

Marxism and Literature

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1. Culture

At the very centre of a major area of modern thought and practice, which it is habitually used to describe, is a concept, 'culture', which in itself, through variation and complication, embodies not only the issues but the contradictions through which it has developed. The concept at once fuses and confuses the radically different experiences and tendencies of its formation. It is then impossible to carry through any serious cultural analysis without reaching towards a consciousness of the concept itself: a consciousness that must be, as we shall see, historical. This hesitation, before what seems the richness of developed theory and the fullness of achieved practice, has the awkwardness, even the gaucherie, of any radical doubt. It is literally a moment of crisis: a jolt in experience, a break in the sense of history; forcing us back from so much that seemed positive and available — all the ready insertions into a crucial argument, all the accessible entries into immediate practice. Yet the insight cannot be sealed over. When the most basic concepts — the concepts, as it is said, from which we begin — are suddenly seen to be not concepts but problems, not analytic problems either but historical movements that are still unresolved, there is no sense in listening to their sonorous summons or their resounding clashes. We have only, if we can, to recover the substance from which their forms were cast.

Society, economy, culture: each of these 'areas', now lagged by a concept, is a comparatively recent historical formulation. 'Society' was active fellowship, company, 'common doing', before it became the description of a general system or order. 'Economy' was the management of a household and then the management of a community before it became the description of a perceived system of production, distribution, and exchange. 'Culture', before these transitions, was the growth and tending of crops and animals; and by extension the growth and tending of human faculties. In their modern development the three concepts did not move in step, but each, at a critical point, was affected by the movement of the others. At least this is how we may now see their history. But in the run of the real changes what was being put into the new ideas, and to some extent fixed

in them, was an always complex and largely unprecedented experience. 'Society' with its received emphasis on immediate relationships was a conscious alternative to the formal rigidities of an inherited, then seen as an imposed, order: a 'state', 'Economy', with its received emphasis on management, was a conscious attempt to understand and control a body of activities which had been taken not only as necessary but as given. Each concept then interacted with a changing history and experience. 'Society', chosen for its substance and immediacy, the 'civil society' which could be distinguished from the formal rigidities of 'state', became in its turn abstract and systematic. New descriptions became necessary for the immediate substance which 'society' eventually excluded. For example, 'individual', which had once meant indivisible, a member of a group, was developed to become not only a separate but an opposing term—'the individual' and 'society'. In itself and in its derived and qualifying terms, 'society' is a formulation of the experience we now summarize as 'bourgeois society': its active creation, against the rigidities of the feudal 'state'; its problems and its limits, within this kind of creation, until it is paradoxically distinguished from and even opposed to its own initial impulses. Similarly, the rationality of 'economy', as a way of understanding and controlling a system of production, distribution, and exchange, in direct relation to the actual institution of a new kind of economic system, persisted but was limited by the very problems it confronted. The very product of rational institution and control was projected as 'natural', a 'natural economy', with laws like the laws of the ('unchanging') physical world.

Most modern social thought begins from these concepts, with the inherent marks of their formation and their unresolved problems usually taken for granted. There is then 'political', 'social' or 'sociological', and 'economic' thought, and these are believed to describe 'areas', perceived entities. It is then usually added, though sometimes reluctantly, that there are of course other 'areas': notably the 'psychological' and the 'cultural'. But while it is better to admit these than neglect them, it is usually not seen that their forms follow, in practice, from the unresolved problems of the initial shaping concepts. Is 'psychology' 'individual' (psychological) or 'social'? That problem can be left for dispute within the appropriate discipline, until it is noticed that it is the

problem of what is 'social' that the dominant development of 'society' has left unresolved. Are we to understand 'culture' as 'the arts', as 'a system of meanings and values', or as a 'whole way of life', and how are these to be related to 'society' and 'the economy'? The questions have to be asked, but we are unlikely to be able to answer them unless we recognize the problems which were inherent in the concepts 'society' and 'economy' and which have been passed on to concepts like 'culture' by the abstraction and limitation of those terms.

The concept of 'culture', when it is seen in the broad context of historical development, exerts a strong pressure against the limited terms of all the other concepts. That is always its advantage; it is always also the source of its difficulties, both in definition and comprehension. Until the eighteenth century it was still a noun of process: the culture of something—crops, animals, minds. The decisive changes in 'society' and 'economy' had begun earlier, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; much of their essential development was complete before 'culture' came to include its new and elusive meanings. These cannot be understood unless we realize what had happened to 'society' and 'economy'; but equally none can be fully understood unless we examine a decisive modern concept which by the eighteenth century needed a new word—*civilization*.

The notion of 'civilizing', as bringing men within a social organization, was of course already known; it rested on *civis* and *civitas*, and its aim was expressed in the adjective 'civil' as orderly, educated, or polite. It was positively extended, as we have seen, in the concept of 'civil society'. But 'civilization' was to mean more than this. It expressed two senses which were historically linked: an achieved state, which could be contrasted with 'barbarism', but now also an achieved state of development, which implied historical process and progress. This was the new historical rationality of the Enlightenment, in fact combined with a self-referring celebration of an achieved condition of refinement and order. It was this combination that was to be problematic. The developmental perspective of the characteristic eighteenth-century Universal History was of course a significant advance. It was the crucial step beyond the relatively static ('timeless') conception of history which had depended on religious or metaphysical assumptions. Men had made their

own history, in this special sense: that they (or some of them) had achieved 'civilization'. This process was secular and developmental, and in that sense historical. But at the same time it was a history that had culminated in an achieved state: in practice the metropolitan civilization of England and France. The insistent rationality which explored and informed all the stages and difficulties of this process came to an effective stop at the point where civilization could be said to have been achieved. Indeed all that could be rationally projected was the extension and triumph of these achieved values.

This position, already under heavy attack from older religious and metaphysical systems and their associated notions of order, became vulnerable in new ways. The two decisive responses of a modern kind were, first, the idea of culture, offering a different sense of human growth and development, and, second, the idea of socialism, offering a social and historical criticism of and alternative to 'civilization' and 'civil society' as fixed and achieved conditions. The extensions, transfers, and overlaps between all these shaping modern concepts, and between them and residual concepts of much older kinds, have been quite exceptionally complex.

'Civilization' and 'culture' (especially in its common early form as 'cultivation') were in effect, in the late eighteenth century, interchangeable terms. Each carried the problematic double sense of an achieved state and of an achieved state of development. Their eventual divergence has several causes. First, there was the attack on 'civilization' as superficial; an 'artificial' as distinct from a 'natural' state; a cultivation of 'external' properties—politeness and luxury—as against more 'human' needs and impulses. This attack, from Rousseau on through the Romantic movement, was the basis of one important alternative sense of 'culture'—as a process of 'inner' or 'spiritual' as distinct from 'external' development. The primary effect of this alternative was to associate culture with religion, art, the family and personal life, as distinct from or actually opposed to 'civilization' or 'society' in its new abstract and general sense. It was from this sense, though not always with its full implications, that 'culture' as a general process of 'inner' development was extended to include a descriptive sense of the means and works of such development: that is, 'culture' as a general classification of 'the arts', religion, and the institutions and practices

of meanings and values. Its relations with 'society' were then problematic, for these were evidently 'social' institutions and practices but were seen as distinct from the aggregate of general and 'external' institutions and practices now commonly called 'society'. The difficulty was ordinarily negotiated by relating 'culture', even where it was evidently social in practice, to the 'inner life' in its most accessible, secular forms: 'subjectivity', 'the imagination', and in these terms 'the individual'. The religious emphasis weakened, and was replaced by what was in effect a metaphysics of subjectivity and the imaginative process. 'Culture', or more specifically 'art' and 'literature' (themselves newly generalized and abstracted), were seen as the deepest record, the deepest impulse, and the deepest resource of the 'human spirit'. 'Culture' was then at once the secularization and the liberalization of earlier metaphysical forms. Its agencies and processes were distinctively human, and were generalized as subjective, but certain quasi-metaphysical forms—'the imagination', 'creativity', 'inspiration', 'the aesthetic', and the new positive sense of 'myth'—were in effect composed into a new pantheon.

This original break had been with 'civilization' in its assumed 'external' sense. But as secularization and liberalization continued, there was a related pressure on the concept of 'civilization' itself. This reached a critical point during the rapid development of industrial society and its prolonged social and political conflicts. In one view this process was part of the continuing development of civilization: a new and higher social order. But in another view civilization was the achieved state which these new developments were threatening to destroy. 'Civilization' then became an ambiguous term, denoting on the one hand enlightened and progressive development and on the other hand an achieved and threatened state, becoming increasingly retrospective and often in practice identified with the received glories of the past. In the latter sense 'civilization' and 'culture' again overlapped, as received states rather than as continuing processes. Thus, a new battery of forces was ranged against both culture and civilization: materialism, commercialism, democracy, socialism.

Yet 'culture', meanwhile, underwent yet another development. This is especially difficult to trace but is centrally important, since it led to 'culture' as a social—indeed specifically

anthropological and sociological—concept. The tension and interaction between this developing sense and the other sense of 'inner' process and 'the arts' remain evident and important.

There was always, in practice, some connection between the two developments, though the emphases came to be very different. The origin of this second sense is rooted in the ambiguity of 'civilization' as both an achieved state and an achieved state of development. What were the properties of this achieved state and correspondingly the agencies of its development? In the perspective of the Universal Histories the characteristic central property and agency was reason—an enlightened comprehension of ourselves and the world, which allows us to create higher forms of social and natural order, overcoming ignorance and superstition and the social and political forms to which they have led and which they support. History, in this sense, was the progressive establishment of more rational and therefore more civilized systems. Much of the confidence of this movement was drawn from the enlightenment embodied in the new physical sciences, as well as from the sense of an achieved social order. It is very difficult to distinguish this new secular sense of 'civilization' from a comparably secular sense of 'culture' as an interpretation of human development. Each was a modern idea in the sense that it stressed human capacity not only to understand but to build a human social order. This was the decisive difference of both ideas from the earlier derivation of social concepts and social orders from presumed religious or metaphysical states. But when it came to identifying the real motive forces, in this secular process of 'man making his own history', there were radical differences of view.

Thus one of the very earliest emphases on 'man making his own history' was that of Vico, in *The New Science* (from 1725). He asserted

a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind. Whoever reflects on this cannot but marvel that the philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows; and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations or civil world, which, since men had made it, men could hope to know. (p. 331)*

* All references are to editions specified in the Booklist.

Here, against the grain of the time, the 'natural sciences' are rejected but the 'human sciences' given a startling new emphasis. We can know what we have made, indeed know by the fact of making. The specific interpretations which Vico then offered are now of little interest, but his description of a mode of development which was at once, and interactively, the shaping of societies and the shaping of human minds is probably the effective origin of the general social sense of 'culture'. The concept itself was remarkably advanced by Herder, in *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–91). He accepted the emphasis on the historical self-development of humanity, but argued that this was much too complex to be reduced to the evolution of a single principle, and especially to something so abstract as 'reason'; and, further, that it was much too variable to be reduced to a progressive unilinear development culminating in 'European civilization'. It was necessary, he argued, to speak of 'cultures' rather than 'culture', so as to acknowledge variability, and within any culture to recognize the complexity and variability of its shaping forces. The specific interpretations he then offered, in terms of 'organic' peoples and nations, and against the 'external universalism' of the Enlightenment, are elements of the Romantic movement and now of little active interest. But the idea of a fundamental social process which shapes specific and distinct 'ways of life' is the effective origin of the comparative social sense of 'culture' and its now necessary plural 'cultures'.

The complexity of the concept of 'culture' is then remarkable. It became a noun of 'inner' process, specialized to its presumed agencies in 'intellectual life' and 'the arts'. It became also a noun of general process, specialized to its presumed configurations in 'whole ways of life'. It played a crucial role in definitions of 'the arts' and 'the humanities', from the first sense. It played an equally crucial role in definitions of the 'human sciences' and the 'social sciences', in the second sense. Each tendency is ready to deny any proper use of the concept to the other, in spite of many attempts at reconciliation. In any modern theory of culture, but perhaps especially in a Marxist theory, this complexity is a source of great difficulty. The problem of knowing, at the outset, whether this would be a theory of 'the arts and intellectual life' in their relations to 'society', or a theory of the social

process which creates specific and different 'ways of life', is only the most obvious problem.

The first substantial problem is in attitudes towards 'civilization'. Here the decisive intervention of Marxism was the analysis of 'civil society', and what within its terms was known as 'civilization', as a specific historical form: bourgeois society as created by the capitalist mode of production. This provided an indispensable critical perspective, but it was still largely contained within the assumptions which had produced the concept: that of a progressive secular development, most obviously; but also that of a broadly unilinear development. Bourgeois society and capitalist production were at once heavily attacked and seen as historically progressive (the latter in received terms, as in 'the bourgeoisie ... has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones', *Communist Manifesto*, 53). Socialism would supersede them as the next and highest stage of the development.

It is important to compare this inherited perspective with other elements in Marxism and in the radical and socialist movements which preceded it. Often, especially in the earlier movements, influenced by an alternative tradition, including the radical critique of 'civilization', it was not the progressive but the fundamentally contradictory character of this development that was decisive. 'Civilization' had produced not only wealth, order, and refinement, but as part of the same process poverty, disorder, and degradation. It was attacked for its 'artificiality'—its glaring contrasts with a 'natural' or 'human' order. The values upheld against it were not those of the next higher stage of development, but of an essential human brotherhood, often expressed as something to be recovered as well as gained. These two tendencies in Marxism, and in the wider socialist movement, have often in effect been brought together, but in theory and especially in the analysis of subsequent historical practice need to be radically distinguished.

The next decisive intervention of Marxism was the rejection of what Marx called 'idealist historiography', and in that sense of the theoretical procedures of the Enlightenment. History was not seen (or not always or primarily seen) as the overcoming of ignorance and superstition by knowledge and reason. What that account and perspective excluded was material history, the history of labour, industry as the 'open book of the human

faculties'. The original notion of 'man making his own history' was given a new radical content by this emphasis on 'man making himself' through producing his own means of life. For all its difficulties in detailed demonstration this was the most important intellectual advance in all modern social thought. It offered the possibility of overcoming the dichotomy between 'society' and 'nature', and of discovering new constitutive relationships between 'society' and 'economy'. As a specification of the basic element of the social process of culture it was a recovery of the wholeness of history. It inaugurated the decisive inclusion of that material history which had been excluded from the 'so-called history of civilization, which is all a history of religions and states'. Marx's own history of capitalism is only the most eminent example.

But there are difficulties within this achievement. Its emphasis on social process, of a constitutive kind, was qualified by the persistence of an earlier kind of rationalism, related to the assumption of progressive unilinear development, as in one version of the discovery of the 'scientific laws' of society. This weakened the constitutive and strengthened a more instrumental perspective. Again, the stress on material history, especially within the necessary polemics of its establishment, was in one special way compromised. Instead of making cultural history material, which was the next radical move, it was made dependent, secondary, 'superstructural': a realm of 'mere' ideas, beliefs, arts, customs, determined by the basic material history. What matters here is not only the element of reduction; it is the reproduction, in an altered form, of the separation of 'culture' from material social life, which had been the dominant tendency in idealist cultural thought. Thus the full possibilities of the concept of culture as a constitutive social process, creating specific and different 'ways of life', which could have been remarkably deepened by the emphasis on a material social process, were for a long time missed, and were often in practice superseded by an abstracting unilinear universalism. At the same time the significance of the alternative concept of culture, defining 'intellectual life' and 'the arts', was compromised by its apparent reduction to 'superstructural' status, and was left to be developed by those who, in the very process of idealizing it, broke its necessary connections with society and history and, in the areas of psychology, art, and belief, developed a powerful

alternative sense of the constitutive human process itself. It is then not surprising that in the twentieth century this alternative sense has come to overlay and stifle Marxism, with some war-rant in its most obvious errors, but without having to face the real challenge which was implicit, and so nearly clarified, in the original Marxist intervention.

In the complex development of the concept of 'culture', which has of course now been incorporated into so many different systems and practices, there is one decisive question which was returned to again and again in the formative period of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but which was on the whole missed, or at least not developed, in the first stage of Marxism. This is the question of human language, which was an understandable preoccupation of the historians of 'civilization', and a central, even a defining question, for the theorists of a constitutive process of 'culture', from Vico to Herder and beyond. Indeed, to understand the full implications of the idea of a 'constitutive human process' it is to changing concepts of language that we must turn.

2. Language

A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world. The received major categories—'world', 'reality', 'nature', 'human'—may be counterposed or related to the category 'language', but it is now a commonplace to observe that all categories, including the category 'language', are themselves constructions in language, and can thus only with an effort, and within a particular system of thought, be separated from language for relational inquiry. Such efforts and such systems, nevertheless, constitute a major part of the history of thought. Many of the problems which have emerged from this history are relevant to Marxism, and in certain areas Marxism itself has contributed to them, by extension from its basic revaluation, in historical materialism, of the received major categories. Yet it is significant that, by comparison, Marxism has contributed very little to thinking about language itself. The result has been either that limited and undeveloped versions of language as a 'reflection' of 'reality' have been taken for granted, or that propositions about language, developed within or in the forms of other and often antagonistic systems of thought, have been synthesized with Marxist propositions about other kinds of activity, in ways which are not only ultimately untenable but, in our own time, radically limiting to the strength of the social propositions. The effects on cultural theory, and in particular on thinking about literature, have been especially marked.

The key moments which should be of interest to Marxism, in the development of thinking about language, are, first, the emphasis on language as *activity* and, second, the emphasis on the *history* of language. Neither of these positions, on its own, is enough to restate the whole problem. It is the conjunction and consequent revaluation of each position that remains necessary. But in different ways, and with significant practical results, each position transformed those habitual conceptions of language which depended on and supported relatively static ways of thinking about human beings in the world.

The major emphasis on language as activity began in the eighteenth century, in close relation to the idea of men having

electronic transmission and recording of speech and of writing for speech, and the chemical and electronic composition and transmission of images, in complex relations with speech and with writing for speech, and including images which can themselves be 'written'. None of these means cancels print, or even diminishes its specific importance, but they are not simple additions to it, or mere alternatives. In their complex connections and interrelations they compose a new substantial practice in social language itself, over a range from public address and manifest representation to 'inner speech' and verbal thought. For they are always more than new technologies, in the limited sense. They are means of production, developed in direct if complex relations with profoundly changing and extending social and cultural relationships: changes elsewhere recognizable as deep political and economic transformations. It is in no way surprising that the specialized concept of 'literature', developed in precise forms of correspondence with a particular social class, a particular organization of learning, and the appropriate particular technology of print, should now be so often invoked in retrospective, nostalgic, or reactionary moods, as a form of opposition to what is correctly seen as a new phase of civilization. The situation is historically comparable to that invocation of the divine and the sacred, and of divine and sacred learning, against the new humanist concept of literature, in the difficult and contested transition from feudal to bourgeois society.

What can then be seen as happening, in each transition, is a historical development of social language itself: finding new means, new forms and then new definitions of a changing practical consciousness. Many of the active values of 'literature' have then to be seen, not as tied to the concept, which came to limit as well as to summarize them, but as elements of a continuing and changing practice which already substantially, and now at the level of theoretical redefinition, is moving beyond its old forms.

4. Ideology

The concept of 'ideology' did not originate in Marxism and is still in no way confined to it. Yet it is evidently an important concept in almost all Marxist thinking about culture, and especially about literature and ideas. The difficulty then is that we have to distinguish three common versions of the concept, which are all common in Marxist writing. These are, broadly:

- (i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;
- (ii) a system of illusory beliefs—false ideas or false consciousness—which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;
- (iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas.

In one variant of Marxism, senses (i) and (ii) can be effectively combined. In a class society, all beliefs are founded on class position, and the systems of belief of all classes—or, quite commonly, of all classes preceding, and other than, the proletariat, whose formation is the project of the abolition of class society—are then in part or wholly false (illusory). The specific problems in this powerful general proposition have led to intense controversy within Marxist thought. It is not unusual to find some form of the proposition alongside uses of the simple sense (i), as in the characterization, for example by Lenin, of 'socialist ideology'. Another way of broadly retaining but distinguishing senses (i) and (ii) is to use sense (i) for systems of belief founded on class position, including that of the proletariat within class society, and sense (ii) for contrast with (in a broad sense) scientific knowledge of all kinds, which is based on reality rather than illusions. Sense (iii) undercuts most of these associations and distinctions, for the ideological process—the production of meanings and ideas—is then seen as general and universal, and ideology is either this process itself or the area of its study. Positions associated with senses (i) and (ii) are then brought to bear in Marxist ideological studies.

In this situation there can be no question of establishing,

except in polemics, a single 'correct' Marxist definition of ideology. It is more to the point to return the term and its variations to the issues within which it and these were formed, and specifically, first, to the historical development. We can then return to the issues as they now present themselves, and to the important controversies which the term and its variations reveal and conceal.

'Ideology' was coined as a term in the late eighteenth century, by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy. It was intended to be a philosophical term for the 'science of ideas'. Its use depended on a particular understanding of the nature of 'ideas', which was broadly that of Locke and the empiricist tradition. Thus ideas were not to be and could not be understood in any of the older 'metaphysical' or 'idealist' senses. The science of ideas must be a natural science, since all ideas originate in man's experience of the world. Specifically, in Destutt, ideology is part of zoology:

We have only an incomplete knowledge of an animal if we do not know his intellectual faculties. Ideology is a part of Zoology, and it is especially in man that this part is important and deserves to be more deeply understood. (*Éléments d'idéologie*, 1801, Preface)

The description is characteristic of scientific empiricism. The 'real elements' of ideology are 'our intellectual faculties, their principal phenomena and their most evident circumstances'. The critical aspect of this emphasis was at once realized by one kind of opponent, the reactionary de Bonald: 'Ideology has replaced metaphysics . . . because modern philosophy sees no other ideas in the world but those of men'. De Bonald correctly related the scientific sense of ideology to the empiricist tradition which had passed from Locke through Condillac, pointing out its preoccupation with 'signs and their influence on thought' and summarizing its 'sad system' as a reduction of 'our thoughts' to 'transformed sensations'. 'All the characteristics of intelligence', de Bonald added, 'disappeared under the scalpel of this ideological dissection.'

The initial bearings of the concept of ideology are then very complex. It was indeed an assertion against metaphysics that there are 'no ideas in the world but those of men'. At the same time, intended as a branch of empirical science, 'ideology' was limited, by its philosophical assumptions, to a version of ideas

as 'transformed sensations' and to a version of language as a 'system of signs' (based, as in Condillac, on an ultimately mathematical model). These limitations, with their characteristic abstraction of 'man' and 'the world', and with their reliance on the passive 'reception' and 'systematic association' of 'sensations', were not only 'scientific' and 'empirical' but were elements of a basically bourgeois view of human existence. 'The rejection of metaphysics was a characteristic gain, confirmed by the development of precise and systematic empirical enquiry. At the same time the effective exclusion of any social dimension—both the practical exclusion of social relationships implied in the model of 'man' and 'the world', and the characteristic displacement of necessary social relationships to a formal system, whether the 'laws of psychology' or language as a 'system of signs'—was a deep and apparently irrecoverable loss and distortion.

It is significant that the initial objection to the exclusion of any active conception of intelligence was made from generally reactionary positions, which sought to retain the sense of activity in its old metaphysical forms. It is even more significant, in the next stage of the development, that a derogatory sense of 'ideology' as 'impractical theory' or 'abstract illusion', first introduced from an evidently reactionary position by Napoleon, was taken over, though from a new position, by Marx.

Napoleon said:

It is to the doctrine of the ideologues—to this diffuse metaphysics, which in a contrived manner seeks to find the primary causes and on this foundation would erect the legislation of peoples, instead of adapting the laws to a knowledge of the human heart and of the lessons of history—to which one must attribute all the misfortunes which have befallen our beautiful France.*

Scott (Napoleon, 1827, vi. 251) summarized: 'Ideology, by which nickname the French ruler used to distinguish every species of theory, which, resting in no respect upon the basis of self-interest, could, he thought, prevail with none save hot-brained boys and crazed enthusiasts.'

Each element of this condemnation of 'ideology'—which became very well known and was often repeated in Europe and North America during the first half of the nineteenth century—was taken up and applied by Marx and Engels, in their

* Cited in A. Naess, *Democracy, Ideology, and Objectivity*, Oslo, 1956, 151.

early writings. It is the substantial content of their attack on their German contemporaries in *The German Ideology* (1846). To find 'primary causes' in 'ideas' was seen as the basic error. There is even the same tone of contemptuous practicality in the anecdote in Marx's Preface:

Once upon a time an honest fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this idea out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious idea, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. (GI, 2)

Abstract theories, separated from the 'basis of self-interest', were then beside the point.

Of course the argument could not be left at this stage. In place of Napoleon's conservative (and suitably vague) standard of 'knowledge of the human heart and of the lessons of history', Marx and Engels introduced 'the real ground of history'—the process of production and self-production—from which the 'origins and growth' of 'different theoretical products' could be traced. The simple cynicism of the appeal to 'self-interest' became a critical diagnosis of the real basis of all ideas:

the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. (GI, 39)

Yet already at this stage there were obvious complications. 'Ideology' became a polemical nickname for kinds of thinking which neglected or ignored the material social process of which 'consciousness' was always a part:

Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process. (GI, 14)

The emphasis is clear but the analogy is difficult. The physical processes of the retina cannot reasonably be separated from the physical processes of the brain, which, as a necessarily connected activity, control and 'rectify' the inversion. The camera obscura was a conscious device for discerning proportions; the inversion had in fact been corrected by adding another lens. In one sense the analogies are no more than incidental, but they

probably relate to (though in fact, as examples, they work against) an underlying criterion of 'direct positive knowledge'. They are in a way very like the use of 'the idea of gravity' to refute the notion of the controlling power of ideas. If the idea had been not a practical and scientific understanding of a natural force but, say, an idea of 'racial superiority' or of 'the inferior wisdom of women', the argument might in the end have come out the same way but it would have had to pass through many more significant stages and difficulties.

This is also true even of the more positive definition:

We do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. (GI, 14)

That 'ideology' should be deprived of its 'semblance of independence' is entirely reasonable. But the language of 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates' is simplistic, and has in repetition been disastrous. It belongs to the naïve dualism of 'mechanical materialism', in which the idealist separation of 'ideas' and 'material reality' had been repeated, but with its priorities reversed. The emphasis on consciousness as inseparable from conscious existence, and then on conscious existence as inseparable from material social processes, is in effect lost in the use of this deliberately degrading vocabulary. The damage can be realized if we compare it for a moment with Marx's description of 'human labour' in *Capital* (I. 185-6):

We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human... What distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement.

This goes perhaps even too much the other way, but its difference from the world of 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates' hardly needs to be stressed. Consciousness is seen from the beginning as part of the human material social process, and

its products in 'ideas' are then as much part of this process as material products themselves. This, centrally, was the thrust of Marx's whole argument, but the point was lost, in this crucial area, by a temporary surrender to the cynicism of 'practical men' and, even more, to the abstract empiricism of a version of 'natural science'.

What had really been introduced, as a corrective to abstract empiricism, was the sense of material and social history as the real relationship between 'man' and 'nature'. But it is then very curious of Marx and Engels to abstract, in turn, the persuasive 'men in the flesh', at whom we 'arrive'. To begin by presupposing them, as the necessary starting-point, is right while we remember that they are therefore also conscious men. The decision not to set out from 'what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived' is then at best a corrective reminder that there is other and sometimes harder evidence of what they have done. But it is also at its worst an objectivist fantasy: that the whole 'real life-process' can be known independently of language ('what men say') and of its records ('men as narrated'). For the very notion of history would become absurd if we did not look at 'men as narrated' (when, having died, they are hardly likely to be accessible 'in the flesh', and on which, inevitably, Marx and Engels extensively and repeatedly relied) as well as at that 'history of industry . . . as it objectively exists . . . an open book of the human faculties . . . a human psychology' which can be directly apprehended' (EPM, 121), which they had decisively introduced against the exclusions of other historians. What they were centrally arguing was a new way of seeing the total relationships between this 'open book' and 'what men say' and 'men as narrated'. In a polemical response to the abstract history of ideas or of consciousness they made their main point but in one decisive area lost it again. This confusion is the source of the naïve reduction, in much subsequent Marxist thinking, of consciousness, imagination, art, and ideas to 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates', and then of a profound confusion in the concept of 'ideology'.

We can trace further elements of this failure if we examine those definitions of ideology which gain most of their force by contrast with what is not ideology. The most common of these contrasts is with what is called 'science'. For example:

Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence. (GI, 17)

There are several difficulties here. The uses of 'consciousness' and 'philosophy' depend almost entirely on the main argument about the futility of separating consciousness and thought from the material social process. It is the separation that makes such consciousness and thought into ideology. But it is easy to see how the point could be taken, and has often been taken, in a quite different way. In a new kind of abstraction, 'consciousness' and 'philosophy' are separated, in their turn, from 'real knowledge' and from the 'practical process'. This is especially easy to do with the available language of 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates'. The result of this separation, against the original conception of an indissoluble process, is the farcical exclusion of consciousness from the 'development of men' and from 'real knowledge' of this development. But the former, at least, is impossible by any standard. All that can then be done to mask its absurdity is elaboration of the familiar two-stage model (the mechanical materialist reversal of the idealist dualism), in which there is first material social life and then, at some temporal or spatial distance, consciousness and 'its' products. This leads directly to simple reductionism: 'consciousness' and 'its' products can be nothing but 'reflections' of what has already occurred in the material social process.

It can of course be said from experience (that experience which produced the later anxious warnings and qualifications) that this is a poor practical way of trying to understand 'consciousness and its products': that these continually escape so simple a reductive equation. But this is a marginal point. The real point is that the separation and abstraction of 'consciousness and its products' as a 'reflective' or 'second-stage' process results in an ironic idealization of 'consciousness and its products' at this secondary level.

For 'consciousness and its products' are always, though in variable forms, parts of the material social process itself: whether as what Marx called the necessary element of 'imagination' in the labour process; or as the necessary conditions of

associated labour, in language and in practical ideas of relationship; or, which is so often and significantly forgotten, in the real processes—all of them physical and material, most of them manifestly so—which are masked and idealized as 'consciousness and its products' but which, when seen without illusions, are themselves necessarily social material activities. What is in fact idealized, in the ordinary reductive view, is 'thinking' or 'imagining', and the only materialization of these abstracted processes is by a general reference back to the whole (and because abstracted then in effect complete) material social process. And what this version of Marxism especially overlooks is that 'thinking' and 'imagining' are from the beginning social processes (of course including that capacity for 'internalization' which is a necessary part of any social process between actual individuals) and that they become accessible only in unarguably physical and material ways: in voices, in sounds made by instruments, in penned or printed writing, in arranged pigments on canvas or plaster, in worked marble or stone. To exclude these material social processes from the material social process is the same error as to reduce all material social processes to mere technical means for some other abstracted 'life'. The 'practical process' of the 'development of men' necessarily includes them from the beginning, and as more than the technical means for some quite separate 'thinking' and 'imagining'.

What can then be said to be 'ideology', in its received negative form? It can of course be said that these processes, or some of them, come in variable forms (which is as undeniable as the variable forms of any production), and that some of these forms are 'ideology' while others are not. This is a tempting path, but it is usually not followed far, because there is a fool's beacon erected just a little way along it. This is the difficult concept of 'science'. We have to notice first a problem of translation. The German *Wissenschaft*, like the French *science*, has a much broader meaning than English *science* has had since the early nineteenth century. The broader meaning is in the area of 'systematic knowledge' or 'organized learning'. In English this has been largely specialized to such knowledge based on observation of the 'real world' (at first, and still persistently, within the categories of 'man' and 'the world') and on the significant disjunction (and even opposition) between the formerly interchangeable words *experience* and *experiment*, the latter attract-

ing, in the course of development, new senses of *empirical* and *positive*. It is then very difficult for any English reader to take the translated phrase of Marx and Engels—'real, positive science'—in anything other than this specialized sense. But two qualifications have then at once to be made. First, that the Marxist definition of the 'real world', by moving beyond the separated categories of 'man' and 'the world' and including, as central, the active material social process, had made any such simple transfer impossible:

If industry is conceived as an exoteric form of the realization of the essential human faculties, one is able to grasp also the human essence of Nature or the natural essence of man. The natural sciences will then abandon their abstract materialist, or rather, idealist, orientation, and will become the basis of a human science. . . . One basis for life and another for science is a priori a falsehood. (EPN, 122)

This is an argument precisely against the categories of the English specialization of 'science'. But then, second, the actual progress of scientific rationality, especially in its rejection of metaphysics and in its triumphant escape from a limitation to observation, experiment, and inquiry within received religious and philosophical systems, was immensely attractive as a model for understanding society. Though the object of inquiry had been radically changed—from 'man' and 'the world' to an active, interactive, and in a key sense self-creating material social process—it was supposed, or rather hoped, that the methods, or at least the mood, could be carried over.

This sense of getting free of the ordinary assumptions of social inquiry, which usually began where it should have ended, with the forms and categories of a particular historical phase of society, is immensely important and was radically demonstrated in most of Marx's work. But it is very different from the uncritical use of 'science' and 'scientific', with deliberate references to and analogies from 'natural science', to describe the essentially critical and historical work which was actually undertaken. Engels, it is true, used these references and analogies much more often than Marx. 'Scientific socialism' became, under his influence, a polemical catchword. In practice it depends almost equally on a (justifiable) sense of systematic knowledge of society, based on observation and analysis of its processes of development (as distinct, say, from 'utopian'

socialism, which projected a desirable future without close consideration of the past and present processes within which it had to be attained; and on a (false) association with the 'fundamental' or 'universal' 'laws' of natural science, which, even when they turned out to be 'laws' rather than effective working generalizations or hypotheses, were of a different kind because their objects of study were radically different.

The notion of 'science' has had a crucial effect, negatively, on the concept of 'ideology'. If 'ideology' is contrasted with 'real, positive science', in the sense of detailed and connected knowledge of 'the practical process of development of men', then the distinction may have significance as an indication of the received assumptions, concepts, and points of view which can be shown to prevent or distort such detailed and connected knowledge. We can often feel that this is all that was really intended. But the contrast is of course less simple than it may look, since its confident application depends on a knowable distinction between 'detailed and connected knowledge of the practical process of development' and other kinds of 'knowledge' which may often closely resemble it. One way of applying the distinguishing criterion would be by examining the 'assumptions, concepts, and points of view', whether received or not, by which any knowledge has been gained and organized. But it is just this kind of analysis which is prevented by the a priori assumption of a 'positive' method which is not subject to such scrutiny: an assumption based in fact on the received (and unexamined) assumptions of 'positive, scientific knowledge', freed of the 'ideological bias' of all other observers. This position, which has been often repeated in orthodox Marxism, is either a circular demonstration or a familiar partisan claim (of the kind made by almost all parties) that others are biased but that, by definition, we are not.

That indeed was the fool's way out of the very difficult problem which was now being confronted, within historical materialism. Its symptomatic importance at the level of dogma has to be noted and then set aside if we are to see, clearly, a very different and much more interesting proposition, which leads to a quite different (though not often theoretically distinguished) definition of ideology. This begins from the main point of the attack on the Young Hegelians, who were said to "consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of con-

sciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men". Social liberation would then come through a 'change of consciousness'. Everything then turns, of course, on the definition of 'consciousness'. The definition adopted, polemically, by Marx and Engels, is in effect their definition of ideology: not 'practical consciousness' but 'self-dependent theory'. Hence 'really it is only a question of explaining this theoretical talk from the actual existing conditions. The real, practical dissolution of these phrases, the removal of these notions from the consciousness of men, will ... be effected by altered circumstances, not by theoretical deductions' (GI, 15). In this task the proletariat has an advantage, since 'for the mass of men ... these theoretical notions do not exist'.

If we can take this seriously we are left with a much more limited and in that respect more plausible definition of ideology. Since 'consciousness', including 'conceptions, thoughts, ideas', can hardly be asserted to be non-existent in the 'mass of men', the definition falls back to a kind of consciousness, and certain kinds of conceptions, thoughts, and ideas, which are specifically 'ideological'. Engels later sought to clarify this position:

Every ideology ... once it has arisen, develops in connection with the given concept-material, and develops this material further; otherwise it would cease to be ideology, that is, occupation with thoughts as with independent entities, developing independently and subject only to their own laws. That the material life conditions of the persons inside whose heads this thought process goes on, in the last resort determines the course of this process, remains of necessity unknown to these persons, for otherwise there would be an end to all ideology. (Feuerbach, 65-6)

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker, consciously indeed but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives. Because it is a process of thought he derives both its form and its content from pure thought, either his own or that of his predecessors.*

Taken on their own, these statements can appear virtually psychological. They are structurally very similar to the Freudian concept of 'rationalization' in such phrases as 'inside whose heads'; 'real motives ... unknown to him'; 'imagines false or

* Letter to F. Mehring, 14 July 1893 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, New York, 1935).

apparent motives'. In this form a version of 'ideology' is readily accepted in modern bourgeois thought, which has its own concepts of the 'real'—material or psychological—to undercut either ideology or rationalization. But it had once been a more serious position. Ideology was specifically identified as a consequence of the division of labour:

Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears . . . From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. (Gf, 51)

Ideology is then 'separated theory', and its analysis must involve restoration of its 'real' connections.

The division of labour . . . manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood) while the other's attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. (Gf, 39-40)

This is shrewd enough, as is the later observation that each new class . . . is compelled . . . to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, put in an ideal form; it will give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (Gf, 40-1)

But 'ideology' then hovers between 'a system of beliefs characteristic of a certain class' and 'a system of illusory beliefs—false ideas or false consciousness—which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge'.

This uncertainty was never really resolved. Ideology as 'separated theory'—the natural home of illusions and false consciousness—is itself separated from the (intrinsically limited) 'practical consciousness of a class'. This separation, however, is very much easier to carry out in theory than in practice. The immense body of direct class-consciousness, directly expressed and again and again directly imposed, can appear to escape the taint of 'ideology', which would be limited to the 'universaliz-

ing' philosophers. But then what name is to be found for these powerful direct systems? Surely not 'true' or 'scientific' knowledge, except by an extraordinary sleight-of-hand with the description 'practical'. For most ruling classes have not needed to be 'unmasked'; they have usually proclaimed their existence and the 'conceptions, thoughts, ideas' which ratify it. To overthrow them is ordinarily to overthrow their conscious practice, and this is always very much harder than overthrowing their 'abstract' and 'universalizing' ideas, which also, in real terms, have a much more complicated and interactive relationship with the dominant 'practical consciousness' than any merely dependent or illusory concepts could ever have. Or again, 'the existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class'. But this may or may not be true, since all the difficult questions are about the development of a pre-revolutionary or potentially revolutionary or briefly revolutionary into a sustained revolutionary class, and the same difficult questions necessarily arise about pre-revolutionary, potentially revolutionary, or briefly revolutionary ideas. Marx and Engels's own complicated relations to the (in itself very complicated) revolutionary character of the European proletariat is an intensely practical example of just this difficulty, as is also their complicated and acknowledged relationship (including the relationship implied by critique) to their intellectual predecessors.

What really happened, in temporary but influential substitution for just this detailed and connected knowledge, was, first, an abstraction of 'ideology', as a category of illusions and false consciousness (an abstraction which as they had best reason to know would prevent examination, not of the abstracted ideas, which is relatively easy, but of the material social process in which 'conceptions, thoughts, ideas', of course in different degrees, become practical). Second, in relation to this, the abstraction was given a categorical rigidity, an epochal rather than a genuinely historical consciousness of ideas, which could then be mechanically separated into forms of successive and unified stages of—but which?—both knowledge and illusion. Each stage of the abstraction is radically different, in both theory and practice, from Marx's emphasis on a necessary conflict of real interests, in the material social process, and on the 'legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophical—in short

ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out". The infection from categorical argument against specialists in categories has here been burned out, by a practical recognition of the whole and indissoluble material and social process. 'Ideology' then reverts to a specific and practical dimension: the complicated process within which men 'become' (are) conscious of their interests and their conflicts. The categorical short-cut to an (abstract) distinction between 'true' and 'false' consciousness is then effectively abandoned, as in all practice it has to be.

All these varying uses of 'ideology' have persisted within the general development of Marxism. There has been a convenient dogmatic retention, at some levels, of ideology as 'false consciousness'. This has often prevented the more specific analysis of operative distinctions of 'true' and 'false' consciousness at the practical level, which is always that of social relationships, and of the part played in these relationships by 'conceptions, thoughts, ideas'. There was a late attempt, by Lukács, to clarify this analysis by a distinction between 'actual consciousness' and 'imputed' or 'potential' consciousness (a full and 'true' understanding of a real social position). This has the merit of avoiding the reduction of all 'actual consciousness' to ideology, but the category is speculative, and indeed as a category cannot easily be sustained. In *History and Class-Consciousness* it depended on a last abstract attempt to identify truth with the idea of the proletariat, but in this Hegelian form it is no more convincing than the earlier positivist identification of a category of 'scientific knowledge'. A more interesting but equally difficult attempt to define 'true' consciousness was the elaboration of Marx's point about changing the world rather than interpreting it. What became known as the 'test of practice' was offered as a criterion of truth and as the essential distinction from ideology. In certain general ways this is a wholly consistent projection from the idea of 'practical consciousness', but it is easy to see how its application to specific theories, formulations, and programmes can result either in a vulgar 'success' ethic, masquerading as 'historical truth', or in numbness or confusion when there are practical defeats and deformations. The 'test of practice', that is to say, cannot be applied to 'scientific theory' and 'ideology' taken as abstract categories. The real point of the definition of 'practical consciousness' was indeed to undercut

these abstractions, which nevertheless have continued to be reproduced as 'Marxist theory'.

Three other tendencies in twentieth-century concepts of ideology may be briefly noted. First, the concept has been commonly used, within Marxism and outside it, in the relatively neutral sense of 'a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group' (without implications of 'truth' or 'illusion' but with positive reference to a social situation and interest and its defining or constitutive system of meanings and values). It is thus possible to speak neutrally or even approvingly of 'socialist ideology'. A curious example here is that of Lenin:

Socialism, in so far as it is the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class, undergoes the general conditions of birth, development and consolidation of any ideology, that is to say it is founded on all the material of human knowledge, it presupposes a high level of science, scientific work, etc. . . . In the class struggle of the proletariat which develops spontaneously, as an elemental force, on the basis of capitalist relations, socialism is introduced by the ideologists.*

Obviously 'ideology' here is not intended as 'false consciousness'. The distinction between a class and its ideologists can be related to the distinction made by Marx and Engels, but one crucial clause of this—'active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood'—has then to be tacitly dropped, unless the reference to a 'ruling class' can be dressed up as a saving clause. More significantly, perhaps, 'ideology' in its now neutral or approving sense is seen as 'introduced' on the foundation of 'all . . . human knowledge, . . . science . . . etc.', of course brought to bear from a class point of view. The position is clearly that ideology is theory and that theory is at once secondary and necessary: 'practical consciousness', as here of the proletariat, will not itself produce it. This is radically different from Marx's thinking, where all 'separate' theory is ideology, and where genuine theory—'real, positive knowledge'—is, by contrast, the articulation of 'practical consciousness'. But Lenin's model corresponds to one orthodox sociological formulation, in which there is 'social situation' and there is also 'ideology', their relations variable but certainly neither dependent nor 'determined', thus allowing both their separate and their comparative history

*'Latter to the Federation of the North', *Collected Works*, Moscow, 1961, 6, 163.

and analysis. Lenin's formulation also echoes, from a quite opposite political position, Napoleon's identification of 'the ideologists', who bring ideas to 'the people', for their liberation or destruction according to point of view. The Napoleonic definition, in an unaltered form, has of course also persisted, as a popular form of criticism of political struggles which are defined by ideas or even by principles. 'Ideology' (the product of 'doctrinaires') is then contrasted with 'practical experience', 'practical politics', and what is known as pragmatism. This general sense of 'ideology' as not only 'doctrine' and 'dogmatic' but as a priori and abstract has co-existed uneasily with the equally general (neutral or approving) descriptive sense.

Finally there is an obvious need for a general term to describe not only the products but the processes of all signification, including the signification of values. It is interesting that 'ideology' and 'ideological' have been widely used in this sense. Vološinov, for example, uses 'ideological' to describe the process of the production of meaning through signs, and 'ideology' is taken as the dimension of social experience in which meanings and values are produced. The difficult relation of so wide a sense to the other senses which we have seen to be active hardly needs stressing. Yet, however far the term itself may be compromised, some form of this emphasis on signification as a central social process is necessary. In Marx, in Engels, and in much of the Marxist tradition the central argument about 'practical consciousness' was limited and frequently distorted by failures to see that the fundamental processes of social signification are intrinsic to 'practical consciousness' and intrinsic also to the 'conceptions, thoughts, and ideas' which are recognizable as its products. The limiting condition within 'ideology' as a concept, from its beginning in Destutt, was the tendency to limit processes of meaning and valuation to formed, separable 'ideas' or 'theories'. To attempt to take these back to 'a world of sensations' or, on the other hand, to a 'practical consciousness' or a 'material social process' which has been so defined as to exclude these fundamental signifying processes, or to make them essentially secondary, is the persistent thread of error. For the practical links between 'ideas' and 'theories' and the 'production of real life' are all in this material social process of signification itself.

Moreover, when this is realized, those 'products' which are

not ideas or theories, but which are the very different works we call 'art' and 'literature', and which are normal elements of the very general processes we call 'culture' and 'language', can be approached in ways other than reduction, abstraction, or assimilation. This is the argument that has now to be taken into cultural and literary studies, and especially into the Marxist contribution to them, which, in spite of appearances, is then likely to be even more controversial than hitherto. But it is then an open question whether 'ideology' and 'ideological', with their senses of 'abstraction' and 'illusion', or their senses of 'ideas' and 'theories', or even their senses of a 'system' of beliefs or of meanings and values, are sufficiently precise and practicable terms for so far-reaching and radical a redefinition.

6. Hegemony

The traditional definition of 'hegemony' is political rule or domination, especially in relations between states. Marxism extended the definition of rule or domination to relations between social classes, and especially to definitions of a ruling class. 'Hegemony' then acquired a further significant sense in the work of Antonio Gramsci, carried out under great difficulties in a Fascist prison between 1927 and 1935. Much is still uncertain in Gramsci's use of the concept, but his work is one of the major turning-points in Marxist cultural theory.

Gramsci made a distinction between 'rule' (*dominio*) and 'hegemony'. 'Rule' is expressed in directly political forms and in times of crisis by direct or effective coercion. But the more normal situation is a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces, and 'hegemony', according to different interpretations, is either this or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements. Whatever the implications of the concept for Marxist political theory (which has still to recognize many kinds of direct political control, social class control, and economic control, as well as this more general formation), the effects on cultural theory are immediate. For 'hegemony' is a concept which at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of 'culture' as a 'whole social process', in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology', in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest.

'Hegemony' goes beyond 'culture', as previously defined, in its insistence on relating the 'whole social process' to specific distributions of power and influence. To say that 'men' define and shape their whole lives is true only in abstraction. In any actual society there are specific inequalities in means and therefore in capacity to realize this process. In a class society these are primarily inequalities between classes. Gramsci therefore introduced the necessary recognition of dominance and subordination in what has still, however, to be recognized as a whole process.

It is in just this recognition of the wholeness of the process that

the concept of 'hegemony' goes beyond 'ideology'. What is decisive is not only the conscious system of ideas and beliefs, but the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meanings and values. Ideology, in its normal senses, is a relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a 'world-view' or a 'class outlook'. This explains its popularity as a concept in retrospective analysis (in base-superstructure models or in homology), since a system of ideas can be abstracted from that once living social process and represented, usually by the selection of 'leading' or typical 'ideologists' or 'ideological features', as the decisive form in which consciousness was at once expressed and controlled (or, as in Althusser, was in effect unconscious, as an imposed structure). The relatively mixed, confused, incomplete, or inarticulate consciousness of actual men in that period and society is thus overridden in the name of this decisive generalized system, and indeed in structural homology is procedurally excluded as peripheral or ephemeral. It is the fully articulate and systematic forms which are recognizable as ideology, and there is a corresponding tendency in the analysis of art to look only for similarly fully articulate and systematic expressions of this ideology in the content (base-superstructure) or form (homology) of actual works. In less selective procedures, less dependent on the inherent classicism of the definition of form as fully articulate and systematic, the tendency is to consider works as variants of, or as variably affected by, the decisive abstracted ideology.

More generally, this sense of 'an ideology' is applied in abstract ways to the actual consciousness of both dominant and subordinated classes. A dominant class 'has' this ideology in relatively pure and simple forms. A subordinate class has, in one version, *nothing* but this ideology as its consciousness (since the production of all ideas is, by axiomatic definition, in the hands of those who control the primary means of production) or, in another version, has this ideology imposed on its otherwise different consciousness, which it must struggle to sustain or develop against 'ruling-class ideology'.

The concept of hegemony often, in practice, resembles these definitions, but it is distinct in its refusal to equate consciousness with the articulate formal system which can be and ordinarily is abstracted as 'ideology'. It of course does not exclude the

articulate and formal meanings, values and beliefs which a dominant class develops and propagates. But it does not equate these with consciousness, or rather it does not reduce consciousness to them. Instead it sees the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living—not only of political and economic activity, nor only of manifest social activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense. Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indocination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values—constitutive and constituting—which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.

There are two immediate advantages in this concept of hegemony. First, its forms of domination and subordination correspond much more closely to the normal processes of social organization and control in developed societies than the more familiar projections from the idea of a ruling class, which are usually based on much earlier and simpler historical phases. It can speak, for example, to the realities of electoral democracy, and to the significant modern areas of 'leisure' and 'private life', more specifically and more actively than older ideas of domination, with their trivializing explanations of simple 'manipulation', 'corruption', and 'betrayal'. If the pressures and limits of a given form of domination are to this extent experienced and in practice internalized, the whole question of class rule, and of opposition to it, is transformed. Gramsci's emphasis on the creation of an alternative hegemony, by the practical connection

of many different forms of struggle, including those not easily recognizable as and indeed not primarily 'political' and 'economic', thus leads to a much more profound and more active sense of revolutionary activity in a highly developed society than the persistently abstract models derived from very different historical situations. The sources of any alternative hegemony are indeed difficult to define. For Gramsci they spring from the working class, but not this class as an ideal or abstract construction. What he sees, rather, is a working people which has, precisely, to become a class, and a potentially hegemonic class, against the pressures and limits of an existing and powerful hegemony.

Second, and more immediately in this context, there is a whole different way of seeing cultural activity, both as tradition and as practice. Cultural work and activity are not now, in any ordinary sense, a superstructure: not only because of the depth and thoroughness at which any cultural hegemony is lived, but because cultural tradition and practice are seen as much more than superstructural expressions—reflections, mediations, or typifications—of a formed social and economic structure. On the contrary, they are among the basic processes of the formation itself and, further, related to a much wider area of reality than the abstractions of 'social' and 'economic' experience. People seeing themselves and each other in directly personal relationships; people seeing the natural world and themselves in it; people using their physical and material resources for what one kind of society specializes to 'leisure' and 'entertainment' and 'art': all these active experiences and practices, which make up so much of the reality of a culture and its cultural production can be seen as they are, without reduction to other categories of content, and without the characteristic straining to fit them (directly as reflection, indirectly as mediation or typification or analogy) to other and determining manifest economic and political relationships. Yet they can still be seen as elements of a hegemony: an inclusive social and cultural formation which indeed to be effective has to extend to and include, indeed to form and be formed from, this whole area of lived experience.

Many difficulties then arise, both theoretically and practically, but it is important to recognize how many blind alleys we may now be saved from entering. If any lived culture is necessarily so extensive, the problems of domination and subordination

on the one hand, and of the extraordinary complexity of any actual cultural tradition and practice on the other, can at last be directly approached.

There is of course the difficulty that domination and subordination, as effective descriptions of cultural formation, will, by many, be refused; that the alternative language of co-operative shaping, of common contribution, which the traditional concept of 'culture' so notably expressed, will be found preferable. In this fundamental choice there is no alternative, from any socialist position, to recognition and emphasis of the massive historical and immediate experience of class domination and subordination, in all their different forms. This becomes, very quickly, a matter of specific experience and argument. But there is a closely related problem within the concept of 'hegemony' itself. In some uses, though not I think in Gramsci, the totalizing tendency of the concept, which is significant and indeed crucial, is converted into an abstract totalization, and in this form it is readily compatible with sophisticated senses of 'the superstructure' or even 'ideology'. The hegemony, that is, can be seen as more uniform, more static, and more abstract than in practice, if it is really understood, it can ever actually be. Like any other Marxist concept it is particularly susceptible to epochal as distinct from historical definition, and to categorical as distinct from substantial description. Any isolation of its 'organizing principles', or of its 'determining features', which have indeed to be grasped in experience and by analysis, can lead very quickly to a totalizing abstraction. And then the problems of the reality of domination and subordination, and of their relations to co-operative shaping and common contribution, can be quite falsely posed.

A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure. It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits. In practice, that is, hegemony can never be singular. Its internal structures are highly complex, as can readily be seen in any concrete analysis. Moreover (and this is crucial, reminding us of the necessary thrust of the concept), it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. We have then to add to the concept of

hegemony the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony, which are real and persistent elements of practice.

One way of expressing the necessary distinction between practical and abstract senses within the concept is to speak of 'the hegemonic' rather than the 'hegemony', and of 'the dominant' rather than simple 'domination'. The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society. We shall need to explore their conditions and their limits, but their active presence is decisive, not only because they have to be included in any historical (as distinct from epochal) analysis, but as forms which have had significant effect on the hegemonic process itself. That is to say, alternative political and cultural emphases, and the many forms of opposition and struggle, are important not only in themselves but as indicative features of what the hegemonic process has in practice had to work to control. A static hegemony, of the kind which is indicated by abstract totalizing definitions of a dominant 'ideology' or 'world-view', can ignore or isolate such alternatives and opposition, but to the extent that they are significant the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform or even incorporate them. In this active process the hegemonic has to be seen as more than the simple transmission of an (unchanging) dominance. On the contrary, any hegemonic process must be especially alert and responsive to the alternatives and opposition which question or threaten its dominance. The reality of cultural process must then always include the efforts and contributions of those who are in one way or another outside or at the edge of the terms of the specific hegemony.

Thus it is misleading, as a general method, to reduce all political and cultural initiatives and contributions to the terms of the hegemony. That is the reductive consequence of the radically different concept of 'superstructure'. The specific functions of 'the hegemonic', 'the dominant', have always to be stressed, but not in ways which suggest *a priori* totality. The most interesting and difficult part of any cultural analysis, in complex societies, is that which seeks to grasp the hegemonic in its active and formative but also its transformational processes.

Works of art, by their substantial and general character, are often especially important as sources of this complex evidence.

The major theoretical problem, with immediate effect on methods of analysis, is to distinguish between alternative and oppositional initiatives and contributions which are made within or against a specific hegemony (which then sets certain limits to them or which can succeed in neutralizing, changing or actually incorporating them) and other kinds of initiative and contribution which are irreducible to the terms of the original or the adaptive hegemony, and are in that sense independent. It can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that the dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture. There is more evidence for this view (for example in the case of the Romantic critique of industrial civilization) than we usually admit. But there is evident variation in specific kinds of social order and in the character of the consequent alternative and oppositional formations. It would be wrong to overlook the importance of works and ideas which, while clearly affected by hegemonic limits and pressures, are at least in part significant breaks beyond them, which may again in part be neutralized, reduced, or incorporated, but which in their most active elements nevertheless come through as independent and original.

Thus cultural process must not be assumed to be merely adaptive, extensive, and incorporative. Authentic breaks within and beyond it, in specific social conditions which can vary from extreme isolation to pre-revolutionary breakdowns and actual revolutionary activity, have often in fact occurred. And we are better able to see this, alongside more general recognition of the insistent pressures and limits of the hegemonic, if we develop modes of analysis which instead of reducing works to finished products, and activities to fixed positions, are capable of discerning, in good faith, the finite but significant openness of many actual initiatives and contributions. The finite but significant openness of many works of art, as signifying forms making possible but also requiring persistent and variable signifying responses, is then especially relevant.

7. Traditions, Institutions, and Formations

Hegemony is always an active process, but this does not mean that it is simply a complex of dominant features and elements. On the contrary, it is always a more or less adequate organization and interconnection of otherwise separated and even disparate meanings, values, and practices, which it specifically incorporates in a significant culture and an effective social order. These are themselves living resolutions—in the broadest sense, political resolutions—of specific economic realities. This process of incorporation is of major cultural importance. To understand it, but also to understand the material on which it must work, we need to distinguish three aspects of any cultural process, which we can call traditions, institutions, and formations.

The concept of tradition has been radically neglected in Marxist cultural thought. It is usually seen as at best a secondary factor, which may at most modify other and more decisive historical processes. This is not only because it is ordinarily diagnosed as superstructure, but also because 'tradition' has been commonly understood as a relatively inert, historicized segment of a social structure: tradition as the surviving past. But this version of tradition is weak at the very point where the incorporating sense of tradition is strong: where it is seen, in fact, as an actively shaping force. For tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. It is always more than an inert historicized segment; indeed it is the most powerful practical means of incorporation. What we have to see is not just 'a tradition' but a *selective tradition*: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.

It is usually not difficult to show this empirically. Most versions of 'tradition' can be quickly shown to be radically selective. From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded. Yet, within a particular hegemony, and as one of its decisive processes, this selection is significant and usually successfully passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant

As a result of this displacement, the formations and their work are not seen as the active social and cultural substance that they quite invariably are. In our own culture, this form of displacement, made temporarily or comparatively convincing by the failures of derivative and superstructural interpretation, is itself, and quite centrally, hegemonic.

8. Dominant, Residual, and Emergent

The complexity of a culture is to be found not only in its variable processes and their social definitions—traditions, institutions, and formations—but also in the dynamic interrelations, at every point in the process, of historically varied and variable elements. In what I have called 'epochal' analysis, a cultural process is seized as a cultural system, with determinate dominant features: feudal culture or bourgeois culture or a transition from one to the other. This emphasis on dominant and definitive lineaments and features is important and often, in practice, effective. But it then often happens that its methodology is preserved for the very different function of historical analysis, in which a sense of movement within what is ordinarily abstracted as a system is crucially necessary, especially if it is to connect with the future as well as with the past. In authentic historical analysis it is necessary at every point to recognize the complex interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance. It is necessary to examine how these relate to the whole cultural process rather than only to the selected and abstracted dominant system. Thus 'bourgeois culture' is a significant generalizing description and hypothesis, expressed within epochal analysis by fundamental comparisons with 'feudal culture' or 'socialist culture'. However, as a description of cultural process, over four or five centuries and in scores of different societies, it requires immediate historical and internally comparative differentiation. Moreover, even if this is acknowledged or practically carried out, the 'epochal' definition can exert its pressure as a static type against which all real cultural process is measured, either to show 'stages' or 'variations' of the type (which is still historical analysis) or, at its worst, to select supporting and exclude 'marginal' or 'incidental' or 'secondary' evidence.

Such errors are avoidable if, while retaining the epochal hypothesis, we can find terms which recognize not only 'stages' and 'variations' but the internal dynamic relations of any actual process. We have certainly still to speak of the 'dominant' and the 'effective', and in these senses of the hegemonic. But we find that we have also to speak, and indeed with further

differentiation of each, of the 'residual' and the 'emergent', which in any real process, and at any moment in the process, are significant both in themselves and in what they reveal of the characteristics of the 'dominant'.

By 'residual' I mean something different from the 'archaic', though in practice these are often very difficult to distinguish. Any culture includes available elements of its past, but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable. I would call the 'archaic' that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived', in a deliberately specializing way. What I mean by the 'residual' is very different. The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation. It is crucial to distinguish this aspect of the residual, which may have an alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture, from that active manifestation of the residual (this being its distinction from the archaic) which has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture. In three characteristic cases in contemporary English culture this distinction can become a precise term of analysis. Thus organized religion is predominantly residual, but within this there is a significant difference between some practically alternative and oppositional meanings and values (absolute brotherhood, service to others without reward) and a larger body of incorporated meanings and values (official morality, or the social order of which the other-worldly is a separated neutralizing or ratifying component). Again, the idea of rural community is predominantly residual, but is in some limited respects alternative or oppositional to urban industrial capitalism, though for the most part it is incorporated, as idealization or fantasy, or as an exotic—residual or escape—leisure function of the dominant order itself. Again, in monarchy, there is virtually nothing that is actively residual (alternative or oppositional), but, with a heavy and deliberate additional use of the archaic, a residual function has

been wholly incorporated as a specific political and cultural function—marking the limits as well as the methods—of a form of capitalist democracy.

A residual cultural element is usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but some part of it, some version of it—and especially if the residue is from some major area of the past—will in most cases have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in these areas. Moreover, at certain points the dominant culture cannot allow too much residual experience and practice outside itself, at least without risk. It is in the incorporation of the actively residual—by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and exclusion—that the work of the selective tradition is especially evident. This is very notable in the case of versions of 'the literary tradition', passing through selective versions of the character of literature to connecting and incorporated definitions of what literature now is and should be. This is one among several crucial areas, since it is in some alternative or even oppositional versions of what literature is (has been) and what literary experience (and in one common derivation, other significant experience) is and must be, that, against the pressures of incorporation, actively residual meanings and values are sustained.

By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created. But it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture (and in this sense 'species-specific') and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it: emergent in the strict sense, rather than merely novel. Since we are always considering relations within a cultural process, definitions of the emergent, as of the residual, can be made only in relation to a full sense of the dominant. Yet the social location of the residual is always easier to understand, since a large part of it (though not all) relates to earlier social formations and phases of the cultural process, in which certain real meanings and values were generated. In the subsequent default of a particular phase of a dominant culture there is then a reaching back to those meanings and values which were created in actual societies and actual situations in the past, and which still seem to have significance because they represent areas of

human experience, aspiration, and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognize.

The case of the emergent is radically different. It is true that in the structure of any actual society, and especially in its class structure, there is always a social basis for elements of the cultural process that are alternative or oppositional to the dominant elements. One kind of basis has been valuably described in the central body of Marxist theory: the formation of a new class, the coming to consciousness of a new class, and within this, in actual process, the (often uneven) emergence of elements of a new cultural formation. Thus the emergence of the working class as a class was immediately evident (for example, in nineteenth-century England) in the cultural process. But there was extreme unevenness of contribution in different parts of the process. The making of new social values and institutions far outpaced the making of strictly cultural institutions, while specific cultural contributions, though significant, were less vigorous and autonomous than either general or institutional innovation. A new class is always a source of emergent cultural practice, but while it is still, as a class, relatively subordinate, this is always likely to be uneven and is certain to be incomplete. For new practice is not, of course, an isolated process. To the degree that it emerges, and especially to the degree that it is oppositional rather than alternative, the process of attempted incorporation significantly begins. This can be seen, in the same period in England, in the emergence and then the effective incorporation of a radical popular press. It can be seen in the emergence and incorporation of working-class writing, where the fundamental problem of emergence is clearly revealed, since the basis of incorporation, in such cases, is the effective predominance of received literary forms—an incorporation, so to say, which already conditions and limits the emergence. But the development is always uneven. Straight incorporation is most directly attempted against the visibly alternative and oppositional class elements: trade unions, working-class political parties, working-class life styles (as incorporated into 'popular' journalism, advertising, and commercial entertainment). The process of emergence, in such conditions, is then a constantly repeated, an always renewable, move beyond a phase of practical incorporation: usually made much more difficult by the fact

that much incorporation looks like recognition, acknowledgment, and thus a form of acceptance. In this complex process there is indeed regular confusion between the locally residual (as a form of resistance to incorporation) and the generally emergent.

Cultural emergence in relation to the emergence and growing strength of a class is then always of major importance, and always complex. But we have also to see that it is not the only kind of emergence. This recognition is very difficult, theoretically, though the practical evidence is abundant. What has really to be said, as a way of defining important elements of both the residual and the emergent, and as a way of understanding the character of the dominant, is that no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention. This is not merely a negative proposition, allowing us to account for significant things which happen outside or against the dominant mode. On the contrary it is a fact about the modes of domination, that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of human practice. What they exclude may often be seen as the personal or the private, or as the natural or even the metaphysical. Indeed it is usually in one or other of these terms that the excluded area is expressed, since what the dominant has effectively seized is indeed the ruling definition of the social.

It is this seizure that has especially to be resisted. For there is always, though in varying degrees, practical consciousness, in specific relationships, specific skills, specific perceptions, that is unquestionably social and that a specifically dominant social order neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize. A distinctive and comparative feature of any dominant social order is how far it reaches into the whole range of practices and experiences in an attempt at incorporation. There can be areas of experience it is willing to ignore or dispense with: to assign as private or to specialize as aesthetic or to generalize as natural. Moreover, as a social order changes, in terms of its own developing needs, these relations are variable. Thus in advanced capitalism, because of changes in the social character of labour, in the social character of communications, and in the social character of decision-making, the dominant culture reaches much further than ever before in capitalist society into hitherto

'reserved' or 'resigned' areas of experience and practice and meaning. The area of effective penetration of the dominant order into the whole social and cultural process is thus now significantly greater. This in turn makes the problem of emergence especially acute, and narrows the gap between alternative and oppositional elements. The alternative, especially in areas that impinge on significant areas of the dominant, is often seen as oppositional and, by pressure, often converted into it. Yet even here there can be spheres of practice and meaning which, almost by definition from its own limited character, or in its profound deformation, the dominant culture is unable in any real terms to recognize. Elements of emergence may indeed be incorporated, but just as often the incorporated forms are merely facsimiles of the genuinely emergent cultural practice. Any significant emergence, beyond or against a dominant mode, is very difficult under these conditions; in itself and in its repeated confusion with the facsimiles and novelties of the incorporated phase. Yet, in our own period as in others, the fact of emergent cultural practice is still undeniable, and together with the fact of actively residual practice is a necessary complication of the would-be dominant culture.

This complex process can still in part be described in class terms. But there is always other social being and consciousness which is neglected and excluded: alternative perceptions of others, in immediate relationships; new perceptions and practices of the material world. In practice these are different in quality from the developing and articulated interests of a rising class. The relations between these two sources of the emergent—the class and the excluded social (human) area—are by no means necessarily contradictory. At times they can be very close and on the relations between them much in political practice depends. But culturally and as a matter of theory the areas can be seen as distinct.

What matters, finally, in understanding emergent culture, as distinct from both the dominant and the residual, is that it is never only a matter of immediate practice; indeed it depends crucially on finding new forms or adaptations of form. Again and again what we have to observe is in effect a pre-emergence, active and pressing but not yet fully articulated, rather than the evident emergence which could be more confidently named. It is to understand more closely this condition of pre-emergence,

as well as the more evident forms of the emergent, the residual, and the dominant, that we need to explore the concept of structures of feeling.

10. The Sociology of Culture

Many of the procedures of sociology have been limited or distorted by reduced and reductive concepts of society and the social. This is particularly evident in the sociology of culture. Within the radical empiricist tradition, often practically associated with Marxism, there has been important work on institutions. The major modern communications systems are now so evidently key institutions in advanced capitalist societies that they require the same kind of attention, at least initially, that is given to the institutions of industrial production and distribution. Studies of the ownership and control of the capitalist press, the capitalist cinema, and capitalist and state-capitalist radio and television interlock, historically and theoretically, with wider analyses of capitalist society, capitalist economy, and the neo-capitalist state. Further, many of the same institutions require analysis in the context of modern imperialism and neo-colonialism, to which they are crucially relevant (see Schiller (1969)).

Over and above their empirical results, these analyses force theoretical revision of the formula of base and superstructure and of the definition of productive forces, in a social area in which large-scale capitalist economic activity and cultural production are now inseparable. Unless this theoretical revision is made, even the best work of the radical and anti-capitalist empiricists is in the end overlaid or absorbed by the specific theoretical structures of bourgeois cultural sociology. The bourgeois concept of 'mass communications' and the tied radical concept of 'mass manipulation' are alike inadequate to the true sociology of these central and varying institutions. Even at an early stage of analysis these undifferentiated and blocking concepts need to be replaced by the motivating and specifying terms of hegemony. What both bourgeois and radical-empiricist cultural theory have achieved is the social neutralization of such institutions: the concept of the 'mass' replacing and neutralizing specific class structures; the concept of 'manipulation' (an operative strategy in capitalist advertising and politics) replacing and neutralizing the complex interactions of control, selection, incorporation, and the phases of social

consciousness which correspond to real social situations and relations.

This neutralizing element has been particularly evident in the study of 'effects' which has preoccupied empirical bourgeois sociology. Here the analysis and even the recognition of 'effects' are predetermined by the assumption of norms which are either, like 'socialization', abstract and mystifying (since it is precisely the historical and class variations of 'socialization' which need to be studied) or, as in the studies of effects on politics or on 'violence', are themselves 'effects' of a whole active social order, which is not analysed but simply taken as background or as an empirical 'control'. The complex sociology of actual audiences, and of the real conditions of reception and response in these highly variable systems (the cinema audience, the newspaper readership, and the television audience being highly distinct social structures), is overlaid by bourgeois norms of 'cultural producers' and 'the mass public', with the additional effect that the complex sociology of these producers, as managers and agents within capitalist systems, is itself not developed.

A further effect of this kind of concentration on 'mass communications' is that analysis is not normally extended to institutions where these norms appear to be absent: for example, book publishing, which is now undergoing a critical phase of capitalist reorganization with cultural effects which are often not seen as a problem because they are not a 'mass' problem. There has been frequent and often justified complaint against 'vulgar Marxism', but the increasing penetration of small-scale capitalist institutions—which had carried the liberal ideology of 'true' cultural production (as distinct from 'mass culture')—by large-scale international investment and integration with many other forms of production is at once an economic and a cultural fact.

Cultural effects need not always be indirect. It is in practice impossible to separate the development of the novel as a literary form from the highly specific economics of fiction publication. This has been true, with many negative effects, (often isolated and projected as simple changes of sensibility or technique) since at least the 1890s, though directly negative effects are now much more evident. Analysis of the sociology of the novel has to include many factors, but always this directly economic factor which, for ideological reasons, is ordinarily excluded. The

insertion of economic determinations into cultural studies is of course the special contribution of Marxism, and there are times when its simple insertion is an evident advance. But in the end it can never be a simple insertion, since what is really required, beyond the limiting formulas, is restoration of the whole social material process, and specifically of cultural production as social and material. This is where analysis of institutions has to be extended to analysis of formations. The complex and variable sociology of those cultural formations which have no direct or exclusive or manifest institutional realization—literary and intellectual 'movements', for example—is especially important. Gramsci's work on intellectuals and Benjamin's work on 'bohemians' are encouraging models of an experimental Marxist kind.

A Marxist cultural sociology is then recognizable, in its simplest outlines, in studies of different types of institution and formation in cultural production and distribution, and in the linking of these within whole social material processes. Thus distribution, for example, is not limited to its technical definition and function within a capitalist market, but connected, specifically, to modes of production and then interpreted as the active formation of readerships and audiences, and of the characteristic social relations, including economic relations, within which particular forms of cultural activity are in practice carried out.

So much remains to be done, within this general outline, that it is tempting to rest on it. But we have seen, theoretically, as we learn again and again to see practically, that the reduction of social relations and social content to these explicit and manifest general forms is disabling. To these Marxist or other studies of institutions and formations it is crucially necessary to add studies of forms: not by way of illustration but, in many cases, as the most specific point of entry to certain kinds of formation. Here another and very different sociological tradition is relevant.

The sociology of consciousness, which was a seminal element in the period of classical sociology, and which led to a problematic distinction of the 'cultural sciences', has remained influential and is well represented within the Marxist tradition by Lukács and Goldmann, and by the Frankfurt School. The general tendency, within bourgeois sociology, has been a reduc-

tion of the sociology of consciousness to the 'sociology of knowledge'. Within the empirical tradition there has been a further reduction to a sociology of the institutions of 'organized knowledge', such as education and religion, where a familiar kind of evidence, in consciously organized ideas and relationships, is more available. Within some Marxist tendencies, even, the understanding of 'consciousness' as 'knowledge'—perhaps primarily determined by positivism—has been especially weak in relation to important kinds of art and literature. For consciousness is not only knowledge, just as language is not only indication and naming. It is also what is elsewhere, and in this context necessarily, specialized as 'imagination'. In cultural production (and all consciousness is in this sense produced) the true range is from information and description, or naming and indication, to embodiment and performance. While the sociology of consciousness is limited to knowledge, all other real cultural processes are displaced from the social dimension in which, quite as evidently, they belong.

Thus a sociology of drama, already concerned with institutions (theatres and their predecessors and successors), with formations (groups of dramatists, dramatic and theatrical movements), with formed relationships (audiences, including the formation of audiences within theatres and their wider social formation), would go on to include forms, not only in the sense of their relations to world-views or structures of feeling but also in the more active sense of their whole performance (social methods of speaking, moving, representing, and so on). Indeed in many arts, while the manifest social content is evident in one way in institutions, formations, and communicative relationships, and in another way in forms which relate to specific selections of issues, specific kinds of interpretation and of course specifically reproduced content, an equally important and sometimes more fundamental social content can be found in the basic social means—historically variable and always active social forms of language and movement and representation—on which, ultimately, the more manifest social elements can be seen to depend.

Specific studies must often temporarily isolate this or that element. But the fundamental principle of a sociology of culture is the complex unity of the elements thus listed or separated. Indeed the most basic task of the sociology of culture is analysis

of the interrelationships within this complex unity: a task distinct from the reduced sociology of institutions, formations, and communicative relationships and yet, as a sociology, radically distinct also from the analysis of isolated forms. As so often, the two dominant tendencies of bourgeois cultural studies—the sociology of the reduced but explicit 'society' and the aesthetics of the excluded social remade as a specialized 'art'—support and ratify each other in a significant division of labour. Everything can be known about a reading public, back to the economics of printing and publishing and the effects of an educational system, but what is read by that public is the neutralized abstraction 'books', or at best its catalogued categories. Meanwhile, but elsewhere, everything can be known about the books, back to their authors, to traditions and influences, and to periods, but these are finished objects before they go out into the dimension where 'sociology' is thought to be relevant: the reading public, the history of publishing. It is this division, now ratified by confident disciplines, which a sociology of culture has to overcome and supersede, insisting on what is always a whole and connected social material process. This is of course difficult, but great energy is now expended, and is often in effect trapped, in maintaining the abstract divisions and separations. Meanwhile in cultural practice and among cultural producers, before these received abstractions get to work, the process is inevitably known, if often indistinctly and unevenly, as whole and connected.

Specific methods of analysis will vary, in different areas of cultural activity. But one new method is now emerging, which can be felt as original in a number of fields. For if we have learned to see the relation of any cultural work to what we have learned to call a 'sign-system' (and this has been the important contribution of cultural semiotics), we can also come to see that a sign-system is itself a specific structure of social relationships: 'internally', in that the signs depend on, were formed in, relationships; 'externally', in that the system depends on, is formed in, the institutions which activate it (and which are then at once cultural and social and economic institutions); integrally, in that a 'sign-system', properly understood, is at once a specific cultural technology and a specific form of practical consciousness: those apparently diverse elements which are in fact unified in the material social process. Current work on the

photograph, on the film, on the book, on painting and its reproduction, and on the 'framed flow' of television, to take only the most immediate examples, is a sociology of culture in this new dimension, from which no aspect of a process is excluded and in which the active and formative relationships of a process, right through to its still active 'products', are specifically and structurally connected: at once a 'sociology' and an 'aesthetics'.

Other Ways. A Learning
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A View into the Future: The Value of Other Ways of Learning and Development

Futurologist Alvin Toffler wrote in his foreword to *Rethinking the Future* that "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn" (TOFFLER 1997). So how can we best prepare young people for a future that will require more learning and change than ever before? It is clear that to prepare for life as a lifelong learner students need more than study skills: they also need to be able to learn from their experiences (pleasant and unpleasant) while growing and developing along the way. Mainstream education has been slow to adapt to this growing need to prepare students for a life of learning and change. This question about how to prepare young people for an uncertain future is not a new question. It was being asked over a century ago:

"With the advent of democracy and modern industrial conditions, it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now. Hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions." (DEWEY 1897)

From outside the mainstream looking in, change seems slow. But from the mainstream looking out, the alternatives lack credibility. For example, if the mainstream looks towards "experiential learning" for solutions, just one simple question ("What is experiential learning?") reveals its Achilles' heel. The embarrassing answer for its advocates is that experiential learning is a contested idea that gets pulled and stretched in so many directions that it has no clear basis for claiming any distinctiveness from other forms of learning. Ironically, one of the most quoted authorities on experiential learning came to the conclusion that *all* learning is experiential: "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (KOLB 1984, 38). And a leading association of experiential educators cautiously offers its provisional definition of

"experiential education" as part of an "ongoing conversation" (AEE 2007). How can experiential learning be taken seriously if its exponents have difficulty defining it, describing it or demonstrating its distinctive value?

Outdoor adventure education does not escape from issues relating to the broader field of experiential education to which it clearly belongs. This chapter traces some of the key issues for the future development of experiential learning, particularly in the field of outdoor adventure education. Although it is international in scope, it is limited to English language sources. It does not set out to be a representative survey: it simply follows the scents and trails picked up along the way. After exploring the theme of "other ways of learning and development", this chapter investigates the various passions that inspire outdoor adventure educators and how these influence the experiences of participants. This is followed by an account of the confusion about what experiential learning is and how it works, and how this confusion can drain energy and purpose away from the passion that drives it. This leads to the creation of a rough spectrum of different traditions in our field and a hopeful view of the future for outdoor adventure education. This future view places high quality growth enhancing experiences at the heart of our work and encourages educators to keep the doorway to other ways always open.

Other ways of learning and development

When "other" involves leaving the classroom and going outdoors it *disrupts* routines, it *breaks* patterns, it *distorts* time, it *changes* roles, and it *creates* expectations: going outdoors can *disrupt, break, distort, change* and *create*.

I was recently at an experiential learning conference where all the workshops had been indoors. My workshop was on the last day of the conference. It was a beautiful summer's day. We went outside and played in the children's playground. This playing was part of a workshop about experiential learning theory: it involved working out how playground equipment could be used to represent core ideas about experiential learning. The swing, the slide, the bridge, the net and the monkey rings all became dynamic learning models. Going outdoors

helped to *disrupt, break, distort, change* and *create* ideas about learning theory.

Going outdoors is first and foremost a change of environment and a change from the normal ways of doing, thinking, feeling and behaving when learning. Simply crossing the threshold and leaving the normal educational environment behind is a significant step into *other ways of learning and development*.

Having crossed the threshold, do we celebrate this 'otherness' and develop new (and better) ways of learning and teaching, or do we try to recreate (in the outdoors) familiar, traditional, mainstream, conventional ways of learning and teaching? The outdoors is certainly conducive to thinking new thoughts and exploring new possibilities. The outdoors is not just a breath of fresh air: it is a change of perspective. It can feel like the flick of the switch when moving from seminar room to playground. Longer journeys can create unimaginable changes of perspective, as this unemployed 18 year old discovered "a million light years away" in the Saharan desert:

"As the sun rose, we found ourselves standing motionless, as the breathtakingly beautiful landscape became a luminous pink under the early rays of the sun. As the sun rose higher, exposing the full extent of the bare uninviting terrain, everyone looked on in wonder, finding it hard to take in the vastness of the dry, hostile countryside that stretched to the horizon in every direction. We were a million light years away from the industrial North of England which is our home, and one and all experienced a solitude that never again would be experienced. The silence and eeriness of that bleak and foreboding land would remain in our memories for ever." (Eric, Sahara 1985, in: KENNEDY 1992, 48)

What lesson plan could contain such an experience? What reflection could capture its true meaning and significance? What action plan would dare convert that cherished memory into actionable steps? What research measures could judge the value of that sunrise in the Sahara?

Some outdoor experiences do not fit with conventional teaching models, and *nor do they fit very well with conventional models of experiential learning*. Perhaps some experiences (such as Eric's above)

These difficult questions about how much the appetite of one kind of adventure increases or decreases the appetite for other kinds of adventures can perhaps be resolved if we see adventure as part of a particularly dynamic learning process. Adventure educators may well have a passion for *adventure*, but when at work perhaps their passion is for a particularly dynamic form of *learning*...

passion for learning

A breakthrough in learning can be achieved by "unlocking" the learning process. The *Learning Combination Lock* (BEARD/WILSON 2006, 4) is a model of experiential learning that illustrates countless potential combinations of ways to unlock learning. We usually think of a combination lock as having just one secret sequence that will work, but in the "Learning Combination Lock" *any* sequence will work (even though some sequences may work better than others).

Beard and Wilson encourage us to experiment with many different combinations: it is about unlocking our practice and unlocking learning.

But is it possible to get passionate about *learning* without qualifying it in some way? Does it not matter *what* is being learned and *how* it is being learned? What values underlie statements that glorify learning such as Alvin Toffler's prediction about the importance of learning, unlearning, and relearning? Unlearning means letting go of old ways (and even old values) and not hanging up with the times and riding about growing and developing, keeping up with the times and riding the wave of change. A passion for learning could be a passion for brighter and better future. Let's put this to the test: picture an outdoor educator working in a forest school or training people in wilderness survival skills. Someone who has chosen to live and work close to nature can play a valuable part in a young person's education, but is nature person likely to have much to offer young people preparing for a fast-paced future? What does spending slow quality time in the outdoors have to do with preparing young people for a future of rapid change? Is this a mismatch or a perfect match?

Beard and Wilson's *Learning Combination Lock* can be used to help answer these questions. The ways we can use the outdoors for

learning provide many more learning combinations than are found in the typical classroom. A creative indoor teacher could always provide more learning combinations than an unimaginative outdoor educator, but a well designed and well facilitated outdoor education programme can be full of opportunities for unlocking learning. An outdoor educator with a passion for learning will find ways of unlocking learning for each student – whether it is bringing a subject alive, arousing curiosity, or awakening the learning process in students who do not thrive in school. At the other end of the educational spectrum, there are outdoor programmes (in the UK) which are specially designed to develop the interpersonal skills of PhD students and improve their employment prospects. These other ways of learning in the outdoors can benefit students throughout the whole spectrum of ability and privilege.

A passion for education

The idealism that infuses outdoor education is both a strength and a weakness. Our great expectations of what outdoor education can achieve, and of how much individuals can learn, grow and develop in the outdoors are the kinds of positive beliefs that help to make outdoor education work. On the other hand, we can claim so much that we are vulnerable to criticism that the benefits of outdoor education are overstated. The incredibly broad agenda of outdoor educators is shared by many others. This gives outdoor education a high score for relevance, but a low score for uniqueness. For example: learning by doing, active learning, interactive learning, participatory learning, project-based learning and group problem-solving are found throughout many forms of education. A whole range of teaching styles can be found both indoors and outdoors. Some outdoor education literature implies that classroom teachers are stuck in a time warp in the 1950s, while outdoor educators are 21st century facilitators of experiential learning. How many counter examples would I need to find of excellent 21st century classroom teaching and 1950s style outdoor instructing to balance the argument? It would be more fruitful to explore commonalities in 21st century practices and not discredit others by exaggerating differences – especially if we have a shared passion for education.

Confusion for experiences that enhance growth

I believed that "Everything depends on the quality of experience which is had ... every experience lives on in further experience" (NEWBY 1938). He recognised that not all experiences are "equalitative", and that some experiences enhance future growth for others can have the opposite effect. So how do we recognise growth-enhancing experience? This question can be the start of a new journey into theories about what makes a whole person – as multiple intelligence theory, learning styles theories and current theories. Each development theorist seems to have their idealised vision of what it is to be whole. Their theories highlight that (when met) are said to foster development. These include needs for belonging, acceptance, care, love, praise, responsibility, achievement, new experiences, connection, significance, unity, uncertainty, growth, contribution, power, fun and freedom (NEWBY 1954; KELLMER-PRINGLE 1965; ROGERS 1969; KOLB 1982; GLASSNER 1990; ROBBINS 2001). No such list is ever complete. An alternative way of presenting growth and development is in the form of a multidirectional model, such as this:

Personal growth can be viewed as making new connections in any of several directions: upward, to achieve one's full potential; outward, to make contact and encounter others; inward, to increase our awareness of who we are, and what we want, need, sense, feel, think, and do; and downward, to touch earth, to be grounded, and to connect with the universe. It involves: increasing the range of perceptions, thoughts and feelings we experience, developing new ways to express them, and making choices and decisions about the direction in which we wish to move." (GIGES/ROSENFIELD 1976, 87)

Giges and Rosenfeld's description of growth as connection-making in four directions (upward, outward, inward and downward) can be fully applied to the fostering of growth through adventure. From an adventure education perspective we tend to emphasise how "big" adventures can enhance growth. But the following story illustrates how a heightened sense of awareness of simple every-

day experiences can help a person escape from their conditioning – and grow.

"Tonight, I had no idea what to expect. Then, my friend Aaron taught me a lesson [...] he gave me a German malt drink, with a most unusual taste. It was my first time ever to have such a drink. I spent the first couple of sips trying to describe it in terms of known tastes, such as a mixture of Coca-Cola and beer. Then, I saw my stupidity. I was trying to fit this experience into what I knew, and I was locked in the prison of my conditioning. Straight away, I knew exactly what this tasted like. It tasted like a German malt drink, in all its uniqueness. Every experience, every moment, is unique. What if we could keep the freshness of the intelligent, untouched mind, and see it that way? There is no learning when we stuff new experiences into old memories. There is no flow when our past determines what we can see in the present. Open. It's about opening and letting go, moment to moment, being born and dying, moment to moment, endlessly." (OOM 2007)

Being able to see new experiences with fresh eyes must surely be an essential feature of any experiential learning process. These insights suggest that always being open to new experiences could do more for continuing growth than relying too much on recalling lessons arising from past experiences. Perhaps growth involves sensing the uniqueness of an experience while also seeing connections with other experiences? Another fine balance.

A confusion of language

There is a confusion of language, theory and practice in experiential learning and outdoor adventure education. The confusion begins with language and terminology. In an article entitled "Diversity in Language", Ivana Turcová, the compiler of an English-Czech outdoor dictionary, explains some of the background:

"With regard to the outdoors, many publications are written in English and much of the basic terminology has been primarily developed in English. To understand the range of apparently similar terms is becoming

best left intact and untouched. Any attempt to add value by 'processing' the experience could spoil that treasured moment. There are plenty of other events on this expedition that did involve learning from experience (such as truck maintenance and teamwork) *but this desert sunrise was the kind of experience that didn't need learning from*. Eric believed that the desert sunrise would remain in their memories forever: it was a powerful experience even though it had no clear significance and no clear consequences. A zealous accountant might wonder why these young expeditioners were not doing something of more measurable value at the time, but I think the rest of the world would appreciate that such experiences have value. Somehow we 'know' that the most valuable experiences can be the most difficult to express or explain.

However, outdoor education is a source of a huge variety of valuable experiences and is not simply a search for a special category of awe-inspiring experiences that are difficult to express or explain. Some experiences produce more identifiable learning than others, but the fact that some experiences are best left untouched is not an argument for leaving *all* experiences alone; likewise, the fact that the sharing of experiences can bring out valuable learning is not an argument for reviewing *all* experiences. There is no rule that states "*You will have only one model to guide your practice!*". We should be alive to the diversity of valuable experiences that can happen outdoors, and we should be smart enough to respond in appropriate ways to each different kind of experience.

I believe that the passion that outdoor educators have for their work is undervalued. Recognising such passion also recognises what is missing from the dry models and theories through which outdoor educators explain what they do. A notable exception is Colin Mortimer's model of adventure education in which he uses the word "love" three times: love of self, love of others, and love of the environment (MORTLOCK 1984, 19). The passion of outdoor educators takes many forms. Understanding what inspires outdoor educators might reveal more about outdoor education than any model can do. Let us look more closely at these passions.

A passion for the outdoors

Our classroom and our dreams are huge. The outdoors is a big place and we have big ideas about how being, living, doing, growing and learning in the outdoors can be good for us and good for the planet. Our wish list is enormous. We want to open hearts, minds and bodies to unlimited horizons. We want outdoor learning to be available and accessible to all, so that everyone can fulfil their potential. We believe in healthy bodies, healthy minds and happy spirits (while reducing truancy, obesity and suicide rates if we can). And this is just a start: our list is much, much longer. In the outdoors we can raise self-esteem (if it is too low), develop a positive outlook on life (for all ages), develop trust, deepen relationships, improve social skills, develop altruism and co-operation (and competition too). We can also foster an entrepreneurial spirit, teach problem-solving skills, reduce bullying and offending behaviour, develop groups and teams, and develop leaders (and followers), organisations and communities. All outdoors. And it is increasingly urgent for us to go beyond raising awareness of nature: we want people to *connect* with nature, follow sustainable life styles and adopt sustainable policies wherever they live, learn or work. In short, we want to save the planet. And the medium we use for learning (the outdoors) is so powerful and flexible that we'll find a way of achieving whatever you want.

Passion inspires and energises, especially when purpose, values, activities and methods are all in alignment with a coherent philosophy of outdoor education. But clients and participants may not want the full menu – they may want less walking and more indoor activities, they may want less time for sustainability and more time for fun (or vice versa), less emphasis on personal development and more on curriculum links (or vice versa). They will almost certainly expect more in less time ("and extra goes on the zip wire, please"). To keep our passion alive, we should each have a coherent philosophy of outdoor education that clarifies (to ourselves and to others) what it is we are passionate about, and we should feel free to adopt a facilitation style that allows us to show our passion through our work. Passion is one of our strongest assets: it should not be restrained in a strait-jacket of structured learning models. It is difficult to nourish whole

from development if the teacher follows a model that restricts their style – making them a professionalised half person. When young people take part in outdoor education they should meet an educator who is clearly 'in their element' and passionate about what they do while paying close attention to the quality of each young person's experiences. Being passionate while remaining objective and attentive and leaving space for each young person is a demanding combination and a fine balance.

A passion for adventure

Every adventure educator surely has a passion for adventure. But what happens to that passion when adventure is transformed into adventure education? Sometimes adventure becomes a process of setting challenging goals and achieving them. (Is that adventure or is it the *work ethic* injected into an adventurous setting?). Sometimes adventure is about leaving a "personal comfort zone" and spending time in the "stretch zone" while seeking "flow" or "mastery" (Is that having an adventure or is it becoming an *expert* in an adventurous activity?) Achieving goals and achieving mastery are very useful kinds of adventures to have, but where is the passion for adventure in these *useful adventures*? Where is adventure itself? Where is the fun of adventure? Where is the spontaneity of adventure? Where is the delight of a *shared* adventure? Where is the uncertainty and surprise of adventures that just happen, without design or contrivance? All of the above kinds of adventure (and more) have a part to play in adventure education. But if adventure education becomes exclusively focused on stories of individual success, our cultural heritage of outdoor adventure (in our organisation, region or country) would be reduced to the mainstream game of jumping over hurdles. The alternative is a fuller sense of adventure that opens new windows on the world and broadens horizons.

With some adventure activities the idea is to have each person exceeding their own expectations. Some succeed and say "Never again!" – an unfortunate message to take away) while others leave with a more empowering message such as "If I can do this I can do anything!" This is a very controlled (and valuable) use of adventure activities aimed at turning "I can't" into "I can". It is just one of many kinds of adventure

that a young person might experience. If taking part in a residential programme, being away from home may be a bigger adventure than jumping off a pole, but the main learning from the experience of being away from home may not be the "I can do it" message. It might be about valuing the friendship and support of others. Such seemingly unadventurous benefits are an integral part of many adventures. I have referred to these as "the other side of adventure":

Adventurous activity may at first appear to be valuable mainly for the "adventurous spirit" which the experience can arouse. Adventurous activities tend to get linked with more adventurous aims such as: becoming more confident and positive, becoming more assertive, overcoming difficulties, and breaking new ground, but the "other side" of adventure, though less visible, can have just as much impact, and just as much relevance – especially when the experience is suitably reviewed. This "other side" of adventure provides scope for aims such as: developing greater awareness of self and others, making relationships, learning to co-operate, learning to express feelings, and the development of many attitudes and skills other than "adventurous-looking" ones. (GREENAWAY 1990, 60)

A passion for adventure narrowly interpreted would not include this "other side" of adventure. But the word "adventure" can also be an all-encompassing term that refers to the whole experience and therefore pays attention to the whole person. A shared adventure is far more than the achieving of a goal. And sometimes goals are little more than a good excuse for having a real adventure.

Adventure can create an appetite for more adventure. And the bigger the adventure the bigger the appetite it can create. An awakened appetite for adventure could reveal itself in many different ways (some more worthwhile than others) perhaps as an appetite for fairground rides, independent travel, computer games, adventure sports, gambling, entrepreneurship, or finding the courage to stand up for oneself or for others. Interestingly, there is a counter argument that having an adventure "outlet" helps people suppress their desire for adventure at other times. This apparent ability of adventure to pacify is frequently expressed as one of the rationales for using outdoor adventure with young offenders. Adventure, it seems, can stimulate or satiate the desire for further adventure. Who decides? And how?

exercises which they published in their annual handbooks for facilitators. It appears that when designers of exercises are confident that a particular activity will generate a particular experience and a particular outcome, then activity, experience and outcome are readily conflated into one composite term such as "Structured Learning Experience". This 3 word term is a bit of a mouthful, so the first two words get dropped and these training exercises become known as "experiences". In this way "experience" could refer to any or all of the following: the published briefing notes, the activity, the experiences or the outcomes. In this broad usage, "experience" becomes part of an almost didactic delivery system that has little room for the individual variations that stray outside the prescribed pathways of the designed experience.

This stretching of the meaning of "experience" is paralleled by a shift of language that takes experiential learning theory back into the didactic paradigm – an ironic shift back into the very ideology that most experiential learning theorists were challenging in the first place. In experiential learning theory, rather than the teacher being the primary source of knowledge, the student's own experiences become the primary source of knowledge. The student is no longer a passive student receiving wisdom, but is now an active learner constructing meaning from their experiences, while the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning. These ideas were grown, raised and developed in North America through the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, George Kelly, Carl Rogers, David Kolb, Donald Schön, Howard Gardener, Elliot Eisner and many others. Theorists from other countries have made important contributions to experiential learning theory (such as Paulo Freire, David Boud and John Heron) but the main point here is that the development of experiential learning theory has been primarily a USA phenomenon – and male dominated. So it is ironic to find that outdoor adventure education textbooks published in North America appear to be taking experiential learning theory back into the didactic paradigm. Recent terminology in North American adventure education literature presents *learning from experience* as if it is a highly organised industrial process. Instead of the didactic pouring of knowledge into the passive student, the educator is now busy *programming* the experience, *delivering* the experi-

more difficult, not only for non-English speakers who face the problems with translation of terms, but also for native speakers." (TURCOVA et al 1995, 110)

the variety of opinions of the British academics who were consulted in Turcová's study demonstrates a range of different views about how key terms relate to each other. Turcová's work is helping to clarify meanings but her purpose is to *bring out* differences rather than to smooth them over:

National characteristics and norms influence subtle differences among terms and individual perception and interpretation of terms. These differences highlight regional differences in practice, as well as different theoretical standpoints, which is helpful for communication with colleagues from other countries and for international co-operation in the European Union." (ibid., 115)

Some terms, such as the Czech "turistika", the Norwegian "friluftsliv" and the German "Erlebnispädagogik", are not readily translated into English because their meanings are so bound up with the history and culture from where they originate. Exploring the differences within and between British and North American terminology is both more straightforward and more complex: despite sharing the same language some terms (such as "programming") have different meanings on each side of the Atlantic and need translating. Interestingly, many of these transatlantic differences follow a *clear and consistent pattern* that is having a profound influence over how people think, write and talk about outdoor and experiential education when communicating in the English language. The pattern involves a shift from a learner-centred language to teacher-centred language.

A typical example of this pattern can be seen in how the word "experience" changes its meaning. In American usage, "experience" often refers to the activity, whereas the British tend to reserve "experience" for the subjective and individually different experience of the activity (which is the usage generally followed in this chapter). The American usage dates back at least to the 1970s when Pfeiffer and Jones used the term "Structured Learning Experiences" to refer to the training

ence, *frontloading* the experience, *framing* the experience, *funnelling* the experience and *processing* the experience. Even allowing for some mistranslation from American English to British English, the pattern is clear: this new industrialised lexicon of experiential education (designing, loading, funnelling etc.) is reversing the direction of change. This reversal from experiential back to didactic is not quite complete because it is still *experience* rather than *knowledge* that is being acted upon. In an attempt to bring some clarity to this confusion, a range of experiential approaches are presented below in a rough spectrum from *designed experience* to *open-ended adventures*.

A rough spectrum from design to adventure

Treatment through experience: characterised by the terms "Isomorphic Framing" and "Paradoxical Symptom Prescriptions" (PRIEST/GASS 1997, 190-221) – approaches which are carefully designed and controlled.

Teaching through experience: characterised by the advice from designers to facilitators that the activity should "not generate excess data" (PEIFFER/JONES 1983) – not the kind of advice that would apply to a day in the hills (nor to any other outdoor adventure).

Delivering the experience characterised by an adventure education seminar which involves "delivering the outdoor adventure experience" (NORTHLAND COLLEGE 2007) – the combination of the term "delivery" and the use of "experience" in the singular pulls this experiential approach back into the didactic paradigm.

Optimal experience characterised by the concept of "flow" in which the participant experiences a state of focused concentration and complete absorption in an activity. (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI 1990) – experiential and highly focused.

Learning from experience characterised by the definition: "Experiential Education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experience." (AEE 2003) – a definition in which the educator is not mentioned.

Uncontrived experience: "We must always try to prevent our programmes from turning what should be natural, direct and immediate

ate into a contrived experience" (DRASDO 2000) – "programmes" implies there is some design, but Drasdo's dislike of contrivance puts a clear limitation on just how far design should go.

– **"It is their adventure"** characterised by David Charlton's ideas about adventure education: "It is their adventure and if they tell you about it, it is because they hope that you will understand." (CHARLTON c.1980) – shows full confidence in the value of adventurous experiences.

The above spectrum is "rough" because it combines several scales in one. The designed end is the medical model (using language such as *diagnosis* and *prescription*) in which the provider views participants principally as patients. The patients may be actively doing things – but the activities are structured and supervised in ways that ensure they do not have too much experience (excessive data complicate the treatment process). Somewhere in the middle of the spectrum is "flow" experience. *Flow* is probably rare in outdoor education (except where there is scope for sustained skill development) because to experience *flow* the person would usually be quite accomplished in a particular activity and in a state in which they are in control, in the zone, and totally absorbed. *Beyond flow*, at the less contrived end of the spectrum, neither the educator nor the learners have a strong influence over the particular nature of the experience: it is adventure!

The *designed* end of the above spectrum happens to be illustrated with examples from North America and the *open* end of the spectrum with European (British) examples. Perhaps there are significant American-British or American-European differences here? But any such generalisation would ignore all the American theorists (listed above) who have done so much to develop experiential learning theory *throughout* this rough spectrum.

Another way of seeing this spectrum is to notice the influence of the world of training at the *designed* end of the spectrum. This also reflects a global trend in which education is becoming more vocationalised and more dominated by the language of objectives and outcomes. Ideals about a broad and balanced curriculum and the more aesthetic subjects are becoming squeezed out of the mainstream and into the margins of "other ways of learning and development". Thus

training end is clear and focused (what you see is what you get) and the other end is fuzzy and open.

This could also be seen as a spectrum with learning at one end and development at the other. The learning end could be represented by Kolb's theory of experiential learning, and the development end could be represented by Kolb's (less well known) theory of experiential development. Both theories are brought together in a three dimensional integrated model in his seminal work *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (KOLB 1984). The most prominent experiential learning theorist has successfully integrated the whole spectrum of learning and development, should not try to emulate such integration in practice? Kolb's use of Escherich's art as illustrations in his 1984 work shows his fascination with integrating opposites, with balance and with transformation.

The following words of Johan Hovelynck bring together some key themes from this section. He summarises two of his papers as follows:

Many practices that are currently referred to as 'experiential education' – especially in outdoor programs – are more accurately understood as active forms of teaching. In such programs, activities have enlivened the curriculum, but the concept of education as a matter of teachers conveying a message has largely remained unchanged. The papers argue that such a 'didactic' mindset interferes with a focus on the experiences of program participants, and hence with experience-based learning." (HOVELYNCK 2001, 2003)

In this chapter I take a similar view, but I also encourage a search for new ways that draw on all parts of the spectrum and that also include looking beyond the comfort of our own favourite models. That proposal comes next.

What's missing from models?

The rough spectrum outlined above could form part of a more elaborate, more inclusive, more diverse and more complete picture of outdoor adventure education. This would create a map on which we could differentiate between one approach and another. We could each

then identify our own preferred territory and our own preferred way of working. Or are there better ways of using such a map? Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. Each approach is also stronger if it blends in suitable ideas or practices from other parts of the map. What such a composite map would call into question is whether we have *any* single theory or model that is so universal that it is equally relevant throughout *all* forms of outdoor adventure education. This is a question worth asking because so many models are used as if they are universal.

Models are useful because they simplify. They reduce complex and variable processes into a regular and standard pattern. But experiences do not come in regular and standard packages and we learn and grow (through experience) in many different ways. Some experiences might be worth subjecting to deep analysis, whereas other experiences are more for celebrating than for analysing; some potentially valuable experiences will pass us by unless our senses are sufficiently alert to pick them up and tune in, whereas other experiences can be so overwhelming that we need to distance ourselves from the experience to recover and make sense of it; some experiences recur so much that we can learn from looking at patterns over time, whereas other experiences seem so special that we may want to treasure their uniqueness in every way we can; most experiences are kept alive by sharing them, whereas some experiences may seem so fragile that we prefer to keep them to ourselves. If the experiences are adventurous experiences outdoors, the potential variety of experiences is immense. And the more variable the experience, the less likely it is that "one model fits all". In my book *Reviewing Adventures* I asked:

"Is experiential learning theory (such as that of KOLB 1984) really so versatile that it can be usefully applied to any experience – from boiling an egg to climbing a mountain?" (GREENAWAY 1996)

Deeply enriching experiences, immensely rewarding experiences or highly adventurous experiences are not necessarily about performance nor are they necessarily about learning. There are times when *the experience itself* matters far more than any learning or performance improvement that might arise from it. It is likely that such ful-

... experiences are simultaneously satisfying several developmental needs — including the need for growth. Attempting to follow such experiences with a rational process of reflection and abstract conceptualization could be a serious mismatch. Adventure educators need more options than are suggested in Kolb's model. Surely it is not always necessary to feed the experience into a reflective process in order to make it "educational" or worthwhile?

In their book on adventure programming, Simon Priest and Roger Gass have adapted Kolb's model to include emotions ("afterthoughts") as part of their "debriefing funnel" (PRIEST/GASS 1997). A series of filters in the funnel, sequentially transform experience into "change" — which is represented by a drip emerging from the bottom of the funnel. Whenever it is important to bring out specific learning points or to produce a commitment to change, such a process provides a useful means of focusing on what really matters. Despite paying more attention to emotion than other models, the visual image of the funnel and its filters, seems opposite to the philosophy of adventure: the funnel zooms in whereas adventure zooms out. The funnel presents an image of convergent thinking rather than an image of divergent thinking. While both kinds of thinking can be useful throughout the spectrum outlined above, convergent thinking is more characteristic of treatment, and divergent thinking is more associated with adventure. Interestingly, Kolb's cycle does provide a balance between divergent and convergent thinking. Also, the What? So What? Now What? cycle (BORTON 1970) is balanced in a similar way, but only if Borton's advice is heeded to apply the cycle twice — first analytically and then in a more relaxed and contemplative mode. Facilitators do not know that the models they follow are not balanced in these ways, the chances are that they will adopt the convergent style that is implied (in British English) by the term "processing" — that is so unequivocally represented in the metaphor of funneling. The funnel provides a useful guide for filtering experiences, but without a complementary process to stimulate divergent thinking (as found in other models of experiential learning) there is a risk that the color and spirit of adventure also get filtered out.

Adventure involves broadening horizons and opening out and zooming and exploring new frontiers and opportunities. At the ad-

venture end of the spectrum there is a different kind of experiential learning process at work. The bigger the adventure, the harder it can be to appreciate its future significance close to the event, and the harder it can be to predict what impact it will have. The individual may feel that their adventure is a personal breakthrough, or a group may feel that they have crossed a significant threshold in their development. A celebratory telling of their story or a physical re-enactment may do more to help this special experience live on in future experiences than would a convergent cognitive filtering process designed to produce a commitment to change. Reliving a special experience is a kind of *emotional* processing — which may turn out to be of greater lasting value than the purely *cognitive* processing of the experience that is typical of most learning cycles. Dewey writes of experiences *carrying* people into the future. He describes an educative experience as one that:

"... arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future." (DEWEY 1938, 31)

Dewey provides a broader vision of "educative experience" than many of his followers do. Dewey's interest was in the kinds of experiences that arouse, that are intense, that strengthen, that stimulate, and that live on in future experiences that have similar properties. Such experiences help people over dead patches and help to prevent them shrinking from the world. This is a philosophy of adventure — and one that maintains a holistic view of the individual throughout the process. It is the opposite of "paralysis by analysis". Borton was aware of the dangers of lifeless processing when he warned "do not dissect to disintegration", but many users of his "What? So What? Now What?" model do not know of author's warnings.

Models simplify reality. Practitioners simplify a model further if they work only with the model's labels and have little understanding of the substance beneath the labels.

Ultimately, however much we aspire to "follow" a particular model, our decisions are subjective, intuitive and provisional. There may be something "professional" about following a model, but there may

something even more "professional" about not following a model. We should continually be seeking *other* ways in learning and development.

How into the future

In the world of outdoor adventure education it is especially important to appreciate the core belief that outdoor adventure can arouse, stimulate, enliven, draw out potential and provide a broader view of ourselves and the environment. It is an enlivening process that develops potential and opens up new possibilities and opportunities. Within this process there are times when it pays to zoom in and in the detail, especially if it is a detail that is holding things back. We need a holistic approach, movement in one direction will soon need turning by movement in another direction: such as by following in with zooming out, structure with freedom, intention with relaxation, yin with yang. By asking "What else?", "What's going?", "What other?", "What's new?" we find opposites, new directions and create a more rounded and life-enhancing process of learning and development.

Outdoor adventure education is itself "other" to mainstream education. For many participants it provides what is missing. Much of the appeal and power of outdoor adventure education lies in its 'otherness'. Let's continue to celebrate and develop our rich diversity of experiences. Let's continue to celebrate and develop our rich diversity of experiences. We should always be seeking *other* ways. In the following lines I draw together the reasons why.

Other is not normal

Other is not mainstream

Other is not the status quo

Other is not how we do things round here

Other is alternative

Other is different

Other is alien

Other is beyond the familiar

Other is yin ... or yang

Other is balance

Other is what's missing

Other is promise and potential

Other is unknown

Other is risk

Other is adventure

Other is opening, changing and becoming

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