference that liberalism forecloses on.

Guillory points out, in collapsing “all exchange value into a version of use-value,” what disappears “is precisely exchange in the *economic* sense—as what takes place ... *between* subjects” (299). That is to say, precisely what disappears is the social. As Guillory’s example demonstrates, what a “neorelativist,” liberal pluralist critique rejects in its consolidation of a “New, Improved Individualism” is “the appeal to community as the consensual ground of value”:

It is not when the fruit is plucked from the tree for one’s private consumption but when it is exchanged between subjects as a quantifiable “value” that there exists something called the “economic.” To collapse the latter into a special case of the former is finally to collapse all exchange value into a version of use value in the same way that Smith’s notion of community as a “coincidence of contingencies” is projected out of, and collapses back into, the experience of the individual subject. (299)

Again, what we have here is a liberal perspective that disavows the profoundly social nature of the economic. Guillory points out that Smith’s solution to the problem of the relationship between the individual and the community “always refers to the individual subject’s *perception* of contingencies, rather than to those social conditions which structure the society as a whole” (286). Such a perspective is not merely “fixated on the relation between individuals and communit[y],” but Guillory makes the important point that such a perspective simultaneously fails to “identify the forms of social structuration which *do not* in fact emerge from the experience of community” (287).

Forms of social structuration not available to Smith’s liberal conception of community function at the “sub-individual” level and include, in Spivak’s reference to Althusser, the “great aggregative apparatuses” (*CPR*; 252). They would include “forms of objective structuration [such as] ... the class structure itself, as well as the ‘discourses’ about which Foucault writes, ... the social institutions analysed by Bourdieu” (287), and we can add the structural, ideological state apparatuses described by Althusser. In the case of Althusser, it is important to note Spivak’s strategic qualification of poststructuralist critiques of the sovereign subject, for example.

Such a critique, Spivak argues, all too often “conserve[s]” the “subject of the West, or the West as Subject,” a subject that “pretend[s] it ha[s] ‘no geo-political determinations’” (248). The exemplars here are Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. Althusser, by contrast, “inhabits ... [a] middle ground” between an assumed subject and the sub-individual functions of ideology (“the domination of the ruling class “in and by words”). This dissertation concurs with Spivak’s position that “the empirical subject, the intending subject, the self even, must be constantly assumed in radical calculations” (253), that is, in materialist calculations. Althusser provides the theory of ideology that the above critics lack, and as Spivak argues, a theory of ideology is necessary “for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation” (253). This dissertation has taken Althusser as a guide in just such a consideration, just as it concurs with Spivak’s strategic essentialism, and her critical positioning with respect to the facile opposition between theoretical and practical fields of representation.

Guillory notes that Smith’s formulation cannot account for how it is that “conflict or dissensus might be constitutive of evaluative acts” (286). As we have seen already, while liberal doctrine is highly suspicious of appeals to structural cause, at the same time liberalism is not chary of attributing social effects to what can only be the structural relation between individuals, community, and institutional structures. However, as Guillory demonstrates, liberal pluralism’s rejection of structural cause preserves the primacy of the individual at the expense of difference. A hypothetical response to this might be that if general social conditions are experienced “differently by differently situated persons, then they are ... different contingencies” (287). However, as with Stanley Fish’s “interpretive communities,” while liberal criticism seeks to recuperate the aesthetic through the ostentatious invocation of difference in the simple act of saying words such as ‘community,’ ‘plurality,’ ‘heterogeneity’ etc., its goal is the effacement of structural cause and systemic difference. In this we detect a distinction between the

ideological practices of liberalism and the materialist theoretical production of critical concepts, “in the simple act of naming,” but with a firm grounding in material structures that are irreducibly social:

... such a response would only betray the implicit subjectivism—or let us say, *individualism*—of [Smith’s] ... account of value; for the reality of experiential differences does not mean that differently situated persons will be unable to recognize that certain conditions—the capital-labor relation, the sex-gender system, racism, etc.—are the *structuring conditions* of the whole social order, and that they *affect different social groups differently as a consequence of their universality*. On what other basis could one imagine a politics of coalition? But in this domain Smith’s argument dutifully reproduces the aporia in contemporary left-liberal discourse between the supposed objectivism of traditional political or sociological analyses (Smith singles out Marxism as typical of such offensive objectivism) and the subjectivism of identity politics, with its preference for testimony and personal experience. (286-7)

Again, liberalism, in conflating use value and exchange value in the ostensible interest of a politics of inclusion, disavows the profoundly social nature of exchange. In this way, surplus value, or systemic exploitation, and the social conflict that results are de-emphasised if not written out entirely. And, keeping in mind that identity politics is pre-eminently, in theory, practiced in universities, this signifies again the deceptive conflation of the two forms of representation; that is to say, liberal and left-liberal academic critical practices misrepresent aesthetic representation as redress for political exclusions both inside and outside of academic walls while leaving the economic and political system untouched.

The professed interest of liberal criticism in inclusion and accessibility, is in effect betrayed in its own claims and practices. Herrnstein Smith’s “contingencies of value” represents then a de-emphasis of the social and a rejection of community. Guillory argues, the only way to achieve this is to alienate community “in thought” as a “‘coincidence of contingencies’ rather than as the epistemological guarantor of values” (283) Such a perspective may in fact assume social forces, but it need not *distinguish* “particular social forces” because the concept of community “defines the general

conditions for the existence of *any* [or all] community” (283). Smith’s alienation of community in thought contrasts with the claim made earlier in this paper that Adorno’s dialectical method represents an enactment in thought, as theory engages with modern experience deformed by monological capitalism. It is the view of this dissertation that Adorno nevertheless critically attends to the Marxist insistence that the subjective, the conceptual or abstract, is connected to material conditions. In this way Adorno remains true to Marx’s qualification of purely language based definitions of critical concepts: “[t]hese imaginary expressions [the value of labour] arise, nevertheless, from the relations of production themselves. They are categories for the forms of appearance of essential relations” (C; 677). The difficult relation between appearance and the essential moments of value, concealing a repression, supports the critical significance of a strategic essentialism. Guillory points out that Herrnstein Smith fails to historicize the discourse of value, the historical separation of the double discourse of value, and the originary complicity of the aesthetic and the economic realms. Liberal discourse fails to be mindful of the history of the discourse of value—its elisions and its repressions. As well, in its disavowals of the social nature of the economic, liberal discourse fails “to be mindful of the duality of the moments” (1039), that is, the synchronic complicity of the aesthetic, the cultural, and the economic. Spivak recuperates the history of the value form in the act of demonstrating the complicity between the economic and the aesthetic, or cultural. Rather than a complete resolution to the opposition between the cultural and the economic,

[t]he best one can envisage is the persistent undoing of the opposition, taking into account the fact that, first, the complicity between cultural and economic value systems is acted out in almost every decision we make, and, secondly, that economic reductionism is ... a very real danger. (SR; 122)

In order to undo an opposition it is necessary to be able to conceptualise the opposition in the first place in order to identify the productive contradictions that arise out of its historical repressions and exclusions.

As Spivak argues, representation itself is just such an opposition: the “complicity of *vertreten* [rhetoric-as-persuasion, or political representation, speaking for] and *darstellen* [rhetoric-as-trope, or re-presentation as in art and philosophy], their identity-in-difference as the place of practice ... can only be appreciated if they are not conflated by a sleight of word” (260). Spivak critiques such a conflation in Deleuze’s claim that “[t]here is no more representation; there’s nothing but action’—‘action of theory and action of practice which relate to each other as relays and form networks” (in Spivak; 256). In terms of the problem of representing oppressed groups, this poststructuralist position does not see “the subject ... as a representative consciousness (*one re-presenting reality adequately*)” (emphasis added; 257) at all. Therefore, this critique of the sovereign subject is concerned with the one pole of representation, *darstellen*, in its form as “subject-predication” (257) in such a way that a “critique of *ideological* subject-constitution within state formations and systems of political economy” is written out (emphasis added; 257). The problem of ideological subject-constitution is, in Marxist thought, a problem of class formation.

Reading *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, and considering the problem of class formation in Marx, Spivak demonstrates that representation in the political sense “behaves like a *Darstellung* ... taking its place in the gap between the formation of (descriptive) class and the nonformation of a (transformative) class” (260). In the passage in question (*Selected Works*; 170-1), writing about small-holding peasants, Marx, charts the distinction between a class in itself (“descriptive”), and a class for itself

(revolutionary).²⁰ Because “there is merely a local inter-connection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name ... They cannot represent [*vertreten*] themselves, they must be represented” (*Selected Works*; 171). A representative appears in the form of Louis Napoleon. Napoleon III focusses all legislative power in the executive branch at the expense of the legislative assembly, which Marx describes thus: “The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself” (171).

Spivak exploits the deconstructive potentials of this passage. The phrase “its final expression” implies “a chain of substitutions,” a deferral. The “gaps” between peasant influence, the representative (Napoleon), and the “historical-political phenomenon” in the description of “social incoherence ... implies not only a critique of the subject as *individual* agent but even a critique of the subjectivity of a *collective* agency” (260). In this way “representation as *Vertretung* ... behaves like a *Darstellung* ... taking its place in the gap between the formation of a (descriptive) class and the nonformation of a (transformative) class” (260). That is *Vertretung* behaves like *Darstellung* in its sense as “subject-predication,” or subject formation (class consciousness); but, as Spivak acknowledges here, she is also expanding the provenance of the textual. And it is the complicity between *Vertreten* and *Darstellen* here that enables Spivak’s deconstruction to claim “their identity-in-difference as the place of practice” (260). Of course the staging (*Darstellung*) that takes place here functions on a number of levels from Napoleon III’s originary re-presentation, or staging

²⁰ “In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life ... *they form a class*. In so far as ... the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community ... they do not form a class” (*Selected Works*, 170-1; Spivak, 260).

of an imperial coup; to Marx's critical analysis of it; to Spivak's own analysis. The problem of complicity therefore involves, not just the problem of "a transformative class 'consciousness,'" but the complicity of the critic in the duplicities of 'representation' in its doubleness. That is to say, not just how it is that a revolutionary class represents, or fails, to represent its own interests, but what other groups might legitimately speak for those interests or represent them to others.

Crucial to a materialist perspective is the fact that the political is complicitous with the economic. If *Vertretung* represents for Spivak the political aspect of 'representation,' there is, as well, the further complicity of *Darstellung's* role in the economic realm:

Representation in the economic context is *Darstellung*, the philosophical concept of representation as staging or, indeed, signification, which relates to the divided subject in an indirect way. The most obvious passage [*Capital I*] is well known: "In the exchange relationship ... of commodities their exchange-value appeared to us totally independent of their use-value. But if we subtract their use-value from the product of labour, we obtain their value, as it was just determined ... The common element that represents itself [*sich darstellt*] in the exchange relation, or the exchange value of the commodity, is thus its value." (CPR 263; *Capital.1.128*)

Darstellung in the economic sphere then, as signification itself—money being the general equivalent, the universal sign, the transcendental signified *par excellence*—"dissimulates the choice of and need" for political representation (264). Spivak makes the important distinction here between domination in the political realm—"the mechanics of power as such"—and the exploitation that resides concealed within the exchange relation as the "extraction (production), appropriation, and realization of (surplus) value as *representation of labor power*" (263): "in the absence of a theory of exploitation ... capitalist exploitation must be seen as a variety of domination" (263).

Current events perhaps indicate that the relation between the two forms of representation, in terms of which "dissimulates" which, should be reversed. *The New York Times* commenting on the G8 protests in Genoa, Italy, and the shooting death of

23 year old protester Carlo Giuliani, begins with the headline, “Skirmishes Mark Big Protest March at Talks in Italy/Police Keep Low Profile/Leaders of Wealthy Countries Try to Keep Their Attention on Anti-Poverty Issues” (Sunday, July 22/01). Rather, here it seems to be the powerless themselves that conceal the exploitation (surplus value) that resides in the dynamism of an economic idea that “begins to operate [with the emergence of fully developed capital] with no extra-economic coercions” (SR 117). The headline perhaps even suggests that economic exploitation conceals *itself* somehow from “the agents of power.” Does economic exploitation conceal itself so that it is able to function unhindered at the most normalised, sub-individual levels of ideological abstraction while battle is engaged in the empirical realm, the realm of “appearances”? At any rate, in the political realm it seems clear that state coercion is necessary in order that those who would act as the representative voices of the voiceless poor, or even those who would represent their own marginalized interests against power, are prevented from distracting the attention of wealth and power away from “poverty.” If it is not the protesters doing the distracting, protesting in the space of a focused *local* venue, then what is it that distracts the wealthy from grotesque disparity on the *global* scene where they now claim to operate without borders? Mis-representation, power engaged in uncommon acts of restraint as the headline claims, stands in here for responsibility (see note 5 chpt. 1 above).

It is precisely the disjunction between the local and the global that marks the importance of the distinction between ‘domination’ and ‘exploitation,’ and causes Spivak to caution the critic merely interested in domination: “If a view of *affectively* necessarily [sic] labor (as possible within the present state of socialized consumer capitalism) as *labor* as such is proposed *without careful attention to the international division of labor*, its fate may be a mere political avant-gardism” (emphasis added; 119). Crucial to a practice that sees the complicitous relationship between domination

and exploitation, is a theory of ideology capable of accounting for the relationship between the macrological (“the relationship between global capitalism (exploitation in economics) and nation-state alliances (domination in geopolitics”) and “sub-individual micrologies” (Foucault and Deleuze, but not Althusser), as sub-individual micrologies “[on their own] cannot grasp the ‘empirical’ field” (*CPR*; 263-4). Arguably, if *Vertretung* operates only in the political realm, *Darstellung* operates in all, and it is for this reason that the reversal noted in the previous paragraph only appears to be the wrong way round:

To move toward such an accounting one must move toward theories of ideology—of subject formations that micrologically and often erratically operate the interests that congeal the micrologies and are congealed in macrologies. Such theories cannot afford to overlook that this line *is* erratic, and that the category of representation in its *two* senses is crucial. They must note how the staging of the world in representation—its scene of writing, its *Darstellung*—dissimulates the choice of and need for ‘heroes,’ paternal proxies, agents of power—*Vertretung*. (263-4)

Because this functions as an inside/outside metaphor, we might exploit Althusser’s closing remarks on Marx’s use of a “language of metaphors which are nevertheless already *almost perfect concepts*,” and the “capitalist system ... as the complexity of a ‘social metabolism’” (192).

Spivak’s description of the relationship between use value and exchange value provides a corrective to the tendency toward an abstract, dematerialised organicism such as is suggested by Elson’s articulation of concept-metaphor in Marx (Gilker 283). Again, Spivak’s analysis characterises this relation in the following terms: “Exchange value, which in some respects is the species term of Value, is also a superfluity or a parasite of use-value.... The part whole relationship is ... turned inside-side out ... The parasitic part (exchange value) is also the species term for the whole, thus allowing use-value the normative inside place of the host as well as banishing it as that which must be subtracted so that value can be defined” (*SR* 118). Exploitation functions from

sub-individual levels, and radiates out to the strata where ideology is consciously deployed in the act of concealing, even forgetting, that “Capital consumes the *use-value of labor-power*” (117). Use-value, then, neither represents the possibility of utopian escape to primitive barter, nor the mere reduction to economistic “physical coefficients,” but rather “use-value ... puts the entire textual chain of value into question,” presenting the possibility of effective resistance (118).

The above foregrounds the well known and longstanding conundrum for Marxist thought from the time of Marx down to the present: the relationship between a revolutionary class, presumably uneducated, and intellectuals, educated therefore privileged. In a general sense, these two groups embody the problem of theory and its translation into practice. The question is expressed above in terms of the disjunction between (at least) two senses of “representation,” aesthetic and political. Questions of responsibility arise whenever university researchers and teachers claim to represent the interests of marginal groups. Other critics are not immune either when they claim that the work they do has no connections outside of institutional activities, and even if there are political implications to their work criticism must “detach ... itself from practice” (Arnold 41). In the humanities, at least, the demands of one form of representation are inextricably implicated in the demands of the other: for example, historically, curricula in Canada have always been deeply politicised. The disjunctive nature of representation transects a constellation of contradictions and challenges that characterise universities internally, and condition their relations with the outside world. The gap between theory and practice lies behind the problem of an elite stratum (teachers) representing knowledge to a larger population (students) within hierarchically structured institutions; and, depending on what one believes the goals of education are, the uneasy translation of theory into practice becomes manifest in the difficulty of more effectively including the outside world in the institutional and

intellectual practices of knowledge producing institutions, that is, the challenge of opening up the institutional walls to the outside. For a Marxist perspective, this is, of course, understatement. In more pointed terms the problem is one of the relationship between possessors, or producers, of knowledge and a revolutionary class, a class for itself, one “capable of enforcing [representing] their class interests in their own name” (“The Eighteenth Brumaire”; 170-71). Antonio Gramsci, for example, struggled somewhat more explicitly with the paradoxical relationship between “directing intellectuals” and a revolutionary class “enforcing their class interests *in their own name*” (emphasis added), as Marx phrases it.

Gramsci makes the distinction between a “caste tradition,” the intellectual activity of an “‘educated class’ ... detached from the people nation” (210) and organic intellectuals. Not only foreign intellectuals, but also indigenous intellectuals by “accident” with origins among the people who “do not feel tied to them ... are something detached, without foundation, a caste and not an articulation with organic functions of the people themselves” (209). While Gramsci makes a distinction between the “hierarchical” and the “egalitarian” in a “national intellectual and moral bloc” (209), the relationship nevertheless remains one of “democratic solidarity between *directing* intellectuals and popular masses” (emphasis added; 325). The apparently unavoidable contradiction of a directing intellectual elite in a presumed egalitarian context is dissolved, along with the “isolation” of the intellectual caste tradition, by intellectuals of the people “set[ting] themselves the problem of being organically tied to the large national masses” (325). How this organic relationship is achieved is suggested by Gramsci’s discussion of folklore. The (early twentieth century Italian) state seeks to “uproot” folklore because, as a “reflection of the conditions of cultural life of the people,” folklore competes with the interests of the state (191). The birth of a “new culture among the broad popular masses” (191) is brought about through the dialectical

interchange between “the working people and their intellectuals, not ... the national citizen and the traditional intellectual” (246-7). Folklore, then, is not replaced with a “superior” conception; rather, the cultural life of the people is dialectically transformed into a new culture “so that the separation between modern culture and popular culture of folklore will disappear” (191).

Working a religious parallel (such a cultural transformation resembles the Reformation), and a distinction between an ecclesiastical elite (“hierarchy”) and a laity, organic intellectuals, such as certain popular writers, are “lay” educators (211). Nevertheless, the persistence of a hierarchy remains in the necessity of the “directing intellectual[s]” who “bring about” social transformation in an emergent, competing hegemony. That this represents a contradiction for Marxist socialism is fairly obvious. Gramsci’s Italy is not Canada today, but the paradox of the relationship between intellectuals and a revolutionary class remains a challenge for Marxism, a challenge unresolved by simply referring to intellectual elites as knowledge workers. Nevertheless, if numbers suggest anything, today in Canada the separation between uneducated masses and an intellectual elite is much reduced. But what is the significance of this fact?

Jim Stanford, in “We don’t need no education,” argues that while Canada has perhaps the “best-educated workforce in the world” (15), connections between a well-educated workforce and economic well-being are dubious. In terms of numbers alone, accessibility to postsecondary education in Canada would seem to be healthy, even improving. The World Bank reports that Canada’s “post secondary enrolment rates are the highest in the world” (15). Stanford points out that “[m]ore than half of all Canadian workers now possess a completed college or university degree (compared to one fifth just 25 years ago). Close to two-thirds of young adults in Canada now complete a college or university degree program by the time they turn 30” (15). Nevertheless, even

as lobbyists and governments place greater emphasis on the importance of on-going education and upgrading skills to meet the needs of the new knowledge economy, the same governments “underfund public education at all levels” (15). What kind of future do graduates face in today’s economy? As Stanford points out,

[o]ne-quarter of the 8 million Canadian workers with post secondary education report that they are over qualified for their jobs; one-quarter of all university and college graduates in Canada are employed in clerical, sales and menial service positions; and close to 30% of all Canadians living in poverty have at least some postsecondary education. (15-6)

Postsecondary education helps the graduate to compete against those without credentials, and generally there is a correlation between education and higher standards of living. On the other hand, pressure to upgrade university degrees, skills, and educations creates a cycle of “credential inflation” with no necessary connection between either national, or individual economic prosperity (16). Stanford points out that in spite of its well-educated workforce Canada’s economic performance was very poor in the 1990’s with high unemployment and “falling incomes.” Credential inflation undermines the correlation between education and economic security. At the same time, contrary to what enrolment numbers alone might suggest, accessibility is compromised, and a class divide continues to grow as universities translate funding shortfalls into tuition increases.

In spite of the enormous pressure exerted on universities today to be more relevant, more accountable to economic imperatives, to make stronger ties to the market, the individual and social benefits that would result from stronger links between universities and real world markets are far from certain. Stanford points out that even in the information technology sector itself only “110,000 new jobs were created in the ... computer services industry during the 1990’s” (16). These new jobs benefited only 1 in 20 of the 2.2 million unemployed and underemployed Canadians (16). Of course, a huge chunk of these new positions have been lost in the massive layoffs at Nortel

Networks alone (2001). Contrary to neo-liberal arguments, any definite correlation between education and narrowly defined economic outcomes is clearly doubtful. As Stanford argues, a more effective method for improving the lives of working people is not more education as much as “higher minimum wages, more effective unions,” and other efforts to improve wages and working conditions (16). On the other hand, the less *tangible benefits of education for society and an informed democracy are incalculable*, and a greater diversity of affordable education opportunities must be made available to greater numbers of people, particularly those disadvantaged by history and culture.

Of course, the fact that Canada has a well-educated population does not mean that there is no longer a gap between an educated elite and a potentially revolutionary class. Nevertheless, one implication of credential inflation is that as accessibility (enrolment numbers that is) increases the system adjusts to maintain disparity; this readjustment takes the form of a proletarianisation of the educated. As Stanford’s statistics suggest, *this proletarianisation is reflected in the disparity between those graduates that the system rewards with higher standards of living, more financial security, and better quality of life, and those from whom such rewards are withheld.* Within academic walls, this proletarianisation is also reflected in the growing class divide between the professional-managerial class that administers universities and teaching and research faculty, and the proletarianisation within the faculty complement itself increasingly composed of contract, part-time, and sessional staff. However, as long as the system continues to compensate adequately a majority of graduates there is little reason to believe that the perception that higher education is the key to social and individual well-being will diminish. Consequently enrolments will remain high. At the same time, the promise that higher education represents is absolutely necessary for maintaining the highest levels of uncritical compliance that liberal democracy requires in order to function. It is, therefore, necessary that the social system include

an institutional function that in theory enables anyone to transcend class barriers.

However, readjustments in any direction cannot disguise the fact that liberal economies produce disparity, and the disparity within Canada is not any less glaring when placed in a global context of even greater disparity between rich and poor in the rest of the world.

Conclusion

It is a truism that a well-educated population is far better able to participate in democratic process, and better prepared to respond to human and environmental challenges generally. However, an educated population, particularly when unevenly franchised, is a more formidable critic as well.¹ As Christopher Arthur describes it, “the residual ‘subjectivity’ of the worker poses unique problems for capital because it gives rise to a definite recalcitrance to being ‘exploited’” (“Value, Labour and Negativity”; 30). However, “Capital can produce value only through winning the class struggle at the point of production” (30); if production in the global economy is increasingly driven by information technology, and is therefore in a significant sense a knowledge economy, then the residual subjectivity of knowledge workers is truly a unique problem for capital. Of course, as always, workers are played off one against the other: for example, farmers in Saskatchewan, in effect labour indentured to multinational agribusiness, are played off against their counterparts in Eastern Canada as well as farmers in the U.S. and Europe with the spurious pretext of “unfair subsidies”; post-Fordist labour in universities, and their industrial park appendages, are played off against residual Fordist labour in the third world. At the same time, as with material benefits, the less tangible social benefits of education are compromised by an exploitive economic system, and the undemocratic political system that supports it.

Capitalist economic technologies have never penetrated our lives more completely than they do today. New technologies empower the old ideas and concepts

¹ Stanford points out that workers with postsecondary educations are more likely to belong to unions than workers with high school or less, and the fact that the market rewards their skills commensurately may be a consequence of the fact that these workers have “more personal resources and knowledge with which to demand better treatment, by unionising or through other channels” (16). Again, unionisation does not necessarily indicate a revolutionary consciousness; but it is certainly one of the hotter sites of engagement in the class struggle between labour and capital.

with an unprecedented ability to convert and fragment social existence into ever proliferating acts of privatising exchange. It is no wonder then that the birth of a new “global” paradigm is announced here, there and everywhere these days (the victory of liberal democracy over “communism,” the resulting “end of history,” and the victory of one model of globalisation and its attendant discourse of inevitability, for example). The latest pronouncement, designated “the day the world changed,” follows in the wake of the tragedy in New York, 11 September 2001. What exactly is new about the world today? Technological empowerment aside, liberal economics, and its political instrument liberal democracy, is as exploitive today in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 as it was before 11 September. In fact evidence more than suggests that the wealthiest and most powerful nation(s)² of the world are poised to ensure that this system is at least as exploitive, and the means of ensuring disparity will be at least as bloody in the unfolding century as it was in the last. In fact, what we witness today is only the latest instalment in the ongoing tragedy of European imperial hegemony. What is Canada’s role in the new world order, and what will the consequences be for Canadian social programs—education, health, and social welfare—already under siege by neo-liberal policies?³

² As Naomi Klein, in “Signs of the Times,” points out, the so-called war on terrorism is not a “genuinely global response to terrorism but the internationalisation of one country’s foreign policy objectives” (*The Nation* 19; date unavailable at this time).

³ A “team of academic experts” headed by Canadian comprador apologists for power, historians David Bercuson and Jack Granatstein, argue for a “[c]loser collaboration with the United States and NATO” (*Globe and Mail* Saturday 10 November, 01). These experts claim that the UN is ineffectual: “the United Nations has had enough chances.” However, instead of arguing for strengthening the only democratic global political instrument with the potential for democratising globalisation, this “study” endorses the military hegemony of the North Atlantic European nations. Canada’s then minister of defence, Art Eggleton, dismissed the conclusions of the “study” even as Canada does precisely what the “study” suggests. Eggleton suggested that reviewing defence policy must wait while the “government’s preoccupation is dealing with the antiterrorism campaign.” However, this preoccupation is with Canada’s role as a member of the NATO military alliance for an apparently indefinite length of time. George W. Bush has repeated that civilisation’s war will be a “lengthy war, lasting many years” (quoted by Fidel Castro in *The Nation*, 25). If this is so, then when will Eggleton’s “wait” be over? At what point does Canada feel free to act independently of U.S. foreign policy objectives? To what extent will Canada’s

In the sense that liberalism's primary function is precisely to exploit in order to produce disparity, the claim that the world changed on 11 September is no more true after than it was before this tragic event. Systemic disparity and organised exploitation are no less the content of political struggle between left and right today than they were yesterday. It is no surprise then that a critical left is dismissed in the aftermath of tragedy as the "root causes crowd" (for example, Marcus Gee in the *Globe and Mail* Saturday 13 October 01; and this dissertation Chapter Two). Again, like disparity itself, this antagonism to the mere mention of systemic disfunction predates 11 September. Of course, the antipathy that neo-conservatives and neo-liberals reserve for any notion of structural cause stems from their hostility to structural change. If there is institutionalised inequality historically rooted, then its remedy is fundamental change. For this member of the root causes crowd, taking responsibility and making changes accordingly will not necessarily prevent aberrant acts of violent extremism, but humane social transformation is the only solution to systemic disfunction—and that has not changed. The need for structural transformation is, if anything, more necessary now than ever if we are to effectively meet the very grave threats we face as societies, nations, and as a species.

The battle being waged today in the United States, and echoed in Canada, to reassert the "primacy of property against society's broader claims," as William Greider states it in "The Right and US Trade Law," is a revisitation of similar battles between economic liberalism and social reform in the previous two centuries. The concept-metaphor value, precisely because of its historical origins in the thinking of political economy, and liberalism, and because of its centrality in Marx's own critique of political economy and its concepts, is an important analytical tool for exposing the

social policy objectives, such as Education, Health, and Social Welfare, be subordinate to Canada's involvement in a military alliance of European nations pursuing the interests of European nations?

contradictions in these perennial conflicts that have so much power to affect social health and welfare in Canada. The architect of “regulatory takings policy” in the U. S., law professor Richard Epstein, claiming to be a moderate, states that he would not “invalidate the regulatory laws that legislatures enact” (23). Rather, “[w]e will allow the majority to have its way so long as it’s willing to buy off its dissenters at a fair valuation” (23). The sheer scope of chapter 11 of the NAFTA and the ideology of “regulatory takings theory,” speak for the necessity of an analytical tool with the capability to expose the historical and ideological origins of today’s neo-liberalism.

Epstein’s advocacy for obscenely wealthy and immensely powerful minorities, beleaguered, as they choose to think they are, by political and economic regulation, is couched in terms of this very concept, value. While Epstein’s is after all merely an everyday use of an ordinary word; nevertheless, the history of neo-liberalism, its concepts and its ideas, is enshrined in this everyday use of the metaphor, “fair valuation,” and replayed in this cynical demand for just compensation on behalf of powerful elites. What could be more cynical than to strike a rebel pose and rhetorically resituate these privileged and powerful “dissenters” on the left side of the barricades as though they stand on the same ground as their victims, the exploited and dispossessed?

Given the context, if this is the “new reality,” then how does Marxism proceed in response? Perhaps, this dissertation should have more properly begun with the question, “what does value mean to me?” For me value is, on the one hand, symptomatic. Its conceptual framework and mechanisms are manifestations of the diverse modes of value in process, and in conflict within capitalist structures. At the same time it is the analytical tool necessary for picking the locks of its own origins,

repressions, and determinations: from micro-social and sub-individual levels,⁴ to the structural manifestation in the realm of appearance of value in all its determinations; from the theoretically representative Robinson Crusoe⁵ to fully developed capital. As a metaphor, value locks into language and “systems of representation.” And, representation as the image-object of art and philosophy is profoundly imbricated with the challenges of political representation, of constituencies represented and how they are represented. From a Marxist point-of-view, for knowledge workers in the humanities, representation in these senses is also played out in the dynamics of exchange and the distinction between “living labour employed and its representation as ‘dead labour’ in the value of the product” (Arthur 31; *Capital*.I.425). Alienated academic labour may sometimes deceive itself that somehow critical “disinterestedness” escapes the crudely economic, and also escapes “immediate practice in the political, social, [or] humanitarian sphere” (Arnold; 42); nevertheless, as Matthew Arnold observes, there is “the world of ideas and there is the world of practice ... [and] neither is to be suppressed” (33).

Precisely because intellectual labour is subject to this form of representation as well, in which living labour is transformed into dead labour in the process of extracting surplus value, intellectual practice is necessarily interested and cannot be cordoned off from the realm of theory or practical criticism outside of academic walls. Rather than the occasion for despair, the fact of exploitation and alienated academic labour means that value has much broader representational implications in regions of social justice.

As a concept, as a philosophical term and tool, value carries with it origins in moral

⁴ A theory of ideology and how it functions at “sub-individual” levels, such as Althusser’s theory of interpellation within ideological-state apparatuses, is necessary, as Spivak argues, “for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation” (Spivak 253).

⁵ According to Marx, Robinson Crusoe is political economy’s favourite example of the simple production of immediate use-values prior to exchange, who “having saved a watch, ledger, ink and pen from the shipwreck, ... soon begins, like a good Englishman, to keep a set of books” (*C.I*.170). Nevertheless, Marx argues, the relations between Crusoe and the “useful objects he possesses,” or produces, “contain all the essential determinants of value” (170).

philosophy. In the historical trajectory to the present these origins become subsumed by, and submerged in the concepts of neo-liberal economics, the concepts of postmodern ad-copy, and the electoral marketing concepts of prime-time democracy (strikingly superficial, profoundly undemocratic, and quickly forgotten in the cacophony of the next big crisis). In other words, value is not merely a philosophical concept, but, because aesthetic and cultural representation is necessarily imbricated with political representation, value is political in such characteristic ways as these.

Arguably, there is no academic or intellectual activity that is not circumscribed by economic constraints. Nevertheless, there are things repressed by and within the economic text, and these, like use-value, undermine the apparent rationality, dominance, and claimed unity of a system that is characterised in fact by contradiction and conflict: a commitment to structural change and social justice in a society structured by class, for example. But where is the possibility for change located when the structure is all-pervasive and all-invasive? That there is no outside to the economic text is complicated further in Spivak's rearticulation of this basic deconstructive precept: "Persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit is the deconstructive stance" (*OTM* 284). The double negative here captures the paradoxical position of the subject marginalized within structures that are nonetheless inescapable. At the same time, the double negative discloses the destabilising antagonism of its antithesis: the impossibility of living with, and within, this same exploitative structure. Desire and need, the anarchic energies of unreason policed and marginalized in the Western tradition, are bracketed in order to expose again what is effaced in disclosure. The radical energies of desire and need (banished use-value) may be unbound by

putting to work the total or expanded form of value as a critical lever.⁶ However, Spivak's formulation may simply reproduce deconstruction's tendency to political quietism in the claim that the textual nature of experience is "irreducible," and because "there is nothing outside of the instability of language" everything remains the same (Baldick 52).

Nevertheless, at the same time, Marxism has its own version of the inescapability of the economic text.⁷ Guillory argues, the "market is the omnipresent and inescapable horizon of social life" (326). However, the sheer pervasiveness of the economic also means that struggle can be engaged not only "at the site of exchange but in the inescapable relation of all aspects of social life to the economy" (326). I argue that this formulation represents an appeal to the total or expanded form of value. The potential for struggle, and the possibility of an immanent overcoming (apparently suspended indefinitely in Spivak), arise from this inescapable relation between the economy and social life, and from the fact that a condition of incommensurability lurks beneath "the mirage of absolute commensurability" (326) that capitalism presents to the world. In one of its guises such an incommensurability emerges out of the historical separation of the aesthetic and the economic, as identified by Guillory: "there is no 'universal equivalent' for the adequation of cultural and material capital when the latter is *already* the order of the universal equivalent. The conversion of cultural into material capital (or vice versa) is precisely the condition of the commensuration of the incommensurable, an irresolvable social contradiction" (326). Historically aesthetics responds to the economy's claim to universal equivalence with "a theory of the

⁶ For an analysis of the problem of locating leverage in order to translate theory into practice see Findlay, "Inviting Archimedes Over: Literary Theory, The Levers of Power, and the Politics of Narrative." *Textual Studies in Canada* 8 (1996): 3-25.

⁷ See Chapter Two, part 4, and also footnote 59 pg 152 for comparison of Marxism and Deconstruction on inevitability, and the possibility of movement beyond the inevitable.

Spivak's interpretation of value as a textual chain, "(Value—Money—Capital)" "open" at both ends and "harbor[ing] discontinuities" (SR 113-14), has considerable critical utility. Because the money form is the universal equivalent of all value, the promiscuous motions of exchange are a matter of representation (value—money), and a matter of transformation as value becomes capital. In this way capitalism socialises human experience, but socialises human potential by reducing it to the narrow purposes of privatisation in its effort to further consolidate the centuries old process of enclosure to include far more than just commonly held agricultural space—today it encloses and privatises the genetic material of all life. Still, the representational nature of capitalist socialisation presents critical alternatives precisely because it is necessarily open and structured by indeterminacy. Values are coded through the mediation of linguistic structures, and recoded again in the representational concepts of economic value. Social transformation will "always have linguistic, more broadly representational, and ethical components to it" (Findlay; 291); however, the translation of linguistic, and cultural, representations into social justice will be discontinuous as long as there is a disjunction between "inegalitarian economics ... [and] formally egalitarian politics," as the editors of *Monthly Review* express it (Sweezy *et al*, 5), particularly with respect to social values such as education and justice. Neo-liberal platitudes in Canada about equality and plurality cannot disguise the discontinuity in practice between the legal code and its calculated mistranslation into injustice based on gender, economic status, class, and race.

Nevertheless, this dissertation takes the position that the "chain of value" is not simply an endless self-reproducing cycle, but that, capitalism, like human development "in the absolute movement of becoming" ("Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations" 64), has forward historical movement. Paradoxically, technology ensures that this is so. Holocaust, the actual unfolding of European history—the slave-trade and the millions of

incommensurability of aesthetic and economic values, on the basis of the inutility of the aesthetic object" (317).

This assertion of the inutility of art is a characteristic of successive *avant-garde* movements in the history of modern art from Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism and registers the impotent resentment of the artist for the patron-host in the historical transition from one form of patronage to another, one economic system into another. Of course, there are always dissenting voices: in the plastic arts, social realism in the USSR and Latin America, and *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Weimar Germany, for example, perfectly aware of the relation between the aesthetic and the economic, did not reject the need for "politicising art" (Benjamin 242). In Canada today this very incommensurability between culture/aesthetics and the economic takes the stage again in the ineffectual struggle for side-agreements to the NAFTA, or, in the terms of the Liberal government's Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade (SAGIT), calls for an "international cultural instrument" to protect culture. However, at the same time as this report argues for the creation of an "international cultural instrument ... to promote and protect" cultural diversity (58), Canadians witness the decline of their own cultural sovereignty and the demise of the institutions necessary to support it—for example, the near obliteration of a Canadian publishing industry (academic publishers included) in the wake of the NAFTA. Mixed economies are a compromise that serves the interests of the "species term of the whole," exchange value. To revisit such earlier attempts in order merely to reassert the inutility of the aesthetic object is guaranteed to be just as ineffectual until such a time as the falsely conceived unity of use-value and exchange-value gives way to a "system of production founded on use-values," as Martin Nicolaus phrases the immanent realisation of socialist value in his introduction to the *Grundrisse* (41).

deaths that accompany colonialism, Dresden, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the environment etc.—as well as potential holocaust, means that today the outdated notion of technology as “progress” is as absurd and anachronistic as “mom” in Madison Avenue’s automated Fifties “kitchen of the Future.” As a consequence of the very real possibility of unimaginable holocaust, technology as progress has been superseded in the social imaginary by internalised apprehension. The kind of optimistic view of the future characteristic of the 1950’s has been replaced by anomie and the increasingly impossible task of juggling the benefits of technology, subordinated to the narrow purposes of capitalist accumulation and power anyway, and the very real potential for catastrophic outcomes: “sublimation becomes increasingly suspect when confronted both by a material fulfilment near enough to touch and by the threatening annihilation of uncounted human beings,” as Adorno expressed it in 1954 (1033).

The well known Marxist precept that the “transformation of the superstructure [art and culture in Benjamin’s essay] ... takes place far more slowly than that of the substructure [economy]” (Benjamin; 218-19), is true in the very real sense that, even as technology becomes exponentially more sophisticated, the fact that we lack the social technologies necessary for controlling its disastrous potentials only becomes more glaringly obvious. That the natural cycles encoded into the genetic material of life are being recoded, with the collusion of a subservient legal code, to conform to the business cycles of liberal economics exemplifies the growing divergence between the benefits and risks of technology. As a result, technological solutions become increasingly necessary to cope with the disastrous consequences of the previous technological advance. In the absence of humane social technologies, the tension between benefit and risk is ratcheted up, and what was merely tension becomes uncontrollable stress (if we were talking about bolts, this would be called metal fatigue).

The discrepancy between healthy social outcomes and the social means necessary for achieving them produces disfunction and disaster.

Estimates are that “at least” one hundred and eleven million people died in the twentieth century’s wars (*Globe and Mail* Saturday 10, 01). The West is a major exporter of military technology and militaristic ideology. As events subsequent to 11th of September, 2001 stunningly demonstrate, the dominant Western ideology of liberalism, economic and political, is utterly powerless, or infinitely worse it lacks the will, to alter its motivations and policies to ensure that the twenty-first century will register any improvement. In fact, the victorious party in the Cold War proceeds as though nothing, except crude technology, has changed since the nineteenth century. Technological advance ensures that the supply of “collateral damage” has long ago outstripped the logic of supply and demand: by far the greater majority of the millions of very reluctant consumers of military ordinance cited above are civilian deaths. Collateral damage is more and more the operating principle of Western civilisation, in war, in “peace,” and in the social and natural environments. At the same time, internalised consciousness of disaster grows. Such a pervasive condition of normalised and internalised trauma on a mass scale cannot be sustained without positive change.⁸ The alternative is truly unthinkable. While the hard technologies consuming the earth proliferate at a

⁸ Of course, such a hypothesis should receive some kind of support from relevant disciplines such as the social sciences, for example. Nevertheless, in lieu of such support, we simply reflect on the observation of a Marxist philosopher that “[t]he more total society becomes, the greater the reification of the mind and the more paradoxical its effort to escape reification on its own. Even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today” (Adorno; 1040). This might seem overstated to some, and reductive psychologising to others; nevertheless, there is no denying that more and more of human experience is “modelled after the act of exchange,” and in such a context there is less and less room for consciousness to differentiate “itself as all difference degenerates into the monotony of supply” (1034). Progress beyond the merely technical, and consequently optimism about the future, are unthinkable in such a context. Adorno’s claim does not seem extreme in the least when placed into the context of the juridical-economic privatisation of genetic material previously the property of organisms born with it according to natural laws.

staggering pace, the need for the social technologies absolutely necessary for controlling them languish.

The incommensurability of cultural and material capital is one manifestation of the disjunction between existence and essence, freedom and necessity, use-value and exchange value. As Marx implies, the “*positive transcendence of ... human self-estrangement,*” requires a strategic essentialism if there is to be a “resolution of the strife between existence and essence ... freedom and necessity” (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* 70). For example, culture and history do matter. They are universal; but they are also contested and negotiable. In the current context, contradiction and heterogeneity are the undeniable essence of an economic and political system that in practice denies both; the depth of contradiction is registered in the fact that at the very same time as neo-liberalism denies culture, history, and responsibility—“It [terrorism] comes from their culture, not ours. The root causes are in their history, not ours” (Wente; *Globe and Mail* Saturday 22 October 2001)—it talks of nothing else but choice, equality, and the interconnectedness of nations, peoples, and economies on a global scale. The movement of liberal democracy toward monoculture (in the farmer’s field and on her television set) is commensurate with the movement of liberal economics toward monopoly. The need for, and failure of, “checks and balances” in the economic and political system speak to this fact (Standard Oil, Microsoft, Enron, Westray in Cape Breton etc.). Capitalism represents as a unity the conflict between the antagonistic conceptual modes of value that function beneath appearances. This unity disguises discord and conflict that manifests itself at the level of appearance as class struggle “won at the point of production.” The true essence of an ideology that cannot be escaped is that nothing is irreducible or irresolvable, particularly when winning at any cost becomes both the means and the end at all levels.

Spivak appears to suspend the “predictive scenario” in Marxism, or the positing of a future beyond capitalism, in her defence of the total or expanded form of value as a way of “transform[ing] what is most fragile in Marx”: “the predictive Eurocentric scenario, buttressed only by a spectacular *scaffolding* of crisis theory and the theory of a world market far into the future” (*OTM* 281). Marx, according to this, participates in the larger Eurocentric venture, the forced march of European imperialism. Although her discussion of necessity and freedom certainly suggests that the horizon of capitalism’s alleged “absolute commensurability” can be escaped, Spivak seems more interested in the potential for a certain freedom here and now with the future bracketed, *il n’y a pas de hors-texte*. That “the arena of practice ... remains bounded by ... two realms of ‘freedom, [the pre-originary and post-teleological]’ has critical value as a consequence of the fact that practice “can never be adequate to all of human/natural reality, never be absolutely justified” (*CPR* 329-30). In this way a deconstructive paradox represents freedom through critique and resistance as indeterminacy and the impossibility of a reality fully present to itself. Still, this may simply articulate a kind of synchronic freedom confined to inescapable structures. In keeping with a Marxist provenance, my position has been that freedom is not only synchronically inherent in the value form, arising out of its fundamental contradictions, but that future freedom is historically immanent at the same time.

Nevertheless, Spivak demonstrates that the affective (need and desire), that which escapes the horizon of rational control, is intimately implicated in the economic repression of use-value. Something like nascent capitalism’s heroic Odysseus, Robinson Crusoe, banished to his proto-colonial island with only his basic needs and his “set of books” (and in very short order a trusty and trusting servant), “[t]he parasitic part (exchange-value) is also the species term of the whole, thus allowing use-value the normative inside place of the host as well as banishing it as that which must be

subtracted so that value can be defined” (SR 118). Imperialism is genetically coded into the heart of liberalism’s conceptual sanctuary, and manifests itself in global and economic exploitation. Desire and need, like use-value, are banished; nevertheless, like use-value, desire and need are necessary for creating value (necessary though not sufficient to provide a fully “justified” account of its determinations), and like desire and need “use-value ... puts ... the entire textual chain of value into question” (118). The potential for social transformation is proportional both to the strength, integrity, and persistence of the critical “question,” and it is proportional to the extent to which the social being’s desire and need for unalienated self-actualisation within a social context is denied.

Historically, as Guillory argues, political economy is forced to “bracket” the “question of the use of the object, or the desire of any individual for an object” (301). It is in the spirit of this desire that I refer to what Guillory calls an aesthetic analogy⁹ as an affective analogy. To repeat, Guillory expresses the total or expanded form of value in terms of “the market [as] ... the omnipresent and inescapable horizon of social life” (326). This appeal to the total or expanded form of value opens up the field of struggle: “the value-constitutive nature of struggle can be expressed not only at the site of exchange but in the inescapable relation of all aspects of social life to the economy” (326). Spivak imparts a poststructuralist inflection to this expression of the expanded form of value in her emphasis on the textual, representational, and significatory determinations of value and exchange: the “coding of value makes all exchange possible” (OTM 281). This formulation, therefore, exploits the textuality of value as an esoteric sign-system. As such, this coded system of signification, governed by cryptographic rules and regulations, prescriptions and proscriptions, and engaged in

⁹ Again, the aesthetic analogy was political economy’s model for, and explanation of, the relationship between the cultural and the economic prior to the rupture of economics and aesthetics.

arcane mystifications, is also subject to decoding, re-coding, and transcoding: “this idea of value-producing/value-coding/code-exchanging as being-human has many areas of operation. To ‘name’ a few: affective value, cognitive value, indeed ‘cultural’ value” (281).

This poststructuralist inflection of the Marxist expanded form of value has then important implications when critically applied to cases such as education. Hence, Newson’s argument, for example, for the necessity of “engag[ing] in a conceptual, as opposed to technical, examination of performance indicators ... [in order to] display the potential weaknesses, if not dangers, of accommodation strategies” (174).

Accommodation is the passive response to pressure on universities to remodel themselves in the image of the market. A crucial part of such interrogations includes exposing the mechanisms of ideological struggle at levels where they are consciously deployed and consciously experienced, but also includes exposing the mystifications of the conceptual at deeper levels—that is the esoteric mysteries of value effaced in disclosure. Precisely as Marx demonstrates of labour materialised in commodities in exchange, intellectual labour producing knowledge is necessarily “*socially determined*” (*Theories of Surplus Value* 74). Arguably, nothing demonstrates the cooperative nature of human experience more than knowledge. As is often observed, it is no longer possible for any one individual to have mastery over all culturally available knowledge in the way it may have been possible prior to the early modern period. Producing and preserving knowledge is an irreducibly communal enterprise. The emphasis placed today on the knowledge economy is in practice a fetishisation of immediately marketable information; in practice, therefore, knowledge is disclosed in information, even as its own effacement. The emphasis placed today on the importance of education to the knowledge economy means that there is no better time to take advantage of the conflict between two competing tendencies—to resist and transform

the one, and to cultivate the other. Liberal economics, and its handmaid liberal democracy, in their long march toward homogeneity, monoculture, and monopoly, continues the construction of a hierarchal pyramid built on an ever-growing base of dispossession, despair, and pain. This movement, and the effacement of the socially determined nature of intellectual labour, conflicts with the antithetical growth of knowledge itself: radically heterogeneous and chaotic, “an inverted pyramid widening at the top every second at an exponential rate” (Swift, *Wired on Words*), the need and desire to know exceeds the narrow instrumentalism of management strategies calling all into question in the movement toward “the subjective existence of thought and experienced society present for itself” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts” 71).

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