2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Table of Contents

Mandela’s Non-Racialism 1
Prostitution, Liberalism, and Slavery 18
The Sovereign 30
Tracing the Çapulcu: Historical, Ethnographic, and Global Perspectives on Mass Politics in Turkey Today 37
André Gorz & the Philosophical Foundation of the Political 42
Reification: History of the Concept 60
Something in the Air: Assayas’ Portrait of Political and Personal Upheaval Post May ‘68 France 67
Sheldon Krimsky and Jeremy Gruber, eds. Genetic Explanations: Sense and Nonsense (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) 71
The Life and Times of the Underground Press — Part 2: Art and Design 77
Stanley Aronowitz, Taking It Big: C. Wright Mills and the Making of Political Intellectuals 83
B. Jack Copeland, Turing: Pioneer of the Information Age (Oxford University Press, 2012) 86
John Nichols, On Top of Spoon Mountain 92
Gregory D. Johnsen, The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda, and America’s War in Arabia 95

Mandela’s Non-Racialism

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

> We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world. Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.
>
> — Nelson Mandela, Presidential Inaugural Address, 1994

The Issue

Section 1 of Chapter 1 of South Africa’s democratic constitution proclaims “non-racialism” as a founding value. Nelson Mandela did not invent the idea, but he did make sure it was featured in the constitution. Meant less as a description of South African reality than an ideal, non-racialism was a promise about the future and a measure of the progress that remains to be made in the country. But what was the promise of “non-racialism”? Was it, as white skeptics suspected, a ruse all along? Was it, as Africanists accuse, a sell-out designed to accommodate privileged whites to democracy at the expense of Africans? Was it something in-between or, more hopefully, something different from what its critics allege?

Mandela’s basic definition of non-racialism was straightforward and familiar. Non-racialism was the universalist and conventional liberal demand for equality under law and in citizenship. Mandela required, therefore, that race be rendered immaterial: in the constitution, law, and formal political institutions—no small ambition given the backdrop. Non-racialism meant reversing the trajectory of South African history, politics, economy, society, and culture; but the benefits were worth the effort. South Africa got democracy, international acclaim, and the hope of a bright future, and it escaped the oppression of apartheid, international condemnation, and the prospect of racial apocalypse. Mandela hoped, however, for more. Equality in law and citizenship for Mandela was both an end in itself and the springboard to higher ends.

Minimally, non-racialism proscribes official racialism. But granting that non-racialism means equality under the law, what does it say about the role race would play in South African politics? Non-racialism means establishing colorblind state institutions; but refusing to represent race formally in official institutions does not necessarily prevent race from playing an informal role in politics. Non-racialism, in other words, leaves ample room for mobilizing, exploiting, and manipulating racial identities, solidarities, and resentments. Mandela himself, of course, refused to appeal to racial fears, hatred, and prejudice. But he did affirm racial solidarities (he headed the African National Congress) and did not aspire to outgrow racial consciousness. What, then, was the non-racial state to do besides ignoring officially the

significance of race in the name of democratic equality?

Maximally, Mandela's political practice was aimed at achieving two additional benefits. First, he wanted South Africans to become one nation bound together under a common identity and by a sense of shared destiny. But because Mandela could not assume that a united people would spring spontaneously from shared cultural identities, the new people had to be made. Acting through the color blind state, non-racialism would construct the non-racial nation. But if Mandela's non-racial state was to carry the burden of unifying South Africa's several races and many ethnicities into a single people that would not be identified or defined by race, the new state would have to be non-racial in a substantive, and not merely nominal way. Mandela's aspirations to build the non-racial people, therefore, entailed practicing genuinely non-racial politics, even though he had no means of preventing the ANC from resorting to racialist politics and even though he dallied with "positive" racialism himself.

Second, Mandela wanted to de-racialize the economy. Dreams of a non-racial people were sincere and comforting, but they would not amount to much as long as South Africa's extreme inequality and deep poverty endured. What could it mean to talk of South Africans as belonging to one nation made up of mutuality and interdependence if half of the population lived in dire want and the top fraction in luxury? And how could non-racialism thrive given that these injustices originated in racism? While South Africa's upper and middle classes have become blacker, they remain disproportionately white. Meanwhile, the poor remain overwhelmingly African (and Coloured), belying promises of unity and common destiny. While Africanists conclude that racial empowerment is the route to African prosperity, the logic of Mandela's thought points in a different direction. The objective is alleviating poverty and inequality, not racializing the state.

Non-racialism is not, in other words, merely the courtesy of according to whites the dignity that white supremacy had denied to blacks, of not turning the tables on the former oppressors.[1] The non-racial state, nation, and economy must walk hand-in-hand if real freedom is to be reached. Making that point from the dock in his 1962 trial (not a venue conducive to feel-good politics), Mandela articulated the core of non-racialism. The ANC, he declared, "believed that all people, irrespective of the colour of their skins, all people whose home is South Africa and who believe in the principles of democracy and of equality of men should be treated as Africans; that all South Africans are entitled to live a free life on the basis of fullest equality of the rights and opportunities in every field, of full democratic rights, with a direct say in the affairs of the Government."[2] Non-racialism and democracy are two sides of the same coin.

Defining Racism and Racialism

Nelson Mandela is revered as the personification of grace. His deep humanity and generosity of spirit are credited with guiding South Africa from the horrors of apartheid to the promised land of democracy. Certainly, credit is due to Mandela's character for setting the example of

forgiving, reconciling, and unifying; but his political choices are explained also by his political commitments. Throughout his political life, Mandela operated with an understanding—an evolving but, ultimately, a theoretically consistent one—of what he meant by "race," where he thought race came from, where race should not matter, and where it may matter. Although the terms of his thought often remained implicit, making them explicit unveils a principled political thinker. Befitting a political activist, the details of Mandela's politics of race developed in response to changing political circumstances and accumulated experience. But they also were informed by coherent principles of what he called "non-racial democracy." Mandela insisted on writing non-racial principles into South Africa's democratic constitution; on that point he was uncompromising. But did Mandela's "non-racialism" mean that "race" does not exist, that it should not exist (which presupposes, of course, that it does exist), or something more modest, more classically liberal? Under Mandela's non-racial regime, would it be possible that race could reign in some spheres but not in others? If so, how was acceptable racialism to be differentiated from unacceptable racialism? And what distinguished "non-racialism" from forthright rejection of racism? If Mandela had no truck with racism, why did he bother calling his politics "non-racial"? What was the purchase of rejecting "racialism" in addition to "racism"?

Racism is defined in many ways. But if the goal is to get at differences with "racialism," it helps to identify racism as the assertion by one group of people (usually whites) of their human superiority over other groups on the basis of differences in their "races." Setting out from the proposition that one race is "better" than others, racists demand that the "worthier" group be installed over the "inferior" to manifest objectively and externally the differences that originate in race. Supremacy in power attests to superiority in worth, and subordinating the lesser group confirms its inferiority. For racists, in other words, hierarchies reflect rather than cause racial inequalities. Political and economic privileges merely accord whites their due, which they deserved before they were manifested in institutions. Clearly, Mandela rejected racist domination. But if apartheid was racism institutionalized, why did Mandela talk about "non-racialism"?

The answer is that apartheid was both racist and racialist. Where racists demand that superiority be translated into supremacy and inferiority into subordination, racialists adopt a different agenda. They do not necessarily demand inequality (although they often practice it). But they necessarily do demand recognition of difference. For both racialists and racists, races are hubs of human society, but racialists derive what seems to be a less offensive conclusion from the centrality of race to human society. Instead of having to assert that one race is better than another, racialists may assert that each race has its own ways, cultures, values, and solidarities, much like nations. Wanting different things, races quarrel and clash if they are lumped together in the same political institutions, and their conflicts are worsened because values are associated with races, preventing them from agreeing on common standards and authorities for adjudicating their differences. Better, racialists argue, to keep races apart. Like nations, races belong in countries of their own; and, if intermixing makes it impossible to separate them territorially into different states, races require official recognition in political institutions. The old American segregationist demand of "separate but equal" was racist in

intent, but it was racialist in sentiment. It obscured the demand for supremacy in the fog of false equality.

Apartheid South Africa, of course, was systematically racist in practice. But in ideology and political organization it was racialist. Apartheid was committed not only to the racist domination over blacks, but also to the racialist separation of blacks from whites (and of blacks from each other). Casting the oppression of "separate development" as conventional nationalism, apartheid ideology refuted—on racialist grounds—any charge that its denial of equality to Africans constituted racism. Africans, it maintained, were denied equality in citizenship not because they were inferior, as racists would have it, but because they were different, foreign, as racialists would say. After all, Africans had homeland states of their own where they belonged, or so Nationalist politicians habitually proclaimed. Nobody expected South Africa to accord equal rights to Austrians, so why to the Xhosa?

Racialism, therefore, carried a specific opprobrium for Mandela. White racism, as he often noted, was grounded neither in nature nor social convention, but in state power; and state power was organized by racialism, which made racialism the linchpin of apartheid. Mandela's demand for non-racialism was aimed, therefore, at the political and ideological foundations of apartheid. It required the apartheid state to shed its explicitly racial definition as the state of the white nation by opening citizenship equally to all South Africans without regard to race. In demanding the de-racializing of both state and citizens, his non-racialism meant to cut the legs from racism. By contrast to the white supremacist state, Mandela's "non-racial" state had no "color" itself and was colorblind when viewing citizens. His words at from the 1962 trial once more are illuminating: "We were inspired by the idea of bringing into being a democratic republic where all South Africans will enjoy human rights without the slightest discrimination; where African and non-African would be able to live together in peace, sharing a common nationality and a common loyalty to this country, which is our homeland."[3] Of course, it is one thing to officially propound the colorblind oneness of people in law, but it is another to achieve it in reality.

Race and Nation in Non-Racialism

Thus far, the idea of non-racialism sounds conventionally liberal. It prohibited states from having racial identities and conceived of citizenship as independent of race. In this, Mandela's colorblind, non-racialism resembled Europe's liberal solution to the wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Faced with terrible devastation and the specter of incessant warfare as states sought to spread—or protect—their religions, Europe began in the middle of the seventeenth century to grope toward the solution of religious toleration. Over time, Protestants and Catholics became indistinguishable in the law as Europeans made religion a matter of personal conscience, not of state interest. States deemed religion as beyond their purview. In effect, religion was privatized.

Liberal societies separate church from state, but they do not seek to outlaw or abolish religions. Indeed, the self-same principles that prohibit states from acting on behalf of or contrary to specific religions also—because the state is "blind" to religion—permit believers to use their faith to influence state policies (rather like a one-way mirror). The liberal state may not cite the teachings of the Catholic Church when, for example, setting its polices on abortion, but it must allow Catholics animated by those teachings to act as citizens. Privatizing religion, in other words, separates state from church, but it leaves standing the right and ability of citizens to make both personal and political choices on the basis of their religious convictions. The American state may not recognize the special claims of Judaism as a religious faith; but it may respond to the urgings of Jews to support the state of Israel diplomatically.

The liberal model of privatizing religion dovetails neatly with "non-racialism," a distinctly South African term that dated to the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century. When coined, the "Cape non-racial franchise" used tests of property and education to restrict the ballot in elections to the colony's parliament. Although these restrictions were inflected with race in that they were measures of "white" civilization, the tests were "non-racial" in that they were not denominated racially. If blacks met them, then they were "civilized." Under the "non-racial" franchise, some men of mixed race and a smattering of African men were permitted to vote. Subsequently, the term "non-racial" was revived by the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in the 1920s, but it was redefined. Acting under the instructions of the Comintern, Communists demanded universal, colorblind suffrage, with the intention of turning South Africa into a "Native Republic." If the vote were to be allocated universally without regard to race, the CPSA reckoned, the normal workings of majority rule government would produce a government controlled by Africans. Then, Africans could infuse democratic forms with racial content (much as the overwhelmingly white franchise of the time infused government with the racial interests and sensibilities of whites), before eventually jettisoning bourgeois rule and proceeding to the second stage of the revolution by establishing socialism. The third main iteration of non-racialism issued from Mandela's generation in the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in the early years of apartheid. The ANCYL called for de-racializing politics through the colorblind franchise, to the obvious benefit of the African majority. When the mainstays of the ANCYL graduated to lead the ANC in the mid-50s, the ANC likewise raised non-racial democracy into a cardinal political value.[4]

Mandela infused South African definitions of non-racialism with the lessons drawn from the European treatment of religion by seeking the abolition of the official, legal status of race. But much as liberal societies must allow religious convictions to influence politics as long as they are expressed through institutions that remain formally neutral to religions, so Mandela's non-racial state may be infused with racial politics. As long as racialism is not institutionalized officially, the non-racial state must tolerate it. Because quintessentially liberal, Mandela's non-racialism permits informally what it must prohibit formally. Consequently, the racialism of the majority may take the cover of non-racial democracy.

Neither in his writings, nor in his practice, did Mandela ever offer a solution to the problem. He rejected racial segregation, separate development, and racial hierarchies, but he accepted

that race has value. He routinely referred to "my people," and he meant Africans. It never occurred to Mandela that non-racialism obligated him to conceal his sense of specific solidarity with other Africans or to conceive of South Africans abstractly, as apart from their race. Announcing that he held his "African heritage dearly"[5] and expecting others to feel the same about theirs, Mandela made a point of respecting the tribal (or ethnic) and racial backgrounds of all South Africans. He celebrated his Xhosa heritage, he took pride in his father's role as a hereditary councilor to the chief, he acknowledged his debt to his elders for the lessons they imparted about governing and leadership, and he identified with "[his] own kith and kin."[6] Nevertheless, Mandela learned from his experiences after settling in Johannesburg in the 1940s to sublimate his original Xhosa identity into the African identity that was then burgeoning. Although he retained personal and cultural allegiances to his tribal traditions, Mandela declared, for political purposes, his loyalty to Africans: "It was this desire for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that animated my life."[7] His non-racialism did not, in other words, prevent Mandela from "seeing" the fact of race or his duty to his race. Mandela's duty, as he makes explicit in his autobiography, "was to [his] people as a whole."[8]

Mandela, feeling his personal identity was steeped in tribe and his political loyalty in race, took the point a step further. He distrusted those South Africans, including some of his comrades, who lacked his sense of roots. The elderly Mandela recalled his meetings with Communists when he first became involved in political struggle: "I was impressed by the members of the Communist Party. To see whites who were totally divested of colour consciousness was a new experience to me. [I]t was interesting." If Mandela regarded race as a problem that was to be overcome, or merely as an attachment that was to be embraced or dropped according to personal preference, he would praise white Communists for rejecting racial privilege and then move on. But he takes the insight in the opposite direction. It was "interesting" for Communists to divest themselves of color consciousness, he reflects in Conversations with Myself, but "I wouldn't say it was liberating. And that is why I attacked the communists . . . I thought Marxism was something that actually was subjecting us to a foreign ideology."[9] A lifetime later, in other words, Mandela attributed his disagreements with Communists not to their views on class, economy, democracy, or scientific socialism, but to their indifference to the distinctively South African mix of color and culture—both politically and personally. Their indifference to inherited cultural traditions was for him "foreign" to what it means to be South African. Thus even though he rejected racism categorically, Mandela did not contemplate South Africa without racial consciousness.

If non-racialism did not mandate Mandela to ignore race when he assessed other South Africans and permitted stronger bonds with some South Africans than with others because of race, non-racialism nevertheless did prescribe a spirit of rapprochement and generosity. All South Africans were affirmed as full members in democratic South Africa: "[T]o be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respects the freedom of others."[10] Embracing Africans did not mean excluding non-Africans. If Africans were to follow the example of white supremacy by privileging their racial solidarities over attachments to the South African people, then Africans would forfeit their freedom too: "I know as well as I know

anything that the oppressors must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed".[11] While attributable to his personal grace and humanity, Mandela's inclusiveness also reflected his political principles. Mandela ministered to the cultural identities of all South Africans because he appreciated that they were held dearly and he respected those holding them. But he could afford to affirm all cultural identities, including those of whites, because he rejected the racialist precept that derives fundamental political allegiances from culture. Because he separated the cultural from the political, Mandela could embrace all of South Africa's cultural identities without ratifying rival political allegiances.

Conventionally, liberals conceive of nations as ethnic groups that, having become conscious of themselves as nations, demand the rights and prerogatives that are due nations. But liberals are uncomfortable with where their ideas about the origins of nations might lead. If ethnic groups produce nations and ethnic groups originate in perceptions of common descent and blood, then liberal conceptions almost inevitably head toward exclusionary conceptions of the most sovereign political identities. Consequently, liberals muddy their causality by substituting culture for ethnicity. They have cultures, which often are euphemisms for ethnic groups, defining, fleshing out, and softening the identities that are at the heart of nations. Once sanitized, liberals then institutionalize "cultural identities" as nations. It is eloquent, therefore, that Mandela (along with much of his generation of the ANC) took a different and, potentially, more radically inclusive track. Rather than attributing causal power to racial cultures, Mandela and his cohort vested the politically decisive power to construct identities in political struggle and the state. Mandela's non-racialism could celebrate cultural identities, therefore, precisely because the state is the substructure that gives substance to and upholds the nation. In other words, Mandela needs the non-racial state to create the non-racial nation.

Mandela effectively broadened the CPSA's definition of non-racialism. Where in the 1920s the CPSA took for granted that Africans would graft their culture onto the state, Africanizing the state and then socializing the economy. Mandela envisioned a common citizenship that would expand membership in the nation by incorporating South Africa's various cultural identities. The logic of Mandela's idea derived from the ANCYL in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It recognized that "Africans" were born into and reared in tribes, not into races, but the ANCYL's creed, as Mandela remarked, was "the creation of one nation out of many tribes."[12] While tribes were seen as elemental, the African race had to be created. Unlike standard nationalists, therefore, the ANC never posited its nation as eternal and primordial. Instead of being given "spontaneously" by culture, the African nation for the ANCYL of Mandela's early years in Johannesburg had to be constructed deliberately and politically if it was to supplant tribes in the affections of Africans. The job of the nationalist organization, of the ANC, was to create the African nation. As the theorist of nationalism, Ernest Gellner, puts it, nationalism "invents nations where they do not exist."[13]

Before apartheid was instituted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the ANC debated whether the African nation was the amalgamation of integral tribes, as if a confederation, or whether it circumvented tribes by integrating Africans directly. As Mandela summarized the ANCYL's position: "We were not different people with separate languages; we were one people, with

different tongues."[14] The ANCYL's effort to surpass tribes, or more precisely, to elevate the African nation for political purposes over the tribe, was assisted by the experience of white supremacy. The violence, land confiscations, coerced labor, disenfranchisements, and daily humiliations that issued from the white state had the unintended effects of forging race into the dominant political identity for Africans and of hoisting it above the cultural identity of tribe. Mandela drew the lesson: "To be an African in South Africa means that one is politicised from the moment of one's birth, whether one acknowledges it or not. An African child is born in an Africans Only hospital, taken home in an Africans Only bus, lives in an Africans Only area, and attends Africans Only schools, if he attends school at all."[15] Individuals may remain committed to tribal traditions for sentimental reasons, but apartheid raised race above tribe: "I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did".[16]

Mandela's later non-racialism expanded the logic of his early ANCYL politics. Just as for the ANCYL of the 1940s and 1950s the injustices of the racist state and the political struggles against it created the African nation, which eclipsed older allegiances, so for the ANC of Mandela's maturity the non-racial nation (theoretically at least) eclipsed the African nation because of struggles for and experiences in the democratic state. In both cases, the more parochial identity is superseded for political purposes, and in both cases the medium of change is political struggle and experiences of legal regimes, not cultural evolution. As Africans became Africans through apartheid's racialism, so South Africans would become non-racial first by building and then by experiencing the reality of the new non-racial state. South Africans would remain African, Indian, Coloured, or white, but these all would become ways of being South African. Non-racial South Africa would have black and white South Africans, but not South African blacks and South African whites.

An irresolvable problem, therefore, threaded through Mandela's thinking and political legacy. His vision of the non-racial nation required the state to be more than nominally non-racial. If the state is to nurture non-racial South Africans, it must interpellate and encourage them as South Africans, not reinforce their racial particularity through a "non-racialism" that is merely perfunctory. Mandela did make important exceptions to the official non-recognition of race for affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). Because they were designed to make economic elites more representative racially, these policies necessarily register race for the purpose of redressing racial inequalities. But notwithstanding the objections from some whites that they amount to the rejection of non-racial liberalism, BEE and affirmative action were meant as exceptions to the rule. The greater problem for Mandela's ideal of non-racialism was the value he conferred on racial feelings. First, he took them as a precious part of the identities of South Africans; then, he had to blunt their impact on the activity of the state if he was to turn the non-racial state into the engine driving the new non-racial nation—and he had to draw the sting from race without impairing the ANC's electoral prospects. The contradiction in Mandela's non-racialism is that, in respecting racial feelings, he preserved them for political mobilization.

It is a canon of democracy that citizens may act on the basis of "private" identities and

solidarities. Although committed to the full equality of South Africans of all races, Mandela's non-racialism, therefore, exposed South African politics to the danger of tacit, unofficial racialism. Parties could not be prevented from constructing a political majority on the basis of race, or even be compelled to honor non-racial niceties. Non-racialism must allow de facto what it must rule out de jure. To the extent the government succumbs to the temptation of racialism, it violates the promises the constitution makes to all South Africans, especially racial minorities, about full inclusion, and ditches the project of constructing the non-racial nation.

The Racialism in Non-Racialism

Mandela's non-racialism is liberal in how it treats the rights, powers, and prerogatives of races and nations, but not in how it conceives of the origins of races and nations. Although drawing from the historical experience of South Africans, it resembles the power politics tradition in sociology exemplified by Max Weber and Charles Tilly. Weber and Tilly, instead of having cultural entities produce nations that then express themselves in states, have states making nations.[17] Their "national" identities grow from encounters with state power that usually, but not always, align identities with the need of states for legitimacy, as was the case for whites under apartheid. But even though Weber and Tilly postulate that states usually mold identities in service of state power, they clearly open the possibility that those disenfranchised from the state would form "national" identities in opposition to state power on the basis of their disenfranchisement. In other words, national identities may grow through resistance to state power, as happened with Africans in South Africa.

Reflecting this experience, Mandela's nation does not originate in ethnicity, culture, or even race, and then, through the process of nationalist struggle awaken to demand the political rights and prerogatives that twentieth-century politics accorded to nations. Mandela's African nation, in other words, was made negatively through struggle against the state and his non-racial democractic nation was to be made positively through the state.[18] Neither nation was made "spontaneously" by culture. As the ANCYL of Mandela's youth had derived Africanness less from the cultural affinities of Africans than from their shared confrontation with white domination, thus tying racial identities to political and economic experiences and resistance,[19] so the older Mandela thought that constituting the new state would produce the different experiences of power, enfranchisement, and economy that would yield the new nation. Extrapolating from the example of apartheid's racializing of whites and blacks by racializing state and law, Mandela projected that substituting non-racial law for racial law would materialize universal citizenship and, in time, build common identities. Instead of serving as the repository of the old, Mandela's non-racial state would give birth to the new. Changing the practices of power changes national consciousness. Mandela's ambitions hinged, therefore, on the state making good faith efforts to keep race out of politics and policies.

Consequently, Mandela was caught in an inescapable dilemma. Non-racialism is democracy, but in empowering citizens to act on preferences and priorities of their choice, democracy may

subvert non-racial inclusion. If citizens choose to racialize politics, it is hard to stop them. South Africa's constitution declares non-racial values and prohibits racial tests, but democracy necessarily opens opportunities for racialism, providing that it is expressed informally, unofficially, and implicitly. As the United State constitution does not prohibit, and cannot prevent, Catholics from factoring their views on abortion into their votes for president, so the South African constitution does not regulate the role of racial feelings in political choices. As illustrated by Mandela's presidency, sincere non-racialists are duty-bound to demonstrate respect for minorities. But Mandela only could set the example; he could not prevent his successors from playing on racialism for their own purposes.

Non-racial political institutions, in refusing to inflate the representation of ethnic and racial minorities, empower electoral majorities to govern regardless of their racial composition. If it can corner the African vote, therefore, the ANC may govern without the co-operation of parties that represent minorities. The demand for free elections to non-racial political institutions, in other words, advances the political advantage of the ANC as well as democratic principles. Seeing itself as the representative of the African people, the ANC reckoned that the principle of majority rule would yield the reality of ANC government. But Mandela neglected this codicil to his non-racialism, with an important implication. Because the colorblind constitution ignores incentives for racial voting, it does not balance them institutionally. Paradoxically, then, non-racialism may produce its opposite. Non-racial institutions may reward racial politics.

The critique of many whites of Mandela's non-racialism is that "non-racial" elections amount to racial censuses.[20] The large African majority is fixed by race, and exerts itself in each and every election without having to be assembled and re-assembled one election at a time. The raw demographic fact of the African majority, therefore, combines with non-racial institutions to consign the white, Coloured, and Asian minorities to political irrelevance. The counterpoint to Mandela's non-racialism fails, however, for two reasons. First, democratic South Africa is capitalist, business is a source of power in capitalist societies, and South African businesses mostly are owned and controlled by whites, albeit decreasingly. The ANC and Africans cannot be all-powerful as long as the economy is capitalist, both because whites hold economic power and because capital acts on interests and exerts a logic that are independent of identity. Even if Africans do control the state, they would not control the economy—and the economy is a source of political power. Second, the African majority is not given automatically by demography. Just because Africans constitute the majority racially does not mean they necessarily constitute the majority electorally. Tribe, class, region, ideology, or any number of factors might split the racial "majority." Something must convert the racial majority into a political majority and then cement it.

Ironically, what cemented the racial majority into the political majority was the bargain that ended apartheid. The apartheid state could not defeat the broad coalition of township organizations, "non-racial" labor unions, and black youth that rebelled in the 1980s. But the mass movement could not defeat the repressive and administrative power of the apartheid state either. Asthe deadlock dragged on, South African businesses paid a rising price. Deteriorating political conditions caused shrinking profits, high inflation, and frequent strikes,

and exposed apartheid as incapable of articulating a framework for resolving the crisis in the political economy. In response, South Africa's large, highly concentrated, and vastly influential monopolies began exploring whether the ANC, in the event it were to become the government, would protect the system of capitalism and the special needs of monopolies. The ANC's answers swayed the monopolies, the monopolies defected from the apartheid coalition, and the deadlock between apartheid and the mass movement broke.

In exchange for acquiescing to a conventional democratic system that would be based on the principle of one-adult, one-vote, one-value and that would not bless racial minorities with special powers and vetoes, monopolies got the commitments they demanded from the ANC. Reflecting the balance of power when it was negotiated, the bargain entrenched property rights (including those acquired through apartheid); it affirmed markets in principle but did little to make them competitive in practice; it guaranteed an independent reserve bank; and it recognized the specific economic needs of business, which culminated in the neo-liberal policies that were instituted soon after the ANC assumed office. The deal was clinched with appeals to black identity in the form of Black Economic Empowerment: the very proposal for legitimating South African capitalism that the monopolies had been peddling since the mid-80s.[21]

The concessions exacted by business prevented Mandela's non-racial vision from being realized economically. The black middle classes are still continuing to grow and the state is boosting new black economic elites. But Mandela's objective was not to promote African middle and upper classes while turning attention from the problems of the poor. While committed to promoting racially representative economic elites, he wanted urgently to narrow inequalities and to eliminate poverty. In his inaugural address, after all, he followed the call to "act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world" with the call for "work, bread, water and salt for all." In tying the economic objectives to the objective of building the new united South African people, Mandela signaled that the economy was not to be transformed on a racial basis. The non-racial state and the non-racial economy were for Mandela interdependent; neither stood without assistance from the other. The tragedy of Mandela's vision is that the very same deal that delivered South Africa from apartheid by sustaining South Africa's basic economic structure inadvertently undid the non-racial vision.

Attempts to de-racialize the economy—for example, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, which was essentially the ANC's election platform for the 1994 election—were frustrated by the undertakings the ANC made to property rights, markets, and neo-liberal policies. In 2006, after twelve years of ANC government, economic inequality had increased. The gini coefficient, the standard measure of inequality, rose from .57 in 1995, about the highest in the world, to .63 in 2009. The income share that is held by the top 10% of the population grew from 45% to 52%. Commensurately, the income share of the poorest 20% shrank from 3.6% to 2.7% and the share of the next poorest 20% shrank from 6% to 4.6%. Not only have the poorer and the poorest been squeezed since the advent of democracy, but the middle 20% of the population has lost ground too. Its earnings slipped from 10% to 8% of

national income. Compensating for these losses, the government initiated transfer programs. Accordingly, the percentage of the population living on $1.25 or less per day has shrunk from 21% to 14% and the percentage living on $2.00 or less from 40% to 31%.[22] But, these countermeasures notwithstanding, the failure to reduce poverty much and inequality at all inevitably compromises non-racial politics. As the commitments to redistribution floundered, the ANC was sent searching for new strategies for winning popular support, particularly once Mandela retired. Inadvertently, the economic terms that conciliated monopolies to democratic government also gave the ANC reason to re-racialize South African politics.

The Non-Racial Economy and the Non-Racial Nation

The best arguments for Mandela's non-racialism are those against it. "Liberals" complain that Mandela's non-racialism is illusory, that the ANC used to talk a good game but that its rhetoric, strategies, bases of support, and ploys betray the racialism that lurked behind the facade of non-racialism. Africanists such as Thabo Mbeki and Julius Malema accuse non-racialists of favoring racial reconciliation over transformation, of protecting the privileges whites hoarded from apartheid in the name of non-racialism. Reversing the liberal charge, Africanists blame non-racialism for blunting transformation. They do make one essential point. Economic inequality and poverty are pervasive, unjust, and associated with race. But they disagree with Mandela on the pivotal issue. Where Mandela believed that the non-racial state and non-racial economy complete each other, as equality in one reinforces equality in the other, Africanists counter that the non-racial state shields the economic privileges of whites. It follows for Africanists that Africanizing the state would Africanize the economy to the benefit of all Africans (and not just the economic elites they would create).

The Africanist argument fails too. Africanization neither necessarily harms the monopolies nor necessarily helps the poor. Africanists of all stripes equate the interests of "members" of the race with those of the "race" itself. Since the end of apartheid, African middle and upper classes have grown substantially, raising the mean income of Africans (which is good) and widening economic inequality among Africans dramatically (which is inevitable). The percentage of Africans living in poverty has declined significantly but not dramatically. The blind spot for Africanists is that continuing widespread poverty is not inconsistent with economic strategies that prioritize racial empowerment over reducing poverty and narrowing economic inequality.

Africanists maintain that empowering African elites benefits the African poor. Ignoring the obvious problem that racially empowered elites develop distinct class interests of their own and might use their influence to pursue these newfound interests to the detriment of those they claim to represent, Africanists take for granted that racial solidarities cause racial elites to advance the priorities of more vulnerable Africans. But even if racial elites do remember the poor, their commitment to constructing African economic elites elevates their interests over those of the poor. Originally, racial elites were justified as servants of the people. Then,

through the magic of racialism, the relationship is reversed. Because the general interests of the race trump the particular interests of individual "members" of the race, actual people must sacrifice for the good of the race—for, in other words, the elites that ostensibly represent the race. The interests of the black poor, therefore, are suspended to the advantage of black elites—in the name, of course, of the real interests of the poor.

Racialization sidelines the interests of the poor in another way too. Democracy should help the African poor by allowing them to demand the attention of government. In exchange for votes, elected officials respond to citizens. But racializing politics downgrades the importance of achieving economic gains. If the post-Mandela ANC can win elections on the basis of racial solidarities and memories, and if the ANC enters into alliance with the monopoly sector of business, whose structural power now is augmented by the influence of black economic elites inside the ANC, then pressure on the ANC to deliver material improvements to the poor diminishes. With racialism staving off economic demands from the poor, the ANC can concentrate on reassuring those with economic power.

Contrary to the fears of white liberals and the promises of Africanists, then, the foremost victims of the ANC's racialism are poor Africans. The proof is that, in spite of minimal improvements in the poverty rate under ANC government, the ANC's margin of victory in national elections has not suffered (from 63% in 1994 to 66% in 1999 to 70% in 2004 to 66% in 2009). More perversely, racialism preserves economic grievances for exploiting. Stagnation for the poor majority of Africans becomes grist for more racialism. The poor are translated into racialist demands, and then are forgotten.

Why Non-Racialism Endures as a Value

What has Mandela's non-racialism amounted to? Has it accomplished common citizenship, fostered common national identity, and equalized economic opportunities? The record is mixed. Racial apocalypse was avoided, constitutional government prevails, the economy grows, and the ideal of inclusive citizenship contributes to normalizing South African politics. But poverty endures, economic inequalities are widening even as economic elites are being Africanized, and the ANC is resorting to racialist political tactics and strategies. While the reality falls short of the ideal, the more realistic questions are, politically, whether South Africa is moving toward or away from Mandela's ideal and, theoretically, whether common citizenship really can inspire common identities. Is Mandela's ideal feasible?

The answer to the theoretical question is that the hypothesis has not been tested. The idea that collective identities derive from political practices and experiences of state power gets ample support from South African history. Mandela can explain the supremely important fact of twentieth-century South African politics that racial identities surpassed "tribal" ones for Africans and "ethnic" ones for whites. Hoping to extend the logic to incubate the universal nation, Mandela planned on using equal citizenship in the non-racial state to grow the non-

racial nation. He had few other options. Without the common nation, Mandela recognized, South Africa would remain mired in racialism and racism, and cultural differences meant South Africa was without alternative sources for universal identities. But even though Mandela's hopes are disappointed by widespread and frequent recourse to de facto racialism by subsequent governments, his views about the origins of nationalist identities have not been invalidated. Mandela's dream of one South African nation united in purpose rested on the premise that the state would be committed sincerely to non-racialism. If the premise does not obtain because the colorblind state is effectively racialist, then Mandela's logic may hold in principle yet fail in practice.

Politically, the racialism of Mandela's successors substantiates his warnings. Of course, there is no knowing whether the government would have lessened poverty substantially if it had not dabbled in African racialism. Allaying poverty and reducing economic inequality are difficult, and governments often fail in spite of their best efforts. But the prospects of relieving poverty and narrowing inequalities diminish when government de-emphasizes the importance of distributing wealth downward by favoring the interests of racial elites. In vesting the fate of the race in "its" elites, racialists ride on the shoulders of a class whose economic interests align more closely with those of monopolies than with the African poor. The strategy of Africanizing elites does respond, however, to the ANC's need for new, non-redistributive appeals for winning popular support after it lost the charisma of Mandela. With the power of capital entrenched through the deal that ended apartheid and reinforced through BEE, the new dispensation alters the racial complexion of South African monopolies but does not change their practices. Recruited and integrated into the existing corporate structures in South Africa, black economic elites bolster the structure of monopoly capitalism.

The deal ending apartheid compromised Mandela's vision of non-racialism. The society inherited by the democratic government was highly unequal, the inequality was highly racialized, and poverty was vast and racialized too, which encouraged the ANC to opt for perfunctory definitions of non-racialism. As past meanings of non-racialism had evolved in response to changes in South Africa's political context, so non-racialism now is being re-defined to straddle the shortfall between transformative promises and disappointing realities. Mandela meant non-racialism to work differently. The unified nation would lure political parties from representing racial groups into satisfying popular demands. If parties are rewarded for responding effectively to the poverty that burdens most South Africans and are punished for responding ineffectively, government becomes accountable. Mandela's non-racial state and non-racial economy, in other words, depend on each other. If democracy is emancipated from racial politics, it opens the state to addressing the concerns of the people; but if democracy remains associated with racialism, the poor lose the opportunity for political redress. Racialism represents the alternative to, not the condition of, transformation.

Why, if they have come to be honored in their breach by his successors, do Mandela's views on non-racialism matter? The answer is that they provide the standard for measuring the achievements and shortcomings of South Africa's democracy. While cherishing race as central to his identity and to the South African tapestry, and while affirming through his charm and

persona the belonging of all South Africans, Mandela's non-racialism did preserve race for political mobilization. Fully committed to the cause of democratic freedom and economic equality in South Africa, without regard to race, ethnicity, or tribe, Mandela was loath to exploit the racialist opportunities his principled non-racialism necessarily preserves. The paradox of non-racialism is that, while the temptation to resort to racialism might be resisted in pursuit of national, democratic, and egalitarian projects, it cannot be eliminated.

Mandela's new South African nation was to be built through the inclusive state, accountable democratic institutions, and more equitable living standards. The persistence of racialism, therefore, registers the shortfalls in building democracy, establishing inclusive communities, and defeating poverty. The more dependent the state becomes on racialism, the less substantial are its democratic and economic achievements. The recourse to racialism taken by his successors as president, paradoxically, vindicates Mandela's central insight into non-racialism—it is what democracy looks like in South Africa.

---

[1] The word "black" is used compositely to refer to all those South Africans who were denied full equality on the basis of race under apartheid. The word "African" is used to refer to those and the descendants of those who were classified as "black" (or "Native" or "Bantu").

[2] Nelson Mandela, "Statements in Court," October 22 and November 7, 1962, in eds. Thomas Karis and Gail M. Gerhardt, Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford California, 1977, pp. 728-735.

[3] Nelson Mandela, "Statements in Court," October 22 and November 7, 1962, in eds. Thomas Karis and Gail M. Gerhardt, Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford California, 1977, pp. 728-735.

[4] Michael MacDonald, Why Race Matters in South Africa, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2006, pp. 92-123.

[6] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Back Bay Books, Boston, 1995, p. 84

[7] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Back Bay Books, Boston, 1995, p. 624.

[8] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk, 89.

[9] Nelson Mandela, Conversations with Myself, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2010, p. 44. Italics in original.

[10] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk, 624.

[11] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk, 624.

[12] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk, 93.

[13] Ernest Gellner, Thought and Change, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964, p. 168.

[14] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk 84.

[15] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Back Bay Books, Boston, 1995, p. 95.

[16] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, 624.

[17]Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 900-1992, Blackwell, Cambridge MA and Oxford, United Kingdom, 1992, 114-17. Charles Tilly, ed., The Formation of National States in Western Europe, Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making", Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 78-9. Max Weber Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Berkeley: University of California Press, DATE), 385-398 & 921-26.

[18] E. J. Hobsbawm, Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, DATE), 9-13.

[19] Steve Biko makes a similar point more explicitly. Steve Biko (ed. Aelred Stubbs C. R.), I Write What I Like: Selected Writings, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

[20] Donald L. Horowitz, A Democratic South Africa?: Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society, University of California Press, Berkeley California, 1991.

[21] Gavin Relly, “The Costs of Divestment”, Foreign Policy 63 (Summer, 1986).

[22] World Development Indicators, accessed 21 December 2012. These are the most recent figures compiled in the World Development Indicators.

Prostitution, Liberalism, and Slavery

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Inconvenient statistics, feral facts like the average life expectancy of prostitutes, the average age of induction into prostitution, the average income of prostitutes, and so forth – hard demographics – have never disturbed those who defined the sex business as a force of liberation. The fact that the 'freedom' being realized is mostly the freedom of men to access the bodies of women and children – or of G8 nations to access the markets and raw materials of Third World nations – is conveniently overlooked when predation is redefined as progress.
(D.A. Clarke, 2004)

Former Swedish Minister of Gender Equality Margareta Winberg noted that in prostitution, certain women and children, often those who are most economically and ethnically marginalized, are treated as a caste of people whose purpose is to sexually service men. Sardonically noting the refusal to recognize prostitution as sexual violence, Andrea Dworkin said, "Hurting women is bad. Feminists are against it, not for it." Yet liberals, including people who describe themselves as liberal feminists, have avoided acknowledging that prostitution hurts women. In their acceptance of the institution of prostitution, they have condoned harm against those most vulnerable. Far from liberating women from restrictive social roles, prostitution locks them into sexist and racist role playing that is often slavery and always a slavery-like practice. Liberals agree about the oppression of race, class, and religious fundamentalism. But liberal men have assumed that their entitlement to sexual access should be more protected than women's right to survive without prostitution.

In rape cultures, the sexual terrorism of rape and prostitution are downplayed, underestimated, or denied. A prostituted woman explained, "What rape is to others, is normal to us." Prostitution is a cornerstone of rape culture. Rape cultures normalize the objectification and commodification of women as sex and blame victims for their own victimization. The global finding that women aged 15-44 are more likely to be injured or killed by male violence than from cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined – only makes sense when understood as a result of cultural acceptance of sexual violence. Prostitution is a commodified form of violence against women, a last-ditch survival option rather than a job choice. The lies that prostitution is a victimless crime, that she chose it, or even that prostitution isn't really happening at all –enable people to avoid the discomfort of knowing about the brutal realities of prostitution. And sex businesses rely on social, political and legal denial of denying the harms of prostitution.

In prostitution, johns and pimps transform certain women and girls into objects for sexual use. Many research studies provide evidence for the harms caused by this process. The emotional

consequences of prostitution are the same in widely varying cultures whether it's high or low class, legal or illegal, in a brothel, a strip club, a massage parlor, or the street. There is overwhelming psychological damage from sucking ten strangers' penises a day, from getting raped weekly, and from getting battered if you don't do whatever pimps or johns want. While sweatshops are exploitive and vicious, they don't involve invasion of all your body's orifices on a daily basis for years or having to smile and say "I love it" when a foul-smelling man your grandfather's age comes on your face. Symptoms of emotional distress resulting from prostitution are off the charts: depression, suicidality, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociation, substance abuse, eating disorders.

Two-thirds of women, men and the transgendered in prostitution in a 9 country study met diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This level of extreme emotional distress is the same as that suffered by the most emotionally traumatized people ever studied by psychologists – battered women, raped women, combat veterans, and torture survivors.

Survivors tell us about the psychological devastation caused by strip club prostitution. A woman who worked as a lap dancer at a strip club said,

"I can no longer tolerate the touch of a man, any man. A man's touch has come to represent labor and degradation, and a sad, sick feeling of desperation and despair. Every sort of hateful, spiteful, rude, venomous remark, I have endured. Vile anger, vomited from the crude, the resentful, the desperate and desolate, has been heaped upon me until I have choked on it. I have come away with, not hate, but worse, a numb disinterest." (Jordan, 2004)

Strip clubs are an integral part of prostitution yet the fiction is maintained that prostitution doesn't happen there. "If I hadn't had the experience I had working in vice," a police officer said, "I would probably think that strip clubs, escort services were cool… But I think the layperson has no idea what goes on in strip clubs and escort services. I've seen the boyfriends, the pimps. I see how the women are treated. It's given me a whole different perspective" (Schoenmann, 2003).

In order to perform the gynecological demonstration for men in the front row of an all-nude strip club in Las Vegas, a woman must split off her mind from her body. Spreading the labia to permit men to look inside women's vaginas sends the message that "the stripper has no private self, that everything about her is open to inspection and invasion, that her very soul is up for grabs, that she can be turned inside out, and that she has no boundaries, no conditions, and no limits on who she lets in." (Scott, 1996)

Just when I think I've heard the most horrific example of the liberal denial of sexual exploitation, up pops another: impoverished Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, and Korean women are enslaved and transported by organized criminals to San Francisco for men's sexual use. Yet these women have been renamed 'migrant sex workers.' From a neoliberal perspective these trafficking victims are just women in the world's marketplace struggling to cross a border for a better wage. No sexism or racism is understood in this analysis which views immigration

policy as the bogeyman. And another devastating example of the denial of sexual and racial violence: writing about the "paradox of pleasure and violence in racial subjection," postmodern film professor Celine Shimizu (1999) discusses the rapes of slaves by their masters and recommends that we not prematurely dismiss "a telling of slavery from the point of view of slave sexual contentment." These examples are reminiscent of the 18th century propaganda released by the British West India Committee – slave traders and ship owners who kidnapped and sold slaves from Africa to British colonists in what we now call the Caribbean. The proslavery disinformation disseminated by the Committee included renaming slaves "assistant planters."

The fantasied "high class independent escort" facilitates liberal denial of the harms of prostitution; it's good for business. In that phrase, the implication is that she chose prostitution, that she's making lots of money, and she certainly isn't being pimped. These may be true for 1% of the world's women in prostitution, but they do not reflect the reality of most prostitution. Third-party control is common in prostitution, with some estimates of pimping as high as 80% of all prostitution. Pimping and other coercive control meet most legal definitions of trafficking. Elliott Spitzer bought a woman from the Emperor's Club VIP (described in the media as a high class escort agency) who was from an abusive home, had been homeless, had a drug problem, had pornography made of her when she was 17 by Joe Francis, producer of Girls Gone Wild with convictions for prostitution, child abuse, assault, and witness tampering. The pimps at Emperor's Club VIP took 50% of her earnings. Spitzer most likely refused to use a condom, thereby threatening her life according to several women he bought for sex.

Commodification

Commodification is a cornerstone of sexism and of prostitution. Once a young woman is "made into a thing for others' sexual use" as the American Psychological Association's Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls has defined sexual objectification, then the stage is set for sexual violence. Men's dominance over women is established and enforced by the dehumanizing process of sexual objectification that is the psychological foundation of men's violence against women. In prostitution, sexual objectification is institutionalized and monetized. Yet when liberals confront this commodification, only racism and classism are addressed. In justifying women's commodification, groups such as the International Labor Organization point out that between 2 and 14% of the GDP of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines is based on prostitution. South Korea's sex industry generates 4% of its GDP while the Netherlands nets 5% of its GDP from prostitution.

Liberalism today subordinates all of us to the corporations. Wages offered women by corporations such as Gap, WalMart and Nike are so low that they actually drive women into prostitution. Especially vulnerable to corporate control are poor women and girls of color who are the supply side of the sex trade but who have been called "erotic entrepreneurs." The branding of any and all consumerism as hip, fun, and even democratic has contributed to the acceptance of prostitution.

The Liberal Belief in Choice and the Denial of Victimization

Only a tiny percentage of all women in prostitution are there because they freely choose it. For most, prostitution is not a real choice because physical safety, equal power with buyers, and real alternatives don't exist. These are the conditions that would permit genuine consent. Most of the 1% who choose prostitution are privileged because of their ethnicity and class and they have escape options. Poor women and women of color don't have these options.

"We want real jobs, not blowjobs," said a First Nations survivor of prostitution in 2009. Prostitution exploits women's lack of survival options. Research conducted in nine countries found that 89% of all those in prostitution said that they were in prostitution because they had no alternatives for economic survival and that they saw no means of escape. In Indonesia another study found that 96% of those interviewed wanted to escape prostitution. Sex discrimination, poverty, racism and abandonment drive girls into prostitution. Women in prostitution were sexually abused as kids at much higher rates than other women. So they are defined as 'whores' by rapists when they are little and they then end up in prostitution – getting paid for the abuse they have grown up with and believing that's all they are good for.

Here are four examples of invisible coercions that drive women into prostitution. In each case, the woman said that she consented to prostitution but her living conditions made prostitution impossible to avoid. An Indian woman said since women in most jobs in West Bengal were expected to tolerate bosses' sexual exploitation, prostitution was better pay for what was expected of her in her last job, anyway. A woman in Zambia, which had a 90% unemployment rate at the time, stated that she "volunteered" to prostitute in order to feed her family. A Turkish woman was divorced, and had no means of support in a fundamentalist state that strongly discouraged women from working outside the home. She prostituted in a state-run brothel guarded by police. A sixteen year-old was sold by her parents into a Nevada legal brothel. Ten years later, she took six different psychiatric drugs that tranquilized her enough to make it through a day selling sex.

Survivors have described prostitution as 'paid rape,' and as 'the choice that is not a choice,' while liberal sex industry apologists insist that prostitution is 'sex work,' unpleasant labor much like factory work. The fetishized and objectified woman in prostitution is seen by postmodern liberals as benefiting from her own exploitation and commodification. The disappearance of the harm of prostitution is not an abstraction. At a Left/Labor conference in Australia, speakers who offered an analysis of prostitution as a violation of women's human rights were denied the right to speak. A pseudofeminist speaker who was employed by the sex industry's Eros Foundation spoke instead about prostitution as sexual freedom. We can't let these logical absurdities disappear the truth of women's experiences in prostitution. Each act of violence that has been made visible as a result of the women's movement—incest, sexual harassment, misogynist and racist verbal abuse, stalking, rape, battering, and sexual torture—is one point on prostitution's continuum of violence. This violence is denied by liberals who support prostitution as a choice made by consenting adults. Liberal sex business apologists declare that opposition to trafficking is "sex-slave panic," and that since many

trafficking victims knew they would be prostituting, they therefore consented to trafficking. "I've never met a Thai woman smuggled in for sex work who didn't know that's what she'd be coming here to do," wrote Debbie Nathan. Nathan implies that if a woman knows she will be prostituted, she deserves whatever she gets.

People who are horribly harmed "consent" to lesser harms in order to survive for example in totalitarian regimes, battering relationships, slavery, and in prostitution. The appearance of consent is actually a creative survival strategy. But that doesn't mean that those of us who are able to avoid prostitution should then become passive bystanders and watch the predatory institution flourish. The agency of a prostitution survivor in avoiding starvation is not the same as the agency of a white European American middle class academic. Agency and oppression coexist in women's lives. Both should be named.

Harm reduction programs that offer support groups and condoms but fail to offer exit programs contribute to a denial of the harms of prostitution. While free condom distribution (of female as well as male condoms) can save lives – harm reduction programs' advocates often suggest that this bandaid solution is sufficient. While accepting condoms and support, almost all women in prostitution seek the option of escape as well. They deserve the right to harm *elimination* (by leaving prostitution) as well as the option of harm reduction.

Again and again women and men tell us that in order to turn tricks they must go numb or split off from their real selves or dissociate. Yet the liberal opines that this destructive removal of the self is an individual's free choice. The payment of money hides the erasure of self that is required for survival in prostitution.

Sex Buyers

To get to the root of what is really happening in prostitution it is useful to ask: Who is getting off in prostitution? And who is not getting off? The inequality of prostitution then becomes clearer. Although sex buyers don't really believe it, women in prostitution almost never enjoy the sex. Research interviews shed some light on the thinking of sex buyers in the prostitution relationship. Sex buyers who were guaranteed anonymity said prostitution was "renting an organ for ten minutes," and that the woman was " just a biological object that charges for services." Another man said, "I use them like I might use any other amenity, a restaurant, or a public convenience." For example, "If my fiancee won't give me anal, I know someone who will."

Sex buyers are not nice guys who just need to get laid. They are predators. Men's favorable opinion of prostitution is one of a cluster of attitudes and opinions that justify violence against women. This includes beliefs that men are superior to women and that they're entitled to sexual access to women. Consistent with other studies of men's sexual aggression, a 2011 study found that compared with a matched group of men who don't buy sex, sex buyers engaged more criminal activity (in addition to prostitution), had more nonrelational sexual relationships, a greater number of sex partners, and that they used pornography extensively.

Sex buyers had less empathy than men who didn't buy sex, were more likely to say they'd rape if they could get away with it, and admitted having engaged in more sexually coercive acts with non-prostituting women than men who didn't buy sex.

Torture

Sex buyers commit acts against women in prostitution that meet legal definitions of torture. Torture is any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as punishing him… or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind. According to recent definitions, torture can be either a private event or one that is state-sponsored.

Specific acts commonly perpetrated against prostituted women are the same as those that define the meaning of torture: verbal sexual harassment, forced nudity, rape, sexual mocking, physical sexual harassment such as groping, and not permitting basic hygiene. The unpredictable and extreme violence used by pimps in prostitution, like that of torture, is used for economic gain as well as sadistic pleasure. Systematically and according to well-known methods used by torturers, pimps psychologically traumatize women in order to establish control over every aspect of their lives. Pimps assume psychological, biological, social, and economic control through the use of chronic terror, cunning use of captivity, and isolation from others who might offer support and validation. They use starvation, sleep deprivation, protein deprivation, conditioned physiologic hyperarousal, unexpected sexual violence, and learned helplessness. In prostitution, any autonomy is considered insubordination and is actively suppressed by pimps. The use of torture ensures that the prostituted woman will comply with any demands of johns or pimps. Just as torturers do, pimps insidiously season violent or coercive strategies with intermittent rewards, special favors, promises of relief and, at times, tenderness, all of which create a powerful and enduring trauma bond.

Pimps and traffickers aim to destroy the self by using the three-pronged strategy of torturers—debilitation, dread, and dependency. Torture sends the message that the victim is utterly worthless. Experts on state-sponsored torture have explained that the specific goal of sexual torture is to make a captive believe that she is a whore or an animal, rather than a human. A survivor explained that the outcome of state-sponsored torture is that "they make a non-person out of you." Prostitution, also a process of dehumanization, is a dominating transformation of a woman into a special commodity in which the man who buys her shapes her into his own physical and psychological masturbatory entity. Evelina Giobbe explained: "The word 'prostitute' does not imply a 'deeper identity;' it is the absence of an identity: the theft and subsequent abandonment of self. What remains is essential to the 'job': the mouth, the genitals, anus, breasts . . . and the label." (Giobbe, 1991)

Liberals fail to see in illegal or legal prostitution the same sexual humiliation and techniques of state-sponsored torture. Historian Joanna Bourke described the photographs of U.S. military sexual torture at Abu Ghraib: "Torture aims to undermine the way the victim relates to his or

her own self, and thus threatens to dissolve the mainsprings of an individual's personality…. The sexual nature of these acts shows that the torturers realize the centrality of sexuality for their victims' identity. The perpetrators in these photographs aim to destroy their victim's sense of self by inflicting and recording extreme sexual humiliation."

Liberals viewed this torture of prisoners by the United States at Abu Ghraib with shock and horror yet when the same acts were paid for by men who use prostituted women, torture was redefined as sexual entertainment.

Slavery

Liberals' failure to acknowledge both the intrinsic violence of prostitution and the intersection of sexism, racism, and poverty in prostitution makes it difficult for them to understand why abolitionists view prostitution as such a miserably oppressive institution. Anthony Gumbs, whose relatives were enslaved, objected to prostitution as a version of slavery.

The current practice in Jamaica of the widespread use of the sanitised or politically correct terms 'sex workers' when referring to prostitutes, and 'sex industry' when referring to prostitution, sends a clear message of a trend towards acceptance or legitimisation, if not outright legalisation. Jamaicans have had a long, hard history of brave struggle and sacrifice to lift our people out of the quagmires of slavery, poverty, indignity, ignorance and exploitation. Are we ready to give up now? Surely those who must earn their living by renting their genitals, instead of by using their brains or hands, are little better off than the slaves of yore in terms of human dignity. Is this what we want to be 'accepted' … in our beautiful home called Jamaica? Is this what we want for any of our people?

The refusal to confront sexism while at the same time stepping forward to eliminate racism is not new. Abolitionists in the 19th century attacked slavery as profoundly unjust and immoral but at the same time refused to support women's right to vote. Suffragist and abolitionist Olympia Brown noted with resentment, "I have often found men who, if you could believe their words, were ready to die for the negro but would at the same time oppose bitterly any engagement of women's opportunity or sphere."

Slavery is a loss of freedom backed up by violence or the threat of violence. All of the elements of slavery are present in the relationship between pimps/traffickers and those they prostitute including gross power inequity, physical abuse, and lack of free will. All of the forms of coercion and vulnerabilities recognized by the Thirteenth Amendment are common in prostitution such as being deprived of food, sleep and money, being beaten and being raped, being tortured and threatened with death. A slave relationship is characterized by control of movement, control of the physical environment, psychological control, measures taken to prevent or deter escape, force, threat of force or coercion, subjection to cruel treatment and abuse, control of sexuality and forced labor. These modes of control are also characteristic of pimp and sex buyer relationships with women in prostitution.

Slavery is a condition of choicelessness. The experience of prostitution, like slavery, varies

according to the extent of unfreedom suffered by a woman. If a woman has class and race privilege and if she has family and friends with resources to help her out with housing and food, then she is far more able to exit prostitution when she wants to. As one man explained,

I don't think prostitution is quite the same as rape. Rape is worse. But it's close to the rape end of the spectrum. It's not rape, because there is superficial consent…On the face of it, the prostitute is agreeing to it. But deeper down, you can see that life circumstances have kind of forced her into that…It's like someone jumping from a burning building–you could say they made their choice to jump, but you could also say they had no choice. (Farley et al., 2011)

If a woman in prostitution is physically or mentally controlled by a pimp then she is enslaved, without freedom. But less visible factors contribute to her unfreedom. For example the more financially desperate she is and the more her life has been limited by racist inequality or by sexual assaults then the less freedom she has in prostitution and the more limited her resources for escape. Hunger and a lack of education or job training can compel a woman into prostitution where it then becomes difficult if not impossible to escape. In the United States, women exchanged sex acts for hamburgers (2012) and gas money (2011).

The commodity fetishism of slave buyers and sex buyers is seen in their obsession with detailing the "products" they are buying. Slave sellers and buyers catalogued skin color in fanatic detail. Sex buyers also catalogue details about women they buy for sex, criticizing, grading, and bragging about purchased sex via online chat boards. Online advertising facilitates trafficking, with up to 80% of today's sex businesses now operating online.

Planters sometimes mimed the conventions of romance, enabling them to temporarily forget that they owned slaves. Similarly some sex buyers today seek what they describe as a "girlfriend experience" in which prostituted women are paid to mimic a love relationship. The performance must fool the sex buyer.

Central to the experience of prostitution and slavery is degradation and humiliation. Non-slaves had little understanding of the depths of degradation of slavery according to former slave Harriet Jacobs. Similarly, Claude Jaget describes the traumatic experience of being selected from a brothel lineup:

"I'd freeze up inside…It was horrible, they'd look you up and down. That moment, when you felt them looking at you, sizing you up, judging you…and those men, those fat pigs who weren't worth half as much as the worst of us, they'd joke, make comments.…They made you turn and face in all directions, because of course a front view wasn't enough for them. It used to make me furious, but at the same time I was panic-stricken, I didn't dare speak. I wasn't physically frightened, but it shook my confidence. I felt really [demeaned].…I was the thing he came and literally bought. He had judged me like he'd judge cattle at a fairground, and that's revolting, it's sickening, it's terrible for the women. You can't imagine it if you've never been through it yourself."

Women who have survived prostitution say that the experience is profoundly degrading and

that it is as if one becomes “something for him to empty himself into, acting as a kind of human toilet.” In the language of the times, an enslaved woman explained, “A slave woman ain’t allowed to respect herself.” Upon refusal to permit sexual assault by her owner, an enslaved sixteen year-old was sent from the mid-Atlantic to a southern state where she was worked to death. One young woman said in 2007 that she felt that she was approaching death by prostitution because her pimp forced her to work 7 days a week, servicing dozens of men a day. A woman in a Nevada legal brothel said, “No one really enjoys being sold. It’s like you sign a contract to be raped.” Another woman described Dutch legal prostitution as “volunteer slavery.”

Summarizing the psychological damage of prostitution, a survivor’s description is reminiscent of Orlando Patterson’s description of the social death that is caused by slavery: “It is internally damaging. You become in your own mind what these people do and say with you. You wonder how could you let yourself do this and why do these people want to do this to you?”

When women in prostitution begin to accept that role and identify with their pimps, physical violence is not necessary to control them. Prostitution is gradually seen as a normal if regrettable way of life rather than calculated violence. The coercive control employed by pimps causes feelings of terror, helplessness, and dependence in prostituted women. A trafficking victim in the United Kingdom explained, “Sometimes I don’t see the point in doing anything. It seems useless. When someone has controlled you and made decisions for you for so long, you can’t do that for yourself anymore.” This same dynamic existed in slavery, with historians noting the vacant look of despair in the eyes of the enslaved as she was about to be sold.

Challenges faced by the abolitionist movement to end slavery in 1840 are echoed in today’s movement to abolish prostitution. Buyers and sellers of slaves, and buyers and pimps of prostituted women were sometimes described as “kind” or engaging in mild or nonviolent slavery/prostitution. Yet the hallmark of slavery and of prostitution is that the enslaved or prostituted are *subject to domination and to the arbitrary will of another person*, however that domination is effected. Both institutions occur on a continuum of coercive harm, whether for example she was whipped once or one hundred times; whether she was permitted better or worse quality food. Systems of slavery and of prostitution are rotten to the core. Improving the food of slaves or offering them medical care during their transatlantic journey did not alter the “beastliness” of slavery, as Patterson has named it. Similarly, offering condoms is presented as a harm reduction quick-fix solution to the health problems of women in prostitution, and legalizing the institution of prostitution is proposed as a solution to the “stigma” of prostitution. Both fail to address the essential beastliness of prostitution.

Laws

A battle is being waged by those who promote prostitution as a reasonable job for poor women against those of us who consider prostitution an institution that is so intrinsically unjust, discriminatory, and abusive that it can’t be fixed, only abolished. Prostitution was described by Friedman in 1996 as sexual slavery and by Bishop in 1993 as sexual annihilation – in articles

published in the liberal magazine, *The Nation*. These views have shifted dramatically. Today liberals including the Greens have redefined prostitution as sex work. In that one word – work – the sexism and the physical and psychological violence of prostitution are made invisible.

Regulationist laws were proposed to improve the conditions of slavery in the 18th century. The argument was that a regulatory law was better than none at all. Over the opposition of abolitionists, who feared that it would concede that the slave trade was in itself just but had been abused, the law proposed to limit the number of slaves based on a ship's weight, to require every ship to have a doctor, and to record all crew and slave deaths. There is a parallel debate today regarding the legalization or regulation of prostitution. It is widely but incorrectly assumed that legal prostitution is safer than illegal prostitution although evidence to the contrary documents the abuses and harms of legal prostitution in Australia, the Netherlands, and Nevada.

Frank de Wolf, a Labor Party member of the Amsterdam City Council and an HIV researcher stated, "In the past, we looked at legal prostitution as a women's liberation issue; now it's looked at as exploitation of women and should be stopped."

Wherever prostitution thrives, so does sex trafficking. If you were a pimp, where would you market your 'product?' Not in Sweden where there's a law against buying or selling people for sex. You would more likely pimp women in countries that provide a legal welcome to pimps: the Netherlands, Germany, Australia and wherever prostitution is legally tolerated. Sweden on the other hand has a feminist prostitution law in which buyers of women, pimps, and traffickers are criminalized but prostituted people are not. Trafficking has plummeted in Sweden since the law was passed. The rationale underpinning the Swedish law is that prostitution is a harmful social institution because prostitution always exploits those who are the most vulnerable and the most marginalized.

We can not permit a pimp's or a sex buyer's money to cover up the sexual harassment, rape, and battering in prostitution. The same oppressive phenomena that liberals attack as evidence of the injustice of slavery are defended in prostitution: gross power imbalance, objectification, sexual and labor exploitation (yes women in prostitution are sometimes expected to clean and cook), coercion, lack of freedom. If we ignore the evidence for the structural inequalities of sex, race, and class in prostitution and if we ignore the clear statements of women who tell us that they want to escape prostitution, then we end up in a postmodern neverland where liberal theory unanchored to material reality frames prostitution as a problem of sexual choice, workers' rights or sex trafficking as an immigration problem. Prostitution is the international business of sexual exploitation. Describing the strategic focus on sex buyers, a Swedish detective said, "trafficking is a business, we try to destroy the market." Yes.

References

American Psychological Association (2007). *Report of the APA Task Force on the sexualization*

of girls. Accessed at https://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html

Bourke, J. (2004) Torture as Pornography. *London Guardian* May 7, 2004, accessed at https://www.guardian.co.uk/women/story/0,3604,1211261,00.html

Clarke, D.A. (2004) Prostitution for everyone: Feminism, globalisation, and the 'sex' industry. In C. Stark and R. Whisnant (eds.) *Not for Sale: Feminists Resisting Prostitution and Pornography*.Melbourne: Spinifex.

Ekman,K.E.(2013) *Being and Being Bought: Prostitution, Surrogacy, and the Split Self*. Melbourne: Spinifex.

Farley, M. (2007) *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections*. SanFrancisco: Prostitution Research and Education.

Farley, M., Cotton, A., Lynne, J., Zumbeck, S., Spiwak, F., Reyes, M.E., Alvarez , D., Sezgin, U. (2003) Prostitution and Trafficking in 9 Countries: Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2 (3/4): 33-74.

Farley, M., Schuckman, E., Golding, J.M., Houser, K., Jarrett, L., Qualliotine, P., Decker, M. (2011) Comparing Sex Buyers with Men Who Don't Buy Sex: *"You can have a good time with the servitude" vs. "You're supporting a system of degradation"* Paper presented at Psychologists for Social Responsibility Annual Meeting July 15, 2011, Boston.

Friedman, R. I. (1996) India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to an AIDS Catastrophe *The Nation*, 262 (14). April 8, 1996.

Giobbe, E. (1991) the Vox Fights, *Vox*, Winter 1991.

Gumbs, A.G. (2006) Prostitution: a return to slavery. *Jamaica Gleaner Online* April 24, 2006Accessed at https://www.jamaicagleaner.com/gleaner/20060424/letters/letters1.html

Herman, J.L. (1992) *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.* New York: Basic Books.

Hochschild, A. (1998) *King Leopold's Ghost: a story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Jaget, C. (1980) Pr*ostitutes – Our Life* Bristol UK: Falling Wall Press.

Jordan, B.K. (2004) *Stripped: Twenty Years of Secrets from Inside the Strip Club.* Kearny Nebraska: Satsyu Multimedia Press.

MacKinnon, C.A. (1993) Prostitution and Civil Rights. *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* 1: 13-31.

Malamuth, N. M., & Pitpitan, E. V. (2007). The effects of pornography are moderated by men's sexual aggression risk. In D. Guinn & J. DiCaro (Eds.), *Pornography: Driving the demand in international sex trafficking* (pp. 125-143). International Human Rights Law Institute and Captive Daughters Media.

Nathan,D. (2005) 'Oversexed' *Nation*, August 29, 2005.

Patterson, L. (1982) *Slavery and Social Death: a comparative study.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Robinson, L.S. (1993) In the Penile Colony: Touring Thailand's Sex Industry,*The Nation*, November 1, 1993, 492-97.

Schoenmann, J. (2003) Reviving Downtown on the backs of taxed and regulated prostitutes. *Las Vegas Weekly* July 10, 2003. Accessed at https://www.lasvegasweekly.com/2003/07_10/news_coverstory.html.

Scott, D. (1996) *Behind the G-String: an exploration of the stripper's image, her person and her meaning.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Shimizu, C.P. (1999) Master-Slave Sex Acts: Mandingo and the Race/Sex Paradox. *Wide Angle* 21 (4) 42-61

Sullivan , M.L. (2007) *Making Sex Work: A Failed Experiment with Legalized Prostitution*. Spinifex: North Melbourne.

The Sovereign

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

The Arab Spring, it seems, has turned into a winter of discontent. In virtually all nations that witnessed a democratic awakening – Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Mali, Syria, Tunisia – either state violence or conflict among competing religious/secular, ethnic, or tribal constituencies dominates the political landscape. Many in the West consider such turbulence an Oriental or Islamic predilection.

In 1848, however, Europe also witnessed spontaneous transnational revolts that, though they legitimated the principle of parliamentary democracy, were wracked by internal conflicts and ultimately produced authoritarian governments like those led by Napoleon III and Bismarck. Even worse were the civil wars that emerged as the modern state arose. Ongoing conflicts between France and England during what was known as the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) led to slaughter on a massive scale while the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) cost Germany and Central Europe nearly one third of its population. Of course, these wars are mostly forgotten and, when memory is jogged, it is only through hearing the famous soliloquy from Shakespeare's *Henry V* celebrating the astounding victory of the English at Agincourt in 1415 or watching Schiller's *Wallenstein*. Catholics and Protestants butchered one another over the proper road to salvation until finally the resulting Treaty of Osnabruck and the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ushered in the modern nation-state and the controversial concept of sovereignty. The English Civil War (1642-1649) reflected this larger European conflict and, in that context, Thomas Hobbes wrote his *Leviathan* (1651).

Sovereignty in the modern sense involves the ability of the state to legitimately represent the (always elusive) national interest, supplant the primacy once given to other institutions, and act independently of external influence. To speak of the sovereign then is to speak less of an individual leader than a regime that is accepted by its citizens and other regimes. Of course, the state can manifest itself in many regime types. But, whatever the form, sovereign embodies the public will and the general interest. All other institutions and associations (whether religious or commercial or ethnic) are private by definition since they express only particular interests. According to the standard definition by Max Weber, therefore, the state alone must have a legitimate monopoly over all sources of coercion. Or, put another way, the sovereign must have the power to sanction public acts and, in democratic terms, with the support of a popular consensus. The Western assumptions that underpin sovereignty are matters of crucial ideological importance both for understanding the prospects of a democratic polity and the obstacles facing it in the Middle East.

Hobbes' classic work of political theory privileges the nation-state and popular sovereignty as

its source of legitimacy. Witnessing the English civil war and the "long parliament" (1640-1648), which he described in his other great work: *Behemoth* 1681), he was appalled by the barbaric clash of uncontrolled private interests. This he described as a "state of nature" marked by the "war of each against all" and lives that are "poor, nasty, solitary, brutish and short." Alleviating that condition according to Hobbes requires a sovereign power. Driven by unrelenting insecurity and fears of death in the state of nature, following the logic of material self-interest, those living in the state of nature ultimately find themselves compelled to negotiate a "social contract." This involves handing over their rights and powers – and, above all, their arms – to the person that they choose to enforce public needs. The costs seem minimal. Anticipating the tendency of European liberals in the 19th century to support authoritarian regimes, so long as they did not interfere with free trade, Hobbes believed that the average person was basically unconcerned with politics. Thus, he considered monarchy unobjectionable especially since, as a regime type, it tends to foster stability and provide the state with ideological legitimacy.

Authoritarian rule is embedded in Hobbes' outlook. This would later make him a favorite of staunchly anti-democratic thinkers like Carl Schmitt. His book *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (1938) is a penetrating study of what serves modern authoritarian purposes even as it criticizes the liberal elements of his subject's thinking. For, ironically, Hobbes paves the way for the increasingly democratic view of the social contract by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Contradicting claims about "the divine right of kings," thereby earning Hobbes the hatred of those same aristocrats and monarchs whose rule he supported, he insisted that the source of sovereignty is the people. Hobbes also believed that the sovereign has no particular features or qualities that entitle him to his position or make him different from other citizens. The need for authoritarian is thereby justified in terms of exigency rather than divine ordination. Given the indeterminate definition of citizenship, moreover, those excluded from the original contract (women, people of color, those without property etc.) can in principle demand inclusion. With his emphasis on popular sovereignty, almost in spite of himself, Hobbes thus legitimized some of the basic principles underpinning the liberal rule of law and a democratic society.

Just as Hobbes stripped away the ideological veil of the monarch, however, he expressed what is weakest about liberal political theory. For the question remains: how is it that the asocial criminal types living in the warlike "state of nature" can forge a social contract in the first place? Francis Ford Coppola depicted such a scene in Godfather III where rival gangsters supposedly give up their guns before entering a suite to negotiate a pact — with murderous results. These gangsters may share a mutual enemy in the police but they show no loyalty to one another, let alone the sovereign, or the pact that they concluded. Hobbes views the preconditions of the state, the preoccupation with property and the existence of civil society, as the outcome of a political entity formed ex nihilo. His work thereby reinforces liberal assumptions about human nature and self-interest (always "rightly understood") that denigrates ideology and the habits learned in traditional societies. Hobbes assumes the behavioral and attitudinal consensus on which the sovereign relies. Emphasizing stability and holding revolution in contempt, enmeshed in abstract assumptions and ignoring prejudice,

incapable of providing anything concrete that might help the exploited overthrow the exploiters, there is a reason why his liberal legacy has had little resonance outside the West.

Unfortunate consequences, however, that accompanied this rejection. Imperialism may have been fought by national liberation “fronts,” or coalitions comprised of often competing organizations with sharply different ideologies, but anti-imperialist solidarity rarely translated into loyalty for the new sovereign once the colonizers were defeated. Bloody conflicts that cost hundreds of thousands of lives between former partners shaped much of the post-imperialist world beginning with India/Pakistan and Algeria. Hamas and Fatah, whatever their common contempt for Israel, are today participating in a formal coalition whiled substantively engaged in a civil war. There is a warning that derives from Hobbes’ work: the extent to which a popular consensus on the sovereign is lacking is the extent to which the need arises for what he wryly termed a leviathan (or a monster).

As suggested earlier, historically speaking, the social contract never actually took place. Hobbes knew well enough that it was a merely hypothetical event that provided the sovereign with legitimacy. The old fox was well aware that the sovereign usually came to power through military conquest. But he also understood that legitimacy was not to be underestimated in constructing a state capable of transcending particular interests and traditional loyalties. Another fictional element thereby enters into the contract. Again, contrary to historical experience, those engaged in the electoral decision are stripped of their empirical traits. All individuals are seen as sharing a similar fear of death and a similar desire for security: all other issues are secondary. Each supposedly places the security provided by the state above any emotional associations that he has with his tribe, ethnic group, class, religion or even family. That self-understanding is the precondition for citizenship. A rigorous distinction thereby appears in Hobbes and other social contract thinkers between public and private. The sovereign represents the national or public interest while his subjects should be content to go about their private business and concerns guided by what C.B. Macpherson termed “possessive individualism.

Hobbes was working in a war-weary context where a new bourgeois class prefiguring a capitalist form of production was contemptuous of the feudal prejudices and religious dogmas. This new class understood that the state will incarnate the national will in a way that private associations and institutions, such as religion or tribe, cannot. These preconditions served as the basis for an organic process whereby the sovereign state became linked to modernity and its disenchantment of the world through bureaucracy and expertise, democracy and diversity, science and secularism.

This organic process rarely emerged outside the West because, quite simply, the state was imposed by imperialism. It was justified and run by what Andre Gunder Frank termed a “comprador” bourgeoisie that was educated in the West and (without undue concern about ethical matters or enlightenment values) did its business at home. An internally generated bourgeoisie supportive of the state never took shape and, under the best of circumstances, this comprador class later became buttressed by multi-national firms and an oil industry controlled

by familial monarchies. The sovereign thus walked the tightrope between past and present. The state never did provide a source of identity, or loyalty for the new sovereign, capable of contesting that of the tribe, ethnicity, or religion. With their impenetrable rivalries and feuds, their parochialism and dogmatic beliefs, they opposed the centralized nation-state as well as modern concerns with individualism, diversity, secularism, and the egalitarian implications of the social contract.

Institutional battles rage over the sovereign. It could be the mosque, the military, the tribe, or ethnic institutions. Whatever the sovereign, however, the sovereign is representative less of a general or public than a particular or private interest. And, if only for this reason, the sovereign always lacks legitimacy. Instability and fear of the new are built into even the most authoritarian states of the Middle East. Modernizing military rulers may find themselves in coalition with traditionalists in opposing democracy or democrats in opposing traditionalism. It's also possible that secular democrats and religious traditionalists will join together in opposing the military. Especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, however, it would be naïve to assume that either the newly emerging political parties or the disorganized masses would continue identifying with authoritarian rule. The dictators sensed that it was impossible to rely on the loyalty of forces either looking forward to a democratic future or backwards toward an enchanted past.

Violence may keep the authoritarian sovereign in power, but it contributes little to solving the problem of sovereignty. Gamal Nasser may have had a pan-Arab vision, but that is not the case with most other Middle Eastern "leaders." They justify themselves as sovereign with little more than their own will to power. Consider Karzai in Afghanistan, Honi Mubarek in Egypt, Saddam Hussein in Iraq or Bashir al-Assad in Syria. Such rulers are principally concerned only with maintaining power. Their state bureaucracies become little more than means for sanctioned forms of bribery, patrimony or log-rolling. Economic progress, when it occurs, is the by-product of the process by which the leader attempts to hold together rival private religious, tribal, or ethnic interests. Prison (or worse) is the lot of dissenters. The state becomes a source of anger and humiliation. The attraction of old caliphate or the transnational *umma*, or religious community, is thus understandable along with their demands for the introduction of Sharia law. Not simply the liberal or authoritarian state, but the state as such turns into the leviathan not just for the arch-reactionary Salaffis but, more generally, for members of pre-capitalist classes and pre-modern religious institutions who consider themselves losers (or collateral damage) in the march of progress.

The principal struggle now taking place in the Middle East revolves around the question of which institution is sovereign: the (Shiite or Sunni) Mosque, the tribe, the (Baath or Hezbollah) party, the paramilitary organization (al Nusra Front), or the authoritarian leader who considers himself (or his office) sovereign. And, because these institutions and organizations are often mutually exclusive in their aims, sovereignty cannot result from some mechanical combination of their interests. Tensions between urban and secular as against countryside and religious forces have become manifest in Tunisia as well as in Iran where the Islamic Republic rests on the power of the revolutionary guards. In Iraq, paramilitary organizations of Sunnis and Shia

battling for power engage in running battles and bombings occur daily. Turf wars between rival tribes (each with its own chieftain) are taking place in Afghanistan and Libya, while organized gangs enter the mix in Somalia. Tightly knit vanguards like al Qaeda or Islamic Jihad refuse to recognize any more encompassing sovereign power.

Everywhere the state is fragile and its direction hangs in the balance. All contenders for power view their competitors as illegitimate and justify their politics and ideology in the name of popular sovereignty. Ironically, however, the stronger that identification of particular interests with public goods the greater the prospect of an authoritarian sovereign. Or, to put it another way, the degree to which the rights of citizenship are associated with the empirical traits of different individuals is the degree to which the liberal of law is dysfunctional and the sovereign lacks broad legitimacy. Even more ominous: the less the state is considered sovereign, the more absolute the claims of rival religions and tribes to champion the public good, the more intense the violence, and the more authoritarian the new sovereign will become.

Memories of times past immediately render suspect the altruistic claims by former imperialist nations that their intervention will produce stability in the Middle East and solve the question of sovereignty. Inhabitants of these states will surely think of Bechtel, XE, or oil companies making a killing. Formerly colonized peoples will also resent the arrogance of those who (once again) refuse them the right organically to generate their own traditions. That is especially the case since it took a bloodbath to bring about the triumph of the sovereign state in the West. Cultural knowledge about the intricacies of traditional social networks in the Middle East is also usually lacking; political resistance is usually underestimated; and national conflicts are usually expressions of transnational or regional rivalries that unexpectedly complicate matters considerably. The intervening power may strengthen its domestic ally in the short-run battle for sovereignty but that generally produces a legitimacy deficit for the long haul. Intervention tends to weaken sovereignty almost by definition and those organizations that readily accept support from the outsider are, more often than not, condemned as puppets or traitors by their domestic enemies. Hospitals, housing, food and other forms of humanitarian aid by Western nations will go a long way to creating good will – and perhaps even increasing their influence. Nevertheless, gratitude for such actions does not translate into the ability of an external power to impose a legitimate sovereign.

Self-styled realists often refer admiringly to the tough-minded Hobbes. Especially neo-conservatives tend to agree with his belief that the war-like state of nature exists where there is no sovereign (such as the international arena) and that ethical constraints on political action are superfluous. With an eye on the Middle East, Robert Kagan argued in *Of Paradise and Power* (2004) that the United States must embrace this Hobbesian outlook while Europe, now reduced to secondary status, has no choice other than to follow Kant's moral imperatives and regulative ideals while remaining content to champion diplomacy and respect for international law. Be that as it may. For all the tough talk, such realists ignore Hobbes most basic lesson, namely, that nothing is more disastrous than dislodging a sovereign without having a legitimate substitute waiting in the wings. That has certainly been the story of American

involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq and, somewhat less dramatically in Libya where the attack at Benghazi, along with half a dozen others that received less media coverage, served as a response to an American invasion in which thousands were killed.

Without even referring to Afghanistan where the Taliban was replaced by the US supported regime of Karzai, whose family is tied to the opium trade, in Iraq the American government and media blithely accepted the claims of Ahmed Chalabi (an Iraqi businessman in exile), that he had the support of the populace and that the Iraqi people would welcome American troops with open arms. When elections were held, however, Chalabi received about 2% of the vote while the invading army was not exactly greeted with joy. When a semi-democratic regime dominated by Shia was finally installed by the United States under Maliki, his lack of legitimacy led him to distance himself from his nominal ally even as American troops were coming under attack by Sunni paramilitary organizations opposed to his government. In Libya, meanwhile, the dislodging of Momar Qaddaffi led to a disintegration of sovereignty, low level fighting between tribes, and lingering resentment against the United States that exploded in the assault on its embassy by al-Qaeda. There is a marked tendency to take seriously the quip by Erich Hobsbawn, the great historian, that "there is nothing more dangerous than a superpower that claims it is doing the world a favor."

American attempts to arrange a new social contract that would put in place a legitimate sovereign proved fruitless in all these cases. There is no reason to think that the outcome would be different in Syria where internecine squabbling is taking place among a completely disorganized opposition without a nationally recognized leadership and unclear about the regime it wishes to substitute for the dictatorship of Assad. The Middle East is not Europe. Making reference to the new regimes introduced after World War II is a false analogy. Governments in exile existed also existed and, after the war, the Marshall Plan secured the new sovereigns. Germany and Italy may have had a relatively recent tradition of statehood but its nationalistic foundations had emerged organically. Neither country was ever colonized. In fact, both were often included among the "great powers."

American foreign policy takes for granted the nation-state as the basic unit of analysis. In the Middle East, however, sovereignty is conditioned by a host of transnational and regional factors including religious, tribal, and even familial loyalties. With Syria, for example, the civil war has already destabilized Lebanon and it has divided the Islamic world. Hezbollah and Iran support the government of President Assad, which retains a Shia and Alawite base, while Saudi Arabia, Qatar have already spent $3 billion to advance Sunni interests. They have armed a dysfunctional and disorganized Syrian opposition in which centralized and transnational vanguard groups like al Qaeda have flourished. So far, luckily, the United States has basically kept its distance. With thousands killed by drone attacks, the United States can only make the situation more explosive by further intruding upon the sovereign of nations in the region.

Intervention has become for the United States what David Bromwich has called a "rationalized addiction." Justifications for intruding upon the sovereignty of other states are usually based on preventing chaos, protecting human rights, or serving the national interest. But they are

hollow. American intervention in Afghanistan and then Iraq produced tens of thousands of deaths, millions of exiles, a wrecked economy, and environmental devastation that is difficult to imagine. Three million refugees have spilled over into other states as Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon are wracked by civil war. That all of this somehow furthers human rights (even in the long run) is an easy claim to make when others pay the price. But then it is difficult to argue that American national interest has been served when more than fifty thousand soldiers have lost their lives and trillions have been spent on regional military actions and wars for seemingly no purpose. Use of torture, mercenaries, and rendition have also undermined the moral standing of the United States and, by subverting the sovereignty of other nations, generated feelings of national humiliation that will take a long time to forget. There is no social contract in the Middle East and the leviathan looms large. If nothing else the Arab Spring suggests that the peoples of the Middle East wish to shape their future in democratic fashion. Enough obstacles (many of their own making) render this a difficult process. Long after colonialism has faded, however, the Arab world is still denied the chance to develop on its own, make its own mistakes, and generate its own institutions appropriate to the modern age. Or, putting it another way, sovereigns in the Middle East are always imperiled precisely because sovereignty has become little more than an artificial construct in the eyes of the West.

Tracing the Çapulcu: Historical, Ethnographic, and Global Perspectives on Mass Politics in Turkey Today

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Blurry photographs of tear gas and swinging bobby clubs, headlines announcing unprecedented police violence and political strife: for most consumers of the international news media, the demonstrations surrounding Gezi Park (*Gezi Parkı*), in Istanbul's central Taksim Square, which began in late May and continue sporadically in spite of state and police repression, amount to little more than these images and words, indistinguishable from countless other contexts around the globe. As historians well know, such images and words may constitute the fodder, the raw material of historical narratives, but they do not provide these narratives in and of themselves. Unfortunately, this crucial distinction between images and narratives regularly eludes the mass media, with its double imperative of sensationalism and immediacy. Such has been the fate of the Gezi Park demonstrations among international commentators and interpreters. Even when reportage on the protests does offer an explanatory narrative, it tends to reduce the intricate, multifaceted context to the simplistic binary of "secularists" vs. "Islamists" (e.g. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/14/opinion/global/turkeys-growing-pains.html?_r=0); I have already criticized this dubious, if intractable, dichotomy and the manner in which it frames Turkish politics here: (https://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2013/06/10/an-excursion-through-the-partitions-of-taksim-square/). In this brief essay, I aim to expand and complicate the field of interpretation of this summer's protests in Istanbul along three dimensions: the historical, the ethnographic, and the global.

Two key aspects of the demonstrations—their initial focus on Gezi Park, a small stand of sycamores and crabgrass adjacent to Taksim Square, and their rapid diversification, which weaved together a whole host of causes and complaints—only make sense in the context of a broader political history of public space in Istanbul. Since the dawn of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923, Taksim Square has been *the* privileged locus and epicenter of mass politics and protest in Turkey. In 1928, only five years following the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic Monument (*Cumhuriyeti Anıtı*), a massive statue depicting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—war hero and revered father of the Turkish nation-state—was erected at the center of Taksim Square, thus proclaiming the hegemony of the Turkish state project and saturating Istanbul's preeminent public space with this project (Image 1). In 1977, against the backdrop of escalating street violence between leftist and rightwing nationalist groups—the eventual, partial cause of the 12 September 1980 military coup—Taksim was the site of a notorious instance of state violence against civilian protestors. A broad coalition of unions and leftist organizations gathered in the square to commemorate May Day (known in Turkish as

"The Worker's Holiday, *İşçi Bayramı*). When state security forces began to clear the square, general panic ensued among the 500,000-odd demonstrators, resulting in the deaths of at least thirty-four. Beginning in 1979, May Day demonstrations were prohibited in Taksim Square; while the ban was lifted temporarily in 2010, it was reinstated this year, ostensibly due to the very redevelopment project that ignited the current protests.

More recently, Taksim Square has become an object of desire for members of Turkey's new political establishment, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; AKP*). Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose increasingly draconian political demeanor is a central complaint of the Gezi protestors, first proposed the construction of a massive mosque on the square during his stint as Istanbul's mayor in the mid-1990s; plans for the mosque continue to resurface every several years, and have even resulted in a widely-praised proposal by a prominent Turkish architect, Ahmet Vefik Alp (https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/24/world/europe/mosque-dream-seen-at-heart-of-turkey-protests.html?pagewanted=all). Reportedly, Erdoğan rejected this proposal as "too modern"—he would prefer a design in the Ottoman architectural tradition. Unsurprisingly, an array of secular political and civil society groups have adamantly opposed the mosque plan—from their perspective, a monumental, government-sponsored mosque would violate the secularist character of the square. The aforementioned statue of Atatürk is the principle custodian and guarantor of this secularity of Taksim's public space, but it is also embodied by state institutions such as the Atatürk Cultural Center (*Atatürk Kültür Merkezi*, *AKM*), which Erdoğan has threatened to dismantle as part of the current redevelopment of the square (https://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/erdogan_akm_yikilacak_taksime_cami_de_yapilacak-1135947).

Clearly, the dominant narrative of a zero-sum competition between Turkey's secularists and Islamists is an unavoidable aspect of the politics of public space in Taksim Square; it is unsurprising that international media have by and large favored this narrative. My point here, however, is different. Taksim has served as the proscenium of Turkish mass politics throughout the history of the Turkish Republic; that it continues to do so today, on an international stage, is no coincidence. At certain moments and conjunctures—notably May Day 1977—demonstrations in Taksim have been entirely indifferent to the narrative of Islamism and secularism. More generally, the puissance and resonance of Taksim as a site of and for mass politics exceeds and defies regimentations of specific interests, causes, and political narratives, including the narrative of Islamism and secularism. Even a casual ethnographic portrait of the Gezi Park demonstrations vividly evinces the excessive heterogeneity that characterizes both mass politics in general and the politics of protest in Taksim specifically.

Regrettably, I was not in Istanbul when the demonstrations began in late May. When I arrived on June 24th, in Turkey on a forty-eight hour layover, I immediately made my way to Taksim. The scene was curious, reminiscent of the afterhours following a raucous party that the participants have yet to reconstruct fully in memory. Gezi Park itself was entirely closed—the police had emptied it on June 15th, and maintained a cordon to prevent any ambitious demonstrators from reoccupying it. Official signs printed in the familiar font and characteristic

bureaucratese of the city government proclaimed, with mute irony: "Gezi Park is being renewed by the Directorate of Parks and Gardens (European Side) of the Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality." (Image 2) In the square proper, just to the south of the park, a handful of protestors silently faced the aforementioned Atatürk Cultural Center, which was draped in a giant banner of Atatürk himself, limned by two equally-massive Turkish flags (Image 3). The protestors mimicked the pose of the "standing man" (*duran adam*), Erdem Gündüz, who reinvigorated the demonstrations with his silent vigil on June 18th (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-burgess/duran-adam-standing-man_b_3475014.html). Near the front of the small group of silent demonstrators, two young men held a sign announcing a march planned for the following evening, to protest the release of Ahmet Şahbaz, the policeman who fatally shot a protestor, Ethem Sarısülük, in Ankara on June 1st. Several young children milled through the crowd selling bottled water; purveyors of tea, Nescafe, and *simit*, the distinctive, sesame-encrusted Turkish bagel, plied their wares on the margins of the square.

The solemnity of the scene on Taksim Square that I witnessed in late June contrasts sharply with the carnivalesque atmosphere that pervaded Gezi Park prior to its police-enforced evacuation. In conversation, friends who had spent time in Gezi regaled me with their effusive enthusiasm. As one of my acquaintances put it in an email prior to the park's evacuation, "While walking through Gezi Park I feel better than I have in my entire life…it's as if a free environment has come into being, one in which everyone can express themselves, in which nobody judges one another, in which no pressure is applied…(here) we are all in solidarity with one another (*buralarda dolaşırken kendimi hayatım boyunca hissetmediğim kadar iyi hissediyorum, kimsenin birbirini yargılamadığı, baskı uygulamadığı, kendilerini ifade edebildikleri özgür bir ortam oluştu adeta, herkes dayanışma içinde*)." Most importantly, any attempt to reduce this unique sociality of solidarity to a single political aim or social demographic would be both futile and cynical. Although most of the Gezi Park demonstrators expressed intense dissatisfaction with the person of Prime Minister Erdoğan and the decade of neoliberal AKP governance in Turkey generally, they were not a simple agglomeration of "secularists" aligned against the "Islamists". As Ateş Altınordu observes in a refreshing, unique essay on the demonstrations (https://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2013/06/10/occupy-gezi-beyond-the-religious-secular-cleavage/), one of the most active, visible institutional occupants of Gezi Park were the "Anti-Capitalist Muslims" (*Antikapitalist Müslümanlar*: https://www.antikapitalistmuslumanlar.org), hardly a "secularist" body. More generally, the heterogeneity of the participants in the demonstrations—LGBT groups, unions, environmentalists, leftists and anarchists of every stripe, Sufi-inspired mystics and yogis, as well as self-identified secularists—constituted a watershed moment in Turkish mass politics, one no longer defined by singular issues and identities. Perhaps the best testament to the distinctiveness of Gezi—its novel political sociality, the "free environment of expression and solidarity," irreducible to a single cause or aim—is the fact that a large number of participants espoused no particular "identity" or "interest" at all. No less prominent a political theorist than Slavoj Žižek emphasizes this very "aimlessness" in a fine essay comparing the Turkish protests with the ongoing demonstrations in Greece:

It is also important to recognize that the protesters aren't pursuing any identifiable 'real' goal. The protests are not 'really' against global capitalism, 'really' against religious fundamentalism, 'really' for civil freedoms and democracy, or 'really' about any one thing in particular. What the majority of those who have participated in the protests are aware of is a fluid feeling of unease and discontent that sustains and unites various specific demands. (https://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n14/slavoj-zizek/trouble-in-paradise)

In his own way, Prime Minister Erdoğan has also gestured to the definitive heterogeneity of the Gezi demonstrators. During a speech on June 2nd, he drew on a rather obscure Turkish term, "*çapulcu*" (roughly translatable as "looter") to describe the protestors as a whole (https://haber.sol.org.tr/devlet-ve-siyaset/erdogan-onbinleri-birkac-capulcu-ilan-etti-diktatorluk-kanimda-yok-dedi-haberi-739). Rather unsurprisingly, the protestors seized gleefully on the label themselves, coining the neologism "chapulling" in the process—a Youtube video titled "Everyday I'm Chapulling" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5s0yuPPw9Q) concisely captures the festive, mischievous contrarianism of the "*çapulcu*." Indeed, if a single "identity" can be said to encompass the demonstrators, it is surely that of the *çapulcu*, a new figure on the Turkish scene who has yet to take up a single banner or cause.

From the vantage of this ethnographic portrait of the Gezi demonstrations, with its emphasis squarely on the carnivalesque, expressive heterogeneity of the protests, we can now briefly direct our gaze to their global dimension. An immediate response of many commentators was to compare and contrast Taksim Square with the two major urban mass political movements of the past several years, the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement (e.g. https://arcade.stanford.edu/turkey-occupy-not-spring). Other, fruitful comparisons could no doubt be drawn with a myriad of other contexts, including the ongoing protests of the "Salad Movement" in Brazil, student protests in a variety of countries, including Croatia (2009) and Chile (2011-2013), and anti-austerity demonstrations across Europe. More important, perhaps, is the manner in which the Gezi protests articulate with the shifting forms and powers of global capitalism—as Žižek underscores in his essay, protests such as those in Turkey and Greece demonstrate the gradual decoupling of liberal democracy and neoliberal capital. In closure, however, I want to pause on the novel, heterogeneous, carnivalesque sociality that was so vivid and visible in Gezi Park, embodied especially in the figure of the *çapulcu*. This festive sociality, which is deeply political without being instrumental, or even easily instrumentalizable, has clear analogues in other contexts of mass politics and protest throughout the globe. We have seen *çapulcus* reveling in Zuccotti Park, holding vigil in Tahrir Square, and swarming around Oscar Niemeyer's Congresso Nacional in Brasilia. Ultimately, one lasting contribution of the Gezi Park demonstrations may be to lend a coherent title to this carnivalesque figure of contemporary mass politics on a global scale. Time will tell. Until then, well, "everyday I'm chapulling…"

*The author thanks Karin Doolan for her invaluable comments and guidance.

Jeremy Walton is Postdoctoral Fellow for the Study of Secularism and New Religiosities, CETREN Project, Georg August University of Gottingen.

André Gorz & the Philosophical Foundation of the Political

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Although André Gorz (1923-2007) was known during the past two decades as one of the leading proponents and innovators of left-wing ecological politics, I will try to show here that the basis of all of his political thought, as it evolved with the times and the circumstances, was *philosophical*.

There are biographical grounds for this claim. Sent to Switzerland to avoid service in the Wehrmacht, this son of an Austrian Jew and his Catholic wife, remade himself into a French philosopher under the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre. Although he remained close to Sartre, and was for many years the leading political thinker on the editorial board of *Les Temps modernes*, the crucial decade in his life's work was his time in Switzerland and as a stateless resident in France surviving by odd-jobs and translations while writing what he considered the moral philosophy necessary to complete the existential ontology of *Being and Nothingness*. This massive manuscript, *Fondements pour une morale* remained unpublished for 15 years. In the interval, Gorz published *The Traitor* (1957), accompanied by a magnificent Preface from Sartre[1]; this volume presented as a phenomenological autobiography was his self-affirmation as a philosopher, although hardly of the professional kind. His continued collaboration with Sartre was not just political or journalistic; the reader of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) finds strong traces of Gorz's *La morale de l'histoire* (1959). During the next years, writing under the pen name of Michel Bosquet, Gorz became a well-known journalist and a co-founder of the influential weekly, *Le nouvel observateur* where he directed the (political-)economic reporting. For all that, he did not abandon but elaborated the philosophical foundations worked out in that early crucial decade.

By the mid-1960s, when I first met him, Gorz was known as a leading theorist of radical trade unionism that was built on the idea of "revolutionary reforms" and came to be associated with the New Left of the 1960s.[2] Although he wrote no more ontological-moral tomes, there is an underlying continuity from the beginning to the end of his political evolution. The Marx to whom he returns again and again is not the stagnant Stalinist of the communist party; he is the theorist of alienation, the critic of the commodity-form and the critical theorist of value; he is also the Marx of the *Grundrisse* who challenges the logic of capitalist productivism and who anticipated the ecological crisis more than a century before it began to be acute. He is in effect an existentialist, just as Sartre claimed in the long introductory essay to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that "Marxism is the unsurpassable philosophy of our time."[3] From this perspective, the evolution of Gorz's politics— from revolutionary reforms through trade union

interventions to self-management, on to his “farewell” to the proletariat, to his support for the right to a basic income for all, as well as his explorations of ecological themes that began in the 1970s and grew deeper and more subtle over the years— was undergirded by the philosophical thought formulated in his earliest years. This was its strength; it gave him a solid foundation, a mode of thinking rather than a theoretical framework from which to explore the new conditions of technologically changing, financially dominated global capitalism.[4]

This philosophical foundation left a question that continued to deepen during the 35 years during which we corresponded, often at length: what is the relation between the practical politics that Gorz proposed and the philosophical foundation that he assumed? This is of course the old problem of the relation of theory to practice. In this case, it became the question of the relation of morality to politics (or, sometimes, that of “the political” to “politics”). I often had the impression that his analysis of the contradictions of capitalist reality left the reader with what Marx, after Hegel called a *hic salta, hic rosa* imperative, an existential dilemma that could be resolved only by a choice, a leap…or by the crash that the system seemed always to stagger through until the next crisis. Then would come a new book by Gorz, presenting not only a convincing explanation of the reasons that this was only a temporary reprise in a basically self-contradictory mode of social reproduction, but pointing to new sources of discontent, rebellion, refusal… the first signs of a new leap, or of a more radical crash.

Although the problem of the relation between theory and practice, morality and politics, which is not a one-way street, was constantly present in my discussions with Gorz during all of these years, I had never returned to his earlier philosophical writings. It was only when I met recently two people who were researching and writing about Gorz’s life and work— a French woman, Françoise Gollain, and a German, André Häger— that I was led to take the old volumes from the shelves. Both researchers had been to the Archive of Gorz’s papers at the IMEC (Institut de la mémoire contemporaine), where they had much of found the long correspondence between us. I was also encouraged to turn back to these themes after reading the impressive collection of essays edited by Christophe Fourel, *André Gorz. Un penseur pour le XXIe siècle.**[5]* This reading and rereading led me to see a dimension of his thinking of which, I suspect, even he was barely aware. I return to this in my conclusions.

The First Clues

The first clues that I found were in the *Letter to D…*, a short essay published in 2006, that is the biography of a couple, the history of a shared adventure, a meditation on their being-together, and a declaration of eternal love. In this sense, it recalls *The Traitor*, Gorz’s first publication, which was a phenomenological autobiography whose narrator describes the transformation of the Gorz as an object (“him”) becomes a subject capable of speaking in the first person (“I”). But why did Gorz write it? And more to the point, why did he publish it? The *Letter* acquires a further significance from the fact that a year after its publication, on September 24, 2007, Gorz and Dorine committed suicide together, unable to bear the thought that one of them could live without the other.

At the cathartic turning point in the *Lettre à D…*, Gorz recounts how he was overcome by a terrible guilt when preparing a new edition of *Le Traître* in the winter of 2005. He realized that he had described the beginning of his life-long love with his partner and accomplice as if it were merely a sort of existential "project" similar to his choice to remake himself as a Frenchman, a wager that had only a subjective and accidental foundation.[6] And yet, he explains in the *Lettre*, it was this literally and philosophically charnel love that truly had permitted him to say "I." I'll come back to the reason for calling this love doubly "charnel" in the context of what he means by "philosophy." He explains somewhat lamely his cavalier mistreatment of his relation to Dorine ("Kay" in the book*)* by the fact that he never reread his manuscripts, and only lightly perused page proofs because, as a man defined by his projects, he considered that what's done is done; and when it's well done, you're already embarked on the next project. Thus, he continues, he was already thinking about politics, about Marx and Lenin and revolution, and that perspective colored his vision of his own lived experience as something that had been, but no longer was, his present. To portray himself now not just as a lover but as *in* love, seemed both too bourgeois and too banal for someone turning his attention to revolutionary politics. This may indeed have been Gorz's state of mind at the time; but it does not explain why he felt the need to return to it 50 years later, and to apologize publicly. Searching for hints, I returned to the philosophical beginnings.

For those who are not familiar with *The Traitor*, two points will suffice to set the stage. The book contains four chapters, whose titles present a phenomenology through which the book's author, who is also its object, evolves as the story moves existentially from the nothingness of (the subject's) being to the being of (the author's) nothingness. In other words, the book describes how the initial project of the individual takes shape in a warm and yet smothering world of the "we" (nous) over which he has no control; how that individual tries and yet fails to affirm himself among "them" (eux) in the world, before he encounters, beyond the life-worlds of familial Sameness and worldly Otherness, a beloved "thou" (tu) whose reciprocity permits the subject finally to affirm himself by saying "I" (je). Each moment of this existential phenomenology moves from sometimes cruel, but always lucid, objective descriptions of the subject presented in the voice of a third person singular external observer of an object; it tries to understand the moment at which the author comes to recognize that what "he," the observed subject, was doing is just what "I," the first person singular, wished, or would have wished, to do. This phenomenological method that passes between the third and the first person descriptions, and between the past (third person) and the present (first person). Gorz applies this dual perspective in a more sociological form in later works to analyze the opposition between the imperatives of the reproduction of the system as described by a disincarnated external observer concerned with functional necessities for maintaining order, and the liberty of the individual incarnated by the participants in the life-world in which their intentions and actions become alien and unrecognizable to them.

Personal Experience

Before coming to the more sociological later works, I want to suggest some of the political questions posed implicitly by Gorz's philosophical autobiography. I'll take the liberty of

illustrating some of these questions by referring to a few of my own encounters during more than three decades of friendship.[7] In an essay on the "the new working class" theories of Gorz and Serge Mallet published in *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism since Lenin* (1970), I emphasized the theory of "revolutionary reforms" that Gorz had anticipated in his 1964 book *Stratégie ouvrière et néo-capitalisme*, and elaborated in 1967 in *Le socialisme difficile.* I justified my reading in part by appeal to philosophical arguments from the the 1959 theoretical essay, *La morale de l'histoire*, particularly the articulation of Marx's theory of alienation as a direct critique of Stalinism. This had led Gorz to the lapidary introductory paragraphs written for the English translation of *Strategie ouvrière* in 1967, in which he asserted that in modern capitalism revolutionary politics can no longer be based on the *misery* of the working class; *new needs* have become the potential root of revolt. To translate these new needs politically, Gorz rejected a "syncretic" politics that tries to impose an external unity on a diversity of separate struggles in favor of a "synthetic" strategy that develops the *immanent* potential of the new working class. The coherence of this first phase of Gorz's work was apparent to me at the time in the light of my own experience of both May 1968 in Paris *and* the August invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact subordinates. I did not see, and at this point I am not sure that Gorz realized, that these "new needs" were rooted in an ineradicable life-world that the imperatives of the capitalist system could in principle never satisfy. In other words, Gorz's political argument had a philosophical foundation.

I was not surprised to learn that in 1970, the same year that I published my account in *The Unknown Dimension*, Gorz republished the central arguments of *Stratégie ouvrière* along with a crucial chapter from *Le Socialisme* difficile, under the title *Réforme et Révolution* [8]. For me, his use of the inclusive conjunction "and" rather than the exclusive "or" was telling; one of the lessons I had learned from New Left politics was ironically an old one, famously repeated in 1936 by Maurice Thorez, head of the PCF: *il faut savoir terminer une grève*. Revolution, in other words, is not a once-and-for all revaluation of all values. Although he would make this point repeatedly in different contexts, it is worth noting that in April of that same year 1970, as he came increasingly under the influence of Ivan Illich, Gorz published an editorial in *Les Temps modernes* titled "Détruire l'université." This was perhaps a too human response to the excitement of the days of May '68; but it seems to express a problem in Gorz's argument that socialism could be based only on a *synthetic* politics of immanent critique. The root of this problem, I think, is that Gorz was and remained a *philosopher* in the tradition of existential phenomenology, as he admitted in a long interview at the end of a three-day meeting organized by the German Trade Union Federation to discuss his work.[9] I want to explain what this "philosophy" was and why it was, for all of its difficulties, at the roots of Gorz's astute political sensibility.

Realizing Philosophy: *The Traitor*

At the beginning of *le Traître*, the author looks from his window as "Morel" and an editor emerge from a darkened doorway. Morel— who is Sartre—has proposed the publication of "the thing," a massive manuscript on which Gorz had labored for nine years. Gorz knows

already, instinctively, that publication will be refused. Translating this instinct, the self-understanding of his nothingness, will become the inner motivation of *Le Traître*, as Sartre's Preface to the publication suggests.[10] Along the way, Gorz proposes paths toward the existential theory of morality— more precisely: the existential "conversion"— that Sartre left incomplete in *Being and Nothingness*. The challenge was to overcome the dualism— the "or"— that separated the dead materiality of the in-itself (*en-soi*) or Being from the active negating praxis of the for-itself (*pour-soi*) or Nothingness. Gorz then elaborated the practical-historical implications of this theory in *La morale de l'histoire* (1959) during the same period that Sartre returned to the question in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960). Gorz's apparent agreement with Sartre's claim that Marxism is the "unsurpassable horizon of our times," and the similarity between his theory of alienation and Sartre's central concept of the *practico-inert* led me to describe Gorz as a Sartrean in the "Afterword" to the second edition of *The Marxian Legacy*; he was, in fact, a more consistent or more philosophical Sartrean.[11] For Sartre, in a world dominated by scarcity, the practico-inert is the expression of the alienation of the free praxis of the *pour-soi* that prevents individuals from freely cooperating to achieve shared goals. The escape from this reification of individual praxis takes place through a moment of "fusion" which comes about through the agency of what Sartre calls the "totalizing Third," which is of course recognizable as the political party (or perhaps its leader).

Gorz points to the antipolitical consequences of the role played by this external third party in creating the fused group. To maintain its unity, the group has to create something like a modern bureaucracy, with its specialized functions, separation of the person from the task, and division of the personal from the private. This alienated politics was accepted by French communist apologists who justified it as a means to a glorious end; but that is not the "moral" or the morality that Gorz sought to analyze in *La morale de l'histoire*. "For us," he italicizes in the concluding pages of the essay, socialism is not a value for members of a future socialist society; "for us," again in italics, it is not identical to any given society; "for us," he stresses again, it is the project of creating a human world and a human person that will overcome the reign of need and necessity; "for us," he repeats, its value is not found in what it will be when it has been created, precisely because that depends on *us*. [12] As Gorz is using the term, the "us" is the editorial voice, the author in the person of all people; it is, in other words, the existential voice of the philosopher. But this voice is barely audible in this early exploration of the place of situated thought in history; it is drowned out by the collective phantasy of the Marxian proletariat still present on the stage of historical progress.

It is only when Gorz has said his *"adieux"* to the proletariat that the voice of the philosopher becomes again audible[13]. Although the "goodbyes" are the theme of the first two parts of the book, there is still an echo of Marxism in the third section, "Beyond Socialism." Its first chapter presents the "Death and resurrection of the historical subject [as] the non-class of post-industrial proletarians." Appealing to Touraine's theory of post-industrial society (and of course to Marx), Gorz argues that members of this "non-class" are not defined by the quality of the work they do but by the routinized and indifferent abstract labor that they exchange for a wage. As a result, their self-understanding, and their sense of self, depends only on their subjectivity. The subjective freedom of this "non-class" represents *in principle* the negation of

the imperatives of the capitalist system. This negation is not just a refusal of capitalism or the projection of a utopian vision; it is what Hegel called a "determinant negation," a sublation that produces a higher synthesis that is based on an immanent critique, just as was the earlier quest to discover the emergence of "new needs" This time, however, these needs will be situated outside of the labor process and the experience of the proletariat. Gorz's turn to the themes of ecology is inseparable from a critique of capitalism, but it does not reiterate a variant on the old socialist dream.[14]

Philosophical Foundations of the Political

The *Adieux* does not explain how the principle of subjectivity incarnated by the "non class" can become an active force of liberation? In existentialist terms, how does this "non-class" become an actor "for itself," a subject whose force of negation replaces the proletariat that had been transformed to a passive "thing in itself." Gorz suggests two possible evolutions. The first looks for the emergence of forms of freedom *outside* of the constraints of capitalist, bureaucratic or systemic necessities. In *Adieux*, for example, he talks of the way feminism affirms the values of intimacy, and he refers to the Illitchian idea of "tools of conviviality." These are not just private escapes without consequences for society at large; they are indeed a negation of the logic of bureaucratic reproduction. Gorz continued to look for these incipient challenges to the reigning (dis)order in successive works, appealing in his last essay, in 2007, for example to the "hacker ethic" and the "appropriation of technology" by South African townships or Brazilian favela communities. There are two problems with this first explanation of the way in which free subjectivity can negate the alienated rationality of post-industrial society. On the one hand, Gorz is aware that unmediated communitarism can become a threat to subjective freedom when it takes, for example, the form of a tribalism. On the other hand, it is unclear whether a "tipping point" exists, and if so where, when and how the tipping becomes effective. Is it only an existential leap? Or is there a place for politics?

The second way in which the principle of subjective freedom can be realized draws on an insight from Marx (especially in the *Grundrisse*) that was also stressed by Sartre: scarcity must be overcome before freedom can be realized.[15] Only when the streams of wealth flow freely, as Marx said, can the opposition of freedom and necessity be overcome. Even if the "cultural mutation" proposed by the first realization of freedom were to take place, subjectively free subjects would still face the constraints of scarcity. This difficulty leads Gorz to propose a "dualist society" which distinguishes between the spheres of autonomy and heteronomy and the imperatives of technical rationality and the free choice of moral values. These two domains are not predefined nor are they water-right; each can and does affect the other. The way in which they affect one another *defines the political*, which is for that reason not a substantive, autonomous sphere of its own[16]. The moral imperatives of the free subject put into question the claimed technical necessities of systemic reproduction, whether in the choice of the means of production or in the regulations governing social relations. Should robots replace living labor? At what human cost are gains of productivity desirable? These are not "objective" questions; they must be understood as *political choices*.[17]

In this dualist framework, the morally free political actor confronts the fact of necessity. The replacement of the self-regulating market has by the regulatory state means that necessity takes the form of the rule of laws that are in principle valid for all citizens *individually*! Although the concern of the state is the reproduction of the system, and although the administration of law may appear to be an instance of heteronomy limiting subjective freedom, Gorz recognizes that the universality of these laws, by protecting the rights of the individual, make possible the political struggle to define the sphere of necessity. As he puts it in *Adieux*: "The political is the specific place where society becomes conscious of its production as a process involving everyone, where it seeks to master its results and to control its constraints." The political struggle is thus inherently pluralist; interests compete with one another while moral claims are debated publicly. This means, significantly, that the goal of the political is "not the exercise of power. Its function, on the contrary, is to delimit, to orient and to codify the actions of power, to define its means and its goals, and to make sure that it does not go beyond the framework of its mission."[18] Its formal role makes possible substantive individual freedom. This definition of the political might be read as a restatement of French republican theory, in which case it recalls the implicit disdain of that tradition for participatory democracy. It is better to see it as the expression of Gorz's concern with the emergence of moral values within the processes of social reproduction. But if that is the role of the political, what is the relation of these moral values to politics?

The warning against the confusion of the political with the exercise of power is reinforced in Gorz's account of the passage from the post-industrial subjective freedom described in *Adieux* to the social vision described in his 1983 essay, *Les chemins du paradis*. The ironically titled "paths to paradise" are not defined by the old revolutionary vision in which power is seized and then, in a second moment, it is used to impose freedom onto social relations in order to overcome the constraints of necessity. That would in fact put an end to the political by treating it as a means toward an end that lies beyond itself and that has no substantive moral foundation. On the contrary, Gorz insists that the political must remain "the place where moral demands confront external necessities. That confrontation must continue for as long as, in Hegel's words, consciousness does not meet the world 'as a garden planted for it.' It is only the permanence and the openness of that confrontation that will be able to diminish to a maximum the sphere of necessity, and thus maximize the sphere of autonomy."[19] While his critique of the inherited model of revolution is convincing, there is still too little flesh on the bones of Gorz's dualist theory. Indeed, it could even be mistaken for a leftist version of what has passed for normative or deontological political theory since John Rawls' *Theory of Justice*. To read him in that light would neglect the fact that he was a *philosopher*, indeed, he was a *moral* philosopher, and that, although neither philosophy nor morality can be assumed to be an Hegelian "garden," they cannot be separated from the charnel embrace of the subject and the world.

The Critique of Normativity

It is important to distinguish Gorz's moral and political theory from the debates in and around the Rawlsian normative theory. Gorz thought long and hard about that kind of question,

particularly as reformulated by Jürgen Habermas. Apparently abandoning the post-modernist theory of Touraine, Gorz was attracted by Habermas's critique of modern capitalism as caught between the imperatives of systemic social reproduction and the need to protect the freely flowing springs of the life-world. This opposition, which Habermas had defined earlier as a "legitimation problem," acquires a normative dimension in his *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*; and the question is further elaborated as a moral theory of democratic law in *Faktizität und Geltung*. Rather than focus on my own discussions with Gorz about these issues and their implications, I will focus on a wider political debate in which he was very much a participant in order to illustrate what Gorz meant by philosophy and political morality. [20]

After the post-Marxist left moved from a politics based on the idea of worker self-management to a broader vision of *autonomy* as both the means and the ends of radical politics, a precondition for its realization was the demand for a *right* to a guaranteed revenue for all citizens. Such a right, it was claimed, would free the individual from the alienated and alienating system of wage labor, and would thus make possible the autonomous creation of a rich social and personal freedom. The problem was how to justify this right? Was it demanded, or at least made possible, by the need to reproduce the increasingly "immaterial" system, to use one of Gorz's themes?[21] Or was this right a normative, de-ontological claim based on the rules of reason. One of the leading participants in the debate was Philippe Van Parijs, who returned to it in a celebratory essay on Gorz that was published after his death. In his essay, Van Parijs recalls his first encounters with Gorz,; he describes their agreements as well as their disagreements, and above all their friendship. He then expresses his pleasure when they came to agree finally about the need for a *politics* built on the demand for a guaranteed revenue for all citizens. He then cites a letter dated November 7, 1990 in which Gorz explains that despite their practical political agreement, they disagreed on the *philosophical principles that justify this politics*:

"I agree with the conclusions, [but] I feel again the unease provoked by that Anglo-Saxon school of thought to which the supporters of the "basic income" appeal. Why? Because the arguments remain at the level of a quasi-algebraic logic and because justice cannot be reduced to that level. Justice is also based on a sense of the normative that precedes all possible rationalization. One can move from the normative to a logical and juridical formalization but one cannot start from the latter in order to go in the opposite direction. In a word, what is missing is the untranslatable *lebensweltichen Interessen und Zusammenhänge* [the interests and relationships that exist in the life-world] that permit individuals to feel "at home" in the social space where they live."[22]

This passage has to be read carefully. Norms whose foundation precedes formal rationalization can be given a rational form as rights protected by law, or as political institutions, for example. But legal rights or political choices that may be rationally justified as necessary for the reproduction of the system cannot by themselves insure the subjective assent of the participating individual citizenry. That is the practical dilemma that confronts proponents of a deontological, normative and rights-based political theory. How can one be certain that what ought to be done (for systemic reasons) will in fact be done? Gorz offers two

solutions, which complement one another. The first was contained in his definition of the political in *Adieux*. His argument presupposed the existence of universal legal protections, and thus of individual *rights*, which insure the ability of citizens to defend themselves and their interests. This definition describes the political as it exists from the external perspective of the (socio-economic) observer who analyzes the reproduction of the system. Gorz's second argument appeals to justice, a value that lies beyond (formal) rights because it is their justification, that which makes them legitimate for the participants. Justice, Gorz maintains, is rooted in the life-world of the individual and of the society. This distinction suggests that the sentence in which Gorz insists on justice in his letter to Van Parijs should read: "Justice is also based on a [lived] sense of the normative that precedes all possible [systemic] rationalization." In this way, the second argument complements the first, whose definition of the political remained at a systemic level.

Gorz's appeal here to the ideal of justice returns him to insights from his earlier work that have accompanied the evolution of his political theory. That is why I have insisted that Gorz was and remained a philosopher. Although he uses here the language of normative political theory and that of Habermasian critical theory, he is applying the same the dialectical method used in *Le Traître* to show how and why the third person objectivating perspective (which he used so effectively in that first book) has to be supplemented by the first person subjective evaluation of the life-world in which the participant feels "at home." Justice belongs to a pre-reflexive life-world; it is the *existential* experience that in the last instance becomes the determining factor in the passage from the *principle* of subjective freedom to its *realization* in the form of rights that are in turn maintained and challenged in the reproduction of the political process.[23] This pre-rational, subjective sensitivity to the demands of justice is neither innate nor is it unaffected by the world in which it appears. It is that "morality" whose foundations Gorz sought during the years consecrated to "the thing," which for him was more than just the physical book that appeared 15 years after its completion. Its practical form was expressed "*for us*" as the value of socialism in the concluding arguments of *La morale de l'histoire*. It is the practical motivation of the *Chemins du paradis*, and the "sense" of the modern *Métamorphoses du travail* (1988), as well as the "wealth of the possible" that contrasts with the *Misères du present* (1997). It animates once again his final essay, "La sortie du capitalisme a déjà commencé," published in 2007, which describes the systemic changes that "have begun," and concludes with the simple statement that "I am not saying that these radical transformations will realize *themselves*. I am saying only that, for the first time, *we can will* that they be realized."[24] Despite this consistency, and perhaps just because his account of the systemic imperatives that undermine modern capitalism is so lucid and convincing, it is not clear why Gorz is so sure that justice *will* be finally realized since the system alone cannot impose it. There must be some foundation in the experience of the modern life-world that explains this certainty.

Return to *The Traitor*

I am not certain that Gorz was ever able to explain completely the reasons for his optimism (if that is what it was! Or is it just "existentialism"?). He doesn't say why he decided to republish

The Traitor in 2005, after it had been out-of-print for decades. And his explanation for appending to it an essay titled "Le vieillissement," (Aging), which first appeared in *Les Temps modernes* in December 1961 and January 1962, seems to contradict his insistence that the pre-reflexive life world is the source of a deep demand for justice. Gorz writes here that "the question that [this essay] explores intransigently is 'How do we enter this society without abandoning our possibilities and our desires?'" He insists that, forty years later, in 2005, the question remains valid. But he doesn't say why it remains valid. Surely Gorz is not returning to the classical liberal political argument. He does not assume that the free individual inherently free subject exists outside of a society into which it subsequently wants to (or is forced to) step. Nor can he be updating classical social contract theory to defend the rights assumed by contemporary normative theorists in their de-ontological reanimation of the social contract. The most plausible reading is that the distinction between system and life-world, like the distinction between the third person perspective and the first person standpoint that he used so effectively in his self-analysis in *Le traître* is artificial. That means that the moral demand for justice is not founded in pure subjectivity; it is, as I suggested at the outset, a *charnel* demand in the same way that Gorz's philosophy is charnel, as he came to recognize when he reread *Le Traître* and recoiled with horror at the unpardonable légerté with which he had treated the love of his life, indeed: his life, which was not his alone. The fact that he was so affected by this discovery seems to have leaped out at him like an aggression; it was as if *his* own life-world, his sense of self and his values were robbed of their foundations.

It would be an exaggeration to say that "Le vieillissement," written by a new star on the Parisian horizon, presents a sort of moral conversion crisis similar to the one that gave rise to the *Letter to D….* Nonetheless, Gorz, who is usually a dispassionate author, describes his shock at the recognition that he has aged. Using the method he had employed in *The Traitor*, he describes himself in the third person, as an object to be studied; and then, at several crucial moments, he reverts to the first person to explain what he has understood. The process can be described briefly. Aging is not physiological; it is a social process. The child for itself has no age; it ages as it passes through the stages that lead to— or rather fabricate[25]— what society considers to be adulthood. One aspect of this adulthood is the loss of a kind of freedom that belonged to the young, who are seen by others as a bundle of possibilities. This freedom is not only "situated" from without; their liberty is limited and defined not just by the results of their own action because it is the product of their own choices, the way in which the past seizes the present and delimits the course of the future. Although Sartre and Nizan had denounced the ideal of youth as a bourgeois illusion, Gorz insists that even in a classless society there will be a conflict of generations as the old leave institutions and expectations into which the young are socialized in spite of themselves.

Gorz personalizes his thesis. He had just turned 36; he is now a recognized author with a steady job as a journalist. People look up to him; they expect him to behave in a certain way, to write critically about politics, and to be a figure in society. He is at once proud of his achievement, revolted by it, and resigned to it as the fate of "everyone." He's become "someone"; but to be someone is to have become a thing. Describing himself in the third person, he says that "he experienced this as a fall…" The formerly free youth whose

possibilities were infinite because he was himself nothing now has responsibilities and a career. As a result, "you are no longer oppressed: you oppress yourself…you personalize your otherness." Is there another choice than this reified subjectivity of the adult? [26] You could, he says, prefer yourself to the results of your action, to be an adventurer, a saint, or simply an aesthete living in the fullness of the now. That had been his own choice when he was young and working on "the thing." Indeed, the long second chapter of the *Fondements* analyzes the price of such attempts by the subject to preserve its subjectivity. It shows that their cost is self-defeat, failure, and above all the *inefficacity* that denies the validity of moral values, as the axiology of the final section of the tome demonstrates.

You cannot return to the infinite possibilities of youth, Gorz concludes; you're caught in a web of your own making, which you restore every day even as you reproduce your life through a "dynamic conformity." It is not clear, either, that you should wish to return to these infinite possibilities that were open only because you were nothing, a bundle of infinite possibilities, and your action left no trace in the world. The price of your success is that "*you have to accept finitude*: you have to be here and not elsewhere, to do this and not something else, to be now and not never or always; you are only here, only this, only now— you have this life only."

This sober conclusion is puzzling, and a bit formulaic. Is it the expression of resignation? Perhaps. But resignation is not the abandonment of the subject or of its projects. It is the recognition of projects are always situated, and that their value is determined by *judgments* that recognize the thickness of lived-life. Gorz had made a similar point in the final paragraph of *Le Traître* when he wrote that "It is necessary to will that action goes beyond its intention [i.e., that it is alienated, becoming part of the system] because this is the price of its reality." But, he continued, it is necessary "to know the general situation into which the action will be incorporated, that is to say, the camp and the sense in which one wants to be engaged." In these conditions, he concludes, his is willing to be "betrayed" in the sense that his act has implications for those whose values he shares that he could not have achieved on his own.

This conclusion suggests that Gorz added his essay on aging to the new edition of *Le Traître* as a reaffirmation of his philosophy of engagement. But it leaves open a final question that also returns throughout his work: what is the relation of the analyses of the constraints of systemic reproduction of society to the liberty of the subject who is "at home" in the life-world? And how does this *more basic conflict* affect the political dynamic set into motion by the contradictions of capitalist— or more broadly, industrial— reproduction? Gorz was apparently trying to formulate an answer to these questions in the draft manuscript of a Preface to the new edition of *The Traitor*. His title is significant: "We are less Old than we were Twenty-Years Ago."[27] Gorz returns to the reception of his essay on aging, which led to invitations and discussions among the group around Sartre and especially Beauvoir (a social life that he evokes in the *Lettre à D,* as a kind of shared worldliness). He reaffirms his thesis in a lapidary phrase: "Every person struggles against an order that crushes him and [yet] to whose support and reinforcement he contributes." He recalls that the essay on aging was written at the time when hopes lay with "young peoples" in Algeria, Cuba, Brazil and among proponents of

liberation theology. What some call their immaturity was in fact not backwardness but an advance; and so "I was thus, like everyone at the time, a Third-Worldist, although for a short time."[28] That hope seems to have returned as he wrote,while capitalist industrialism drives toward its limits, producing adults who remain adolescents because they are unable to identify with their work, while others remain in that state because the precariousness of work, or its lack, leaves them open to now possibilities. And, concludes Gorz, "I didn't predict that when I was 36 years old. I didn't predict that after the age of 60 I would begin a second life with the companion with whom I was united forever."

This allusion to the *Letter to D…* reveals a rooting of Gorz's moral philosophy in a vision of the life-world that is deeper and more complex— but also more intuitive— than he ever admitted. I have called it "charnel" because of its embodiment in nature and humans as natural. Patrick Viveret's suggestive attempt to formulate systematically the lessons of the *Letter* in terms of what he calls the "emotional" elements of social change reflects a similar vision of the way in which an unarticulated intuitive relation to the life-world is a supplement to the transformative critique of the social system.[29] Another version of this intuition is found at the outset of the *Fondements*, when Gorz points out that his debt is not only to Sartre but also to Merleau-Ponty's theory of corporeity[30]. That is why the book's first chapters are concerned with nature and the body in nature. The same impulse returns in the crucial discussion of "axiology" in Part III[31], where "nature" brings a constant renewal of morality in the process through which the refusal of natural givenness implies the need to overcome the passivity of nature.

This intuitive, never wholly thematized anchorage in a pre-reflexive charnel life-world was evident in Gorz's everyday life. Let me conclude with two personal examples, more carnal than theoretical. I can still recall his nearly visceral reaction forty years ago, at a conference in Buffalo, New York, organized by the journal *Telos*, to early American attempts to assimilate feminism and Marxism by means of the demand for "wages for housework." This, he insisted, would destroy the personal and immediate intimacy of human bonds putting a shadow over any vision of a just moral relation between the sexes. This intuitive reaction was later explained and explored in Gorz's demonstration of the systemic harm inflicted by the capitalist reification of "service" into an industry destructive of conditions for the creation human relations capable of benefitting from the surplus that might be produced. The second example is more personal, and will be familiar to those who were fortunate to know him. It is illustrated by another anecdote, this one dating from 20 or 25 years ago, during a visit to to Gérard and Dorine at their home in =Vosnon. Gorz took me for a ride to what I remember as a small forest. He walked me to a particular tree, which was very much alive despite the fact that its quite hollow core was surrounded by four pillars of a trunk that mounted to the sky. "Feel these pillars; you will sense the life that pulses upward," he commanded. Was it his imperative certainty or real sap flowing? It surely was charnel, alive. I don't know either whether a "civilized exit" from the "miseries of the present" will be found; but I'm sure it won't come naturally or rationally. I know only that I want it to occur, and that André Gorz has helped me to understand my own intuitions.

Notes

[1] Sartre's preface is entitled "Of Rats and Men." The book was well-received, as was the preface. Its English translation (by Richard Howard) was published in 1959 by Simon & Schuster. After it had been out of print for many years, Verso reissued *The Traitor*, which remains available.

[2] Our first encounter was not encouraging. I had written an essay on the American New Left, which I submitted to *Les Temps modernes*; I received a letter of acceptance from Claude Lanzmann, another editor of the journal. Shortly thereafter, in the summer of 1966, I arrived in Paris as a student and went eagerly looking for my article in bookstores, to no avail. I later learned from Gorz that his disagreements were the cause of the journal's refusal. I do not remember his reasoning, but do know that at that date I knew very little about Marx and Marxism, and not so much about politics either! This took place during a period when Gorz had developed relations to critical voices in the student union (the UNEF), initiating contributions to *Les Temps modernes* from leaders such as Marc Kravetz.

[3] In a letter to me dated August-September 1986, Gorz remarked that despite my criticisms of Marx, "he was very prolific, and thus his writings contain lots of "loose ends," such that it is possible to use Marx against himself. "I derive great pleasure in doing this." (Françoise Gollain's reminded me of this passage (c.f. note 5 below).) The Sartre passage (in the 1960 edition of the *Critique de la raison dialectique*, p. 29) reads: "Il reste donc laphilosophie de notre temps: il est indépassable parce que les circonstances qui l'ont engendré ne sont pas encore dépassés."

[4] Gorz's 2007 essai, "La sortie du capitalisme est déjà commencé," published in the posthumous volume *Écologica* (Paris: Galilée, 2008) can be read as an anticipation of the crisis from which our capitalist world has not exited.

[5] An expanded edition of this volume was published in 2012 (Paris: Éditions la Découverte). Françoise Gollain will soon publish an introduction to the philosophical work of André Gorz; and André Häger will finish his doctoral thesis on Gorz at the beginning of 2014. A biography of Gorz is aso underway. I should add that the IMEC does not have most of my correspondence; there is a nearly complete version of it in my archives, which are housed at the Library of the Stony Brook University, which also contains the letters of Gorz, often with hand-written supplementary reflections.

[6] In a word, Gorz's "unforgiveable" sin was to have treated Dorine as a dependent object— a

Scotish woman in Lausanne, often sick, with few friends, mastering poorly the language who would be crushed were he not to choose to remain with her— while he remained the active subject. "Who was I, when I wrote those lines?" The *Lettre* restores their life together; one could say that the "I" of the existentialist who wrote *Le traître* shows itself as a "we."

[7] I will for the most part rely on my own memory rather than return to the many letters exchanged over the years (although Françoise Gollain has showed me her detailed notes concerning some of the exchanges, which concern not only Gorz's work but his reading of my own—but this essay concerns him, not me).

[8] It should be noted that the new material does *not* refer to the Soviet invasion, although it does criticize the politics of Leninism and those of the French CP. In the conclusion added to *Réforme et révolution* he tried to outline the nature and functions of a new revolutionary party—noting that this chapter had been written in already in 1966. In a letter to me from 2003, written after I had sent him my book, *The Specter of Democracy*, Gorz begins by stressing three points that we share: writing in 3 languages; the importance of immanent critique; and that we are determined to denounce antipolitics. But, after praising my critique of "real socialism" he adds that for his part, it is neo-liberal antipolitics that is his major concern.

[9] The interview, "L'homme est un être qui a à se faire ce qu'il est," was published in the original German in the *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* in January 1984. Gorz sent me a copy, which is either lost or in my Archives. The French translation appeared in *Autogestions,* and is reprinted in *André Gorz. Un penseur pour le XXIe siècle*, Christophe Fourel, editor (La Découverte, 2012). At the outset of the interview, Gorz explains: "Je me vois comme un philosophe naufragé qui, à travers des essais en apparence politiques ou philosophiques, essaie de faire passer en contrebande des réflexions originellement philosophiques." (p. 250) It should be noted, in addition, that so far as I know, Gorz never reprinted "Détruire l'université" in collections of his work. Another similar inconsistency, with perhaps similar motivations, is seen in the brief temptation of Third Worldism expressed in the short letter "Au camarade Che Guevera," published in *la Casa de las Americas* in Havana in early 1968, and reprited in Fourel, ed., *op. cit.*

[10] When he had become well known, in 1977, Gorz published "the thing" under the title *Fondements pour une morale* (Paris: Galillée). In his new Introduction, he explains that much of the theory developed both *Le Traître* and in *La morale de l'histoire* had been elaborated in that manuscript.

[11] Gorz was also more astutely aware of the social transformations going on around him. His theory of alienation went beyond the critique of alienated labor to show how alienation

transformed the worker into a *consumer*. This insight then led him to introduce into the French left the work of David Riesman and C. Wright Mills.

[12] One difference between Gorz's reading of Sartre and my own turns around the problem of the status and role of this Third party. He doesn't seem to object to its revolutionary role; what worries him are the alienated and bureaucratic consequences once the group has come to power. My critique of Sartre stressed more the antipolitical logic by which the Sartrean dualism is only apparently overcome by the group in fusion. In other words, my critique is political whereas Gorz's stresses the personal and social costs of antipolitics. On Sartre, c.f., my discussion in *The Marxian Legacy* (2nd edition, London: Macmillan, 1988).

[13] C.f., *Adieux au prolétariat. Au delà du socialisme* (Paris: Galilée, 1980).

[14] This is clear in their two early volumes, *Écologie et politique* (1975) and *Écologie et liberté* (1977). For this reason I will not devote a separate discussion to Gorz's ecological theories.

[15] This theme, which becomes increasingly important for Gorz, was first clearly articulated in the 1983 complement to the *Adieux*, *Les chemins du paradis*, which announces the "revolution of free time" as creating "true wealth" on the basis of the advances of new technology. In this context, attention should be called to Daniel Mothé's *L'utopie du temps libre* (Paris: Éditions Esprit, 1997), which is a sustained critique that develops the thesis is that this "utopia" can be in fact only a "path to paradise" for those whose wealth permits them to buy the contents of the time that is freed by the new wealth of society. This will increase social divisions without attacking the major problem of our time which is unemployment and pracarity of life-conditions. Gorz is accused of "a naturalist ideology" that encourages "the narcissim of the individual." (p. 19n) It should be noted that Mothé's criticism comes from the left, refusing individualism in favor of the priority of the common good. (Mothé, who worked for years as on the production line at Renault's fabled plant in Billancourt, was a former member of the group "Socialisme ou Barbarie"; after a workplace injury, he became a sociologist, writing under his legal name of Jacques Gautrat while continuing to write on politics under the pseudonym of Mothé.

[16] This is the source of one difference between Gorz and Habermas. The German critical theorist uses a modified Weberian theory of modernity whose development is articulated by the autonomization or differentiation of distinct spheres of life. The political, like the family or the legal system, becomes increasingly autonomous and therefore, it is implied, increasingly rational. The problem, as Gorz stresses, and Weber knew, is that this rationality remains formal. C.f. the discussion by Françoise Gollain and Christophe Fourel, to appear in *La Vie des idées*.

[17] What Gorz meant by "the political," and its relation to actual political choices, was a frequent theme of our correspondance. In the essay that he dedicated to me, "L'écologie politique entre expertocratie et autolimitation" (in *Ecologica*: Paris: Galilée, 2008), he added a footnote referring to the Preface to the second edition of my *From Marx to Kant*, praised *The Marxian Legacy*, and noted that he "gave a related definition in the last chapter and the postface to *Adieux au prolétariat*." I will refer in a moment to the idea of judgment that was another theme of our exchanges.

[18] The citations are from *Adieux*, *op. cit.,* pp. 166 and 167.

[19] *Ibid., p. 169.*

[20] Much my discussions with Gorz at this period turned around the politics of democracy, a theme that I will not address here. I should say that my interpretation of that theory was not taken seriously by the normativist and legal scholars who attended an international seminar on the book at Cordozo Law School, which made my exchanges with Gorz the more meaningful to me. My essay was included in the proceedings of the conference (*Cordozo Law Review*, 1996, pp. 1392-1440) but was excluded from the bound volume that followed (Rosenfeld and Arato, eds., *Habermas on Law and Democracy. Critical Exchanges* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). It is reprinted, with some modifications, as "Law and Political Culture," in Dick Howard, *Political Judgments* (Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), pp. 171-210. The same themes are addressed in "Habermas's reorientation of Critical Theory toward Democratic Theory," in Dick Howard, *The Specter of Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 261-270.

[21] C.f. *L'immatériel. Connaissance, valeur et capital* (Paris: Galilée, 2003). Dedicated this time: "Grâce à Dorine, sans qui rien ne serait." His handwritten dedication in my copy calls the book "cette Auseinandersetzung avec l'idée de Knowledge Society."

[22] Philippe van Parijs, "De la sphère autonome à l'allocation universelle," reprinted in C. Fourel, *op. cit., pp.* 163-177. À propos of Gorz's notion of autonomy, and its relation to his ecological politics, Timothée Duverger has published a richly documented essay, "Écologie et autogestion dans les années 1970. Discours croisées d'André Gorz et de Cornelius Castoriadis," in *Ecologie et politique*, Nr 46, pp. 139-148. The crucial point in the present for both thinkers is that *autonomy* is the primary attribute of humans; but that the challenge is to conserve that autonomy, or to reaffirm it, in the face of the various forms of social alienation. A crucial difference, not mentioned by Duverger, is that Gorz continues to find inspiration in Marx's theory of alienation as well as from Marx's *Grundrisse*. Perhaps significant in this regard is his use of the term *Selbständigkeit* in both the *Fondements* and le *Traître,* as if the idea of autonomy was not, as it were, *selbstverständlich* in French!

[23] The fact that justice, and values more generally, are pre-reflexive does not mean that they exist in the temporal mode of the past which is assumed to guide thepresent; it is only in the third part of the *Fondements* that Gorz examines the practical-ethical values that concern the future praxis and projects of the *pour-soi*. But the passage among the three domains is not linear, nor need there be a congruence between the "vital attitudes" that naturalize existence for example in the case of fanaticism, resignation, or the cult of force or worship of the race; the "aesthetic attitudes" that derealize the real in the behavior of the gambler, the adventurer, the poet or the mystic; and the "moral conversion" through the kind of self-elucidation practiced in *Le Traître*. None of these "attitudes" suffices on its own; the lower cannot determine the higher, but the higher has no value if it is not realized.

[24] My stress. The essay was originally published in *EcoRev*, nr. 28, automne 2007; it is reprinted in Gorz's posthumous collection, *Écologica* (Paris: Galilée, 2008), pp. 25-42.

[25] Gorz suggests that he is "not at all certain that the contradiction between physiological age and social age can be eliminated in industrial societies" because these societies need 16 years to form people who can run their machines and administer their institutions. He adds in this context that "adolescence" is something that didn't exist in other societies.

[26] In an aside, Gorz suggests that the only social category that escapes from this heteronomy is "those internal emigrés, impoverished students." (400) He doesn't develop this thought, which can be seen as another variant of his quest for a free subject capable of translating the principles of justice into reality, a replacement for the proletariat or working class or the non-class of non-workers… Recall however his cri de coeur: Destroy the University!

[27] The draft manuscript is published in Christophe Fourel, *op. cit.,* pp.268-274.

[28] C.f., the two page testimony "Au comarade Che Guevera," in Fourel, *op. cit.,* pp. 246-47.

[29] Patrick Viveret, "De Kay à Dorine, penser les enjeux émotionnels de la transformation sociale," in Christophe Fourel, *op. cit.,* pp. 39-58.

[30] Gorz drops any reference to Merleau-Ponty after the latter's quarrel and rupture with Sartre, to whom Gorz remains unfailingly loyal. When his German interviewers suggest (in "L'homme est un être qui a à se faire ce qu'il est," op. cit.) that some people see the *Adieux* as also an adieu to Sartre, but gently modify the claim by saying that perhaps it is only a break with Sartre's "idea" of politics, Gorz reacts defensively. Of course they had disagreements, in the 50s concerning the global import of Algerian nationalism, and particularly after 1969 when Sartre became too sympathetic to the Maoists and their "typically populist, sectarian and

dogmatic doctrine," which seemed to Gorz "a resurgence of Stalinism." But, he insists, Sartre never prevented him from publishing in *Les Temps modernes;* and indeed, because Sartre "was fundamentally antipolitical" political differences could not lead to the breaking off of friendships. (Fourel, *op. cit.,* p. 255)

[31] C.f., *op. cit.,* pp. 550, 556, for example.

Reification: History of the Concept

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Until fairly recently, reification was a central diagnostic concept of critical social theory and social philosophy. Due to its heavy metaphysical baggage and its grounding in an obsolescent philosophy of history, the theory of reification has, however, lost much of its credibility and prestige. To explain, describe and criticize various forms of dehumanization in modern capitalist societies, it is occasionally rediscovered, refurbished and actualized by authors within the Marxist tradition of Left Hegelianism. Through a grand narrative of reification, systemic processes of commodification, exploitation and domination that lead to a loss of community (anomie), meaning (disenchantment) and freedom (domination) are connected to a phenomenological description of the alienation of the modern self from itself, others and the world. As a critical category, reification squarely ascribes the blame of alienation to the system. The denunciation of reification is paradoxical, however: to the extent that it presupposes that the object is really a subject, it denies what it affirms (that the world is inhuman) and affirms what it denies (namely that there still is a subject that can act and change the world).

Literally, reification (*Verdinglichung*) refers to the transformation of human properties, relations, processes, actions, concepts, etc. into things. As a technical term, the term reification emerged in the English language in the 1860s out of the contraction of the verb *facere* (to make) and the substantive *res* (thing), which can refer both to concrete and empirically observable things (*ens*) and to abstract, indeterminate things (*aliquid*). As a synonym of 'thingification,' the inverse of personification, reification metaphorically refers to the transformation of human properties, relations, processes, actions, concepts, etc. into *res*, into things that act as pseudo-persons, endowed with a life of their own. Depending on the grammatical subject of reification – who reifies what: is it the analyst who reifies the concepts or is it society that alienates the subjects? – the transformation of human properties, social relations, abstract concepts, etc. into things, types and numbers can operate both on an epistemological and on a social level. Both levels are united by an ontology of practices and a common insistence on the primacy of action over structure. In the philosophy of the social sciences, the concept is used to criticize structuralist, naturalist and positivist theories that hypostatize macro-social entities, dehumanize action and naturalize the system from a dialectical and praxeological position. In Marxist-Hegelian social philosophy, the concept is used by theorists related to the Frankfurt School to criticize capitalism´s systemically induced social pathologies of the life-world that distort the relation between actors and the world, the others and the self and bring the dialectics between agency and structure to a standstill. The concept is never a neutral one. Positive instances of reification (Gehlen, Latour, Virno) are rather rare, though. Usually, the concept is used polemically to denounce the 'violence of

abstractions,' either of conceptual abstractions (*Denkabstraktionen*) that suppress the reflexive embeddedness of concepts into their social context, treat social facts as things, and transform metasubjects into megasubjects, or of real abstractions (*Realabstraktionen*) that strip individuals of their autonomy and reduce them to cogs of an abstract social machinery.

As a normative-descriptive concept that denounces the dehumanizing impact of social systems, such as the market, the state or bureaucracy, reification shows a family resemblance with the Marxist concept of alienation and with the Weberian concept of formal rationalization. Although the dialectical idea of objectivation (*Entaüsserung*)-alienation (*Entfremdung*)-reappropriation (*Aneignung*) is already present in Hegel, the real history of the concept really begins with Marx and with Lukács's Hegelian interpretation of Marx in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). In Marx, the concept is used in the context of the critique of the fetishism of commodities, to denounce the transformation of social relations into things. In his classic formulation of the theory of reification, which constitutes the paradigmatic 'hard core' of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, Lukács generalized Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, and fused it with Max Weber's concept of formal rationalization and Simmel's concept of the tragedy of culture. Confronted with the rise fascism in Europe, the members of the Frankfurt School—Horkheimer, Marcuse, and especially Adorno – progressively abandoned Lukács faith in a proletarian revolution and radicalized, universalized, and totalized Lukács's theory of reification. Criticizing the Frankfurt School's identification of rationalization and reification, Habermas reformulated the theory of reification in his theory of communication in terms of the colonization of the life-world by the subsystems of the economy and the administration of the state. Honneth has also revisited the theory of reification and, inspired by the phenomenology of Sartre, he has reformulated it in terms of a theory of non-recognition that foregrounds the lack of an existential relation between self and other. Although reification has received the greatest attention in Western Marxism, and above all in Lukács, it is important not to restrict the use of the concept to that tradition but to see that the concept and the word can also and already be found in the work of Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Simmel, and Max Weber to criticize the dehumanizing, rationalizing, calculating and alienating tendencies of modernity.

1. Methodological Reification—or the Critique of Conceptual Abstractions

In the philosophy of the social sciences, the concept of reification is used (1) to denounce the hypostasis of concepts (nominalist critique of reism), (2) the naturalization of the subject and the life-world (humanist critique of naturalism), and (3) the ideological justification of the status quo (dialectical critique of fetishism).

1.1 Nominalist Critique of Realism

In the case of the critique of naive conceptual realism (or reism), the notion of reification of concepts is used to denounce, from a nominalist, vitalist, criticist or deconstructivist perspective, the categorical error of transforming abstractions (notions, representations, concepts) into a material reality, in a concrete object 'out there.' Reification is here understood

as a synonym of the hypostasis of concepts, analytical constructs, and ideal types. It occurs when one slides "from the substantive to the substance" and identifies the categorical thing with the 'thing in itself.' This is, for instance, the case with macro-sociologists who transform their own conceptual constructs or those of the actors ('the State,' the *Bourgeoisie*, the 'Proletariat') into historical subjects capable of agency and of determining their own ends ('the State decides,' 'the Anglican Church resists,' 'the glorious Proletariat triumphs,' etc.). It should, however, be noted that due to the absence of a consensus on the ultimate referents of reality and the fact that one can always submit the concepts of the scientist to a neo-Kantian or deconstructivist critique of ontology, the charge of reification is almost inevitable. Given that one's typification is another's reification, the critique of the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead) is endemic in sociology.

1.2 Humanist Critique of Naturalism

The critique of positivist naturalism in terms of reification of the subject is linked to the series of methodological disputes (*Methodenstreit*) which, since the double foundation of sociology by Comte and Dilthey in the nineteenth century, have opposed the partisans of the method of causal explanation (*Erklären*) to the partisans of the interpretative methods (*Verstehen*). Drawing on Vico's principle of the *verum factum (verum et factum convertuntur)*, according to which we can understand the sociohistorical reality because it is a human product, but not nature which is a divine product, humanists claim that the appropriate method of sociology is interpretative in that it aims to understand, by means of a phenomenological and hermeneutic reconstitution of the meaning of action, the social-historical world (Hegel's objective spirit) as an objectivation of subjective actions. Social facts thus have a meaning and cannot be treated 'as if they were things' (Durkheim). The naturalistic elimination of the meaningfulness of action through statistical observation is reifying in that it transforms psychic acts into pseudophysical facts and reduces culture to (second) nature. Against Durkheim and his fellow 'factists' who 'change the subject' of the human sciences by substituting factors for actors, humanists thus argue that social facts are not things but that things are social facts whose meaning can be understood and which can be interpreted as an 'ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life' (Garfinkel).

1.3 Dialectical Critique of Fetishism

The dialectical critique of fetishism offers a metatheoretical critique of the ideological implications of *bourgeois* theories and methodologies of the social that, due to a lack of reflexivity on their context of genesis and application, legitimize the status quo. Dialecticians accept the limits of 'hermeneutic idealism.' When social relations have crystallized into a 'second nature' and social subsystems follow their own pseudonatural laws, 'dehumanizing' theories (e.g., structuralism, functionalism, systems theory) and methods (e.g., linear modeling, statistical regression) can and have to be applied. But if one does not want to fall prey to a 'reification of the second order' and give a 'reified perception of the reifying' (Adorno) that willy-nilly endorses the reality it registers, the observed facts have to be 'mediated by the totality' (Lukács) and defetishized in such a way that the tension between the real and the

possible, between what is and what could or should be, becomes perceptible within the facts themselves.

2. Social Reification—or the Critique of Real Abstractions

In German social philosophy and critical social theory, the concept is generally used to diagnose, i.e. describe and criticize the pathological autonomization of social structures, systems and subsystems, which, although man-made, are out of control, follow their own laws and alienate the actors, dominating them as if they were natural forces.

In the tradition of Western Marxism, Marx's theories of alienation and the fetishism of commodities are combined with Hegel's dialectical phenomenology of spirit, Simmel's theory of the tragedy of culture, and Max Weber's theory of formal rationalization to form a critical theory of society. The concept of reification is used to refer to the relatively autonomous, alienating and alienated functioning of the social (sub-) systems of modern capitalist societies that impose their constraints from without on individuals, limit their freedom and tend to reduce them to powerless 'carriers' or passive 'executioners' of the system. As products of practices, institutions and organizations (like factories, bureaucracies, tribunals, and increasingly also universities) are human objectivations, but in the course of their development, the social (sub)systems have been complexified, formalized, rationalized, and depersonalized to such an extent that eventually they have been transmuted into self-referentially closed systems that function independently of the will and the consciousness of individuals, thwart their plans, threaten their autonomy, and perhaps even their existence. The critique of reification is dialectical and thus somewhat paradoxical: the insistence on the alienating autonomy of the system aims to reactivate the autonomy of the individuals and to overcome their alienation.

Although the concept of reification (*Verdinglichung*) can already be found in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, the real history of the concept begins with Marx and with Lukács's Hegelian interpretation of Marx. The origins of the theory of reification are usually found just where the word itself is absent, namely in the famous section on the fetishism of commodities (chap. 1, sect. 4) of *Das Kapital*. Analyzing capitalism as a system of generalized exchange, Marx notes that the commodity has become the universal form of the product of labor, with the result that the exchange value of the commodity supplants the use value. Consequently, the exchange value appears to those who exchange goods as a property of the commodity itself, whereas in reality it is the result of the labor that is incorporated in the commodity and that expresses itself as a quantitative relationship between the exchanged goods. 'It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the phantasmagoric form of a relation between things' (Marx 1869, pp. 23, 86). This inversion of humans and things is not simply an illusion, however. Rather like ideology, it is a form of false, yet necessary consciousness that is constitutive of capitalist society and represents the real nature of social relations in a competitive market environment. In the absence of a central organism that regulates both the production and the distribution of the products of labor, the social integration of humans is imposed from without by the systemic interconnection of things.

In ‘Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,’ the central chapter of *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács, a Hegelian Marxist who was once a student of Georg Simmel and Max Weber, presents the classic formulation of the theory of reification. Synthesizing Weber’s theory of formal rationalization with Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism, Lukács generalizes the theory of commodity fetishism beyond the sphere of circulation. In the problem of fetishism, which he immediately identifies with the phenomenon of reification, he discovers the ‘central, structural problem of capitalist societies in all its aspects’ (Lukács 1923/1968, p. 257). The universality of the commodity form, conceived as the prototype of all forms of objectivity that seemingly follow their own rational laws and dissimulate the traces of human relations that subtend them, affects the life of everybody, both in its objective and subjective manifestations. Objectively, individuals are confronted with a second nature of pseudo-things against which they are powerless; subjectively, they are estranged from their own activity, apprehending the products of their own activity in an alienated mode— ‘as if they were something else than human products’. Moving from the sphere of circulation to the sphere of production, Lukács rediscovers the theory of the alienation of labor which the young Marx had developed but not published in the *Parisian Manuscripts* of 1844 (see *Alienation, Sociology of*). In the sphere of material production, reification expresses itself most clearly in the reduction of labor power to a commodity and of the laborer to an appendix of the machine. In capitalism, reification is generalized and the fate of the worker becomes paradigmatic of the fate of everyone. Expressing the Messianism of the oppressed – the “hope of the hopeless”- Lukács eventually reintroduces the Proletariat as the ‘identical subject–object’ of history whose revolutionary actions overcome alienation and reification and thus realize the Hegelian dream of the restoration of the ‘beautiful totality.’

The development of the so-called Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School can best be understood as the result of a progressive disillusion with revolutionary expectations. Eliminating the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic of consciousness, which they replace by a Freudian account of sublimation and repression, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and especially Adorno, who also gave a Nietzschean twist to the concept of reification, radicalize the Weberian-Marxist strand in Lukács’ theory. Universalizing and totalizing reification to the point that it appears as an ontological feature of human civilisation, they almost end up indicting Reason as such. Indeed, to explain totalitarianism (in its fascist, communist and capitalist variants), Horkheimer and Adorno develop a negative philosophy of history which uncovers in the first protohistorical attempts to dominate nature the origin of the fatal unfolding of a diabolic logic of increasing reification that will find its culmination (but not its endpoint) in the death camps. In his *Theory of Communicative Action*, Jürgen Habermas (1981), the main representative of the second generation of critical theory, reformulates the theory of reification in terms of the paradigm of language. In this perspective, reification is no longer associated with rationalization as such, as was the case with Max Weber and the Frankfurt School, but reconceptualized in terms of the ‘colonization of the life-world’ by the subsystems of the economy and the administration. When the mechanisms of systemic integration (money and power) force back the forms of social integration from those domains that can only be integrated through language, a reification ensues that leads to a pathological deformation of the life-world. In a short essay on reification, Axel Honneth, the main representative of the third generation of the Frankfurt School, has

taken a new look at an old idea. By means of a linkage between his theory of recognition and a phenomenological theory of alienation, he disconnects the concept from its Lukácsian origins and predominantly conceives of it as a deficient relation to self and others. Understood as a pathological form of life in which participative forms of knowledge (recognition, reciprocity and care) are systematically replaced and repressed by instrumental, representative and manipulative relations to the world, the other and the self, reification is redefined in terms of a forgetting of a primordial way of being in the world. The question, however, is whether the theory of reification can survive outside a dialectical philosophy of history and a host of problematic metaphysical antinomies (e.g. essence and appearance, form and content, part and whole, theory and practice) that it purports to resolve. Conceptual historians may well conclude in a not so distant future that the concept reached its zenith in the midst of the twentieth century and became largely obsolete in the twenty first century.

Bibliography

Arato, A., & Breines, P. (1979). *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism*. New York: Seabury Press.

Berger, P., & Pullberg, S. (1965). Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness. *History and Theory*, 4(2), 196–211.

Brewes, T.: *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.

Brunkhorst, H. (1983): "Paradigm-Core and Theory Dynamics in Critical Social Theory", *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 24, 6, 1998, pp. 67-110.

Courtine, J.F. (2006): "Res, Ens"", *Radical Philosophy*, 39, pp. 36-50.

Gabel, J. (1962). *La fausse conscience. Essai sur la réification*. Paris: Editions de Minuit. (*1975, False consciousness. An Essay on Reification*. Oxford: Blackwell).

Habermas, J. (1981). *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns.* (Vols. 1 and 2). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (1984 *Theory of Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK).

Honneth, A. (2005): *Verdinglichung.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (2008 *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Lukács, G. (1923/1968). *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. In *Werke, Vol. 2*. Neuwied: Luchterhand (1971 *History and Class Consciousness*. Merlin, London).

Marx, K. (1869/1972). *Das Kapital*, Vol. I. In *Marx Engels Werke* Vol. 23. Berlin: Dietz Verlag (1974 *Capital*, Vol. 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London).

Pitkin, H. (1987). Rethinking reification. *Theory and Society*, 16(2), 263–293.

Rose, G. (1978). *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*. London: Macmillan.

Thomason, B. C. (1982). *Making Sense of Reification: Alfred Schutz and Constructionist Theory.* Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.

Vandenberghe, F. (1997–1998). *Une histoire critique de la sociologie allemande. Aliénation et réification.* (2 vols). Paris: Editions la Découverte (2009 *A Philosophical History of German Sociology,* London: Routledge).

Something in the Air: Assayas' Portrait of Political and Personal Upheaval Post May '68 France

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

In May 1968 France was roiling with mass demonstrations, student occupations, strikes, and riots. Initiated by a student revolt–more social and cultural (against convention and authority) than political–the students were then joined by workers in an assault on France's most venerable institutions. Occurring during a time of relative economic prosperity, this upheaval turned into the first ever nation-wide wildcat general strike by workers (breaking from the traditional trade union–often Communist–leadership). At the height of its fervor, the turbulence virtually brought the entire French economy to a halt. The strike involved 11 million workers, and went on for two weeks, almost causing the collapse of French President Charles De Gaulle's paternalistic and conservative government.

It was the workers' strike that was most threatening to the government, not the student movement–and they generally followed separate paths. The students' demands and perspective were more diffuse–often sexual, and philosophical in nature (e.g., "The liberation of humanity is all or nothing or "Boredom is counterrevolutionary.") However, among the students there were left sectarians –Maoists who were more rigidly ideological. The workers' demands were more precise. And when the government responded by offering pay rises and reduced working hours, a 35 per cent increase in the minimum wage, a shorter working week and mandatory employer consultations with workers, the strike came to an end, and the movement petered out.

The protests of '68 may not have lasted long, but in no other country did a student rebellion help to almost bring down a government, nor had one ever led to a workers' revolt. I know the American student movement never came remotely close to having that large an impact, and blue collar workers in this country were often fiercely antipathetic to both the student movement's counterculture and Left elements.

A number of French films have dealt directly with or touched on May '68. They include: Godard's epigrammatic, irritating, and fractured narrative *La Chinoise* (1968); Louis Malle's satiric *May Fools* (1990); Bernardo Bertolucci's erotic, sensual, and nostalgic *The Dreamers* (20003); and Phillipe Garrel's dour, tedious, and exquisite *Regular Lovers* (2005). One must also add Olivier Asaayas' (e.g., *Summer Hours, Carlos*) semi-autobiographical *Something in the Air* (or *Après Mai*, the French title)—though it takes place a few years later in 1971. The film's thin, pale, sensitive, long haired 17 year-old protagonist, Gilles (Clément Métayer)– acted by a non-professional like almost all its young actors -–is Assayas' alter-ego. He is in his last year at a suburban Paris lycée, where Marx and Pascal are taught and discussed, and he is on his way

to art school.

Gilles, who sees himself as an anarchist (Assayas was intellectually influenced by the Situationists who combined a passion for experimental art with anti-authoritarian left politics) is involved with the radical high school movement–handing out leaflets and broadsheets, spray-painting graffiti slogans on the walls of school buildings, and engaging in violent confrontations with school security guards, and with the brutal baton-wielding Parisian riot police. Assayas depicts the conflict with the police with visceral immediacy, and the protestors, though banged around and arrested, take pleasure in proving themselves through combat. He also seamlessly captures the ambience of those earnest political meetings where political tactics and ideology were articulately and endlessly debated. The students here engage in a strenuous attempt to define a political line, and a range of factions– Trotskyists, Maoists, Anarchists– all take part in ideological dispute, with the exception of the Communists, who feel the tactics of these young radicals discredit the Left.

But the joy, wit and utopian impulse that was part of May '68 no longer exists for these young radicals. They are ideologically solemn, rhetorical, and at times gratuitously destructive. They know the political moment has passed, but they continue the struggle–possibly as much out of nostalgia for '68 than out of conviction. And Assayas' portrayal of them is sympathetic, though never sentimental. In some ways he's critical, conveying a clear-eyed but never explicitly judgmental view of their adolescent pretensions and moral callousness. (e.g., Engaging in an act of violence they send a security guard to a hospital with a coma, exhibiting not an iota of guilt for what they have done.)

Gilles' political commitments turn out to be secondary to his desire to become an artist. In Assayas' words: "The center of the movie is really the evolution of the history of the relationship to art. It starts from Gilles' painting and drawing abstraction to accepting he will one day become a filmmaker, and that cinema in a certain way can be considered as a superior form of representation. It's really the undercurrent of the film."

Still, Gilles, while pursuing his artistic ambitions (trying to find a medium and style) in a disciplined not dilettantish fashion, remains political, though he begins to convey a touch of skepticism about adhering to a hard political line. He reads Orwell, and a book critical of Mao, and travels to Italy for the summer with a film collective that makes agit-prop films for workers, who they romanticize. Gilles quietly questions the philistinism and conventionality of their films' syntax, implicitly affirming the 1970 Godard (*One Plus One*) who believed revolutionary films demand an experimental, revolutionary style and who therefore rejected social realism. In Godard's words, "The problem is not to make political films, but to make films politically." I remember the intensity of the aesthetic conflicts between political filmmakers and critics who espoused an experimental style, and those who wanted art to be populist and accessible. Assayas succinctly captures the nature of that debate, as he does so much else of the period's atmosphere.

He does this, however, by eschewing the construction of a tight narrative, and doesn't bother

filling in all the details. He leaps from episode to episode, leaving many unanswered questions about the characters' behavior. His aim is to create an impressionistic portrait of a period of personal and political upheaval as seen through his younger self. Consequently, we get a powerful feeling of the era's radical turbulence without any real analysis of the ideological differences on the Left, or of the movement's failures.

One episode is a summer vacation trip to Italy with two radical high school friends, a fellow committed artist Alain (Félix Armand), and sweet, low-keyed Christine (Lola Créton), who he becomes involved with. They drift from place to place working at their drawing, and hanging out with a group of too beatific-looking hippies singing political folk songs. Christine is more unwaveringly political than the two boys, and leaves them to join an older filmmaking collective–where she is unhappily relegated to shopping, cooking, and doing pedestrian work, and cut off from decision-making. (Assayas in passing commenting on her playing a subordinate role, echoes the fate of many women on the left in that period.)

Among the hippies is a red-haired American diplomat's daughter Leslie (India Salvor Menuez), a student of modern and sacred dance. She and Armand develop into a couple, but their inexpressive interaction never comes alive, and their scenes together undermine the film's momentum.

In fact, Assayas centers the film on Gilles' coming of age, and except for his first love, Laure (Carole Combes)–a striking-looking, mysterious, aesthetic, depressed young woman– who Assayas sees as embodying "the spirit of poetry" (a perfect hard-to- fully-get-hold- of fantasy woman for an artistic adolescent like Gilles), none of other characters are given much dimension. One friend, Jean-Pierre (Hugo Conzelmann) is an unsmiling full time revolutionary, diligently mimeographing leaflets and writing for Left papers, who views Gilles as a political outsider, choosing artistic solitude rather than radical action. But he makes little impact on the film. Nor does Gilles' father, a television scriptwriter forced by Parkinson's disease to employ his recalcitrant son in adapting Simenon's *Maigret* for French TV. Gilles ultimately takes the work, but condemns his father for being a hypocritical hack, and then shows how smart he is by smugly criticizing the structure of Simenon's work.

The film is filtered through Gilles' egocentric personality (e.g., he displays no sympathy for his father's illness), so every place and person is seen through his eyes. It's not only his friends who remain ciphers, but also we learn nothing about the nature of the suburb he grew up in. Also, as he drifts away from politics, he is pushed by Jean-Pierre to demonstrate that he's still an anarchist by blowing up a car. It's a symbolic but nonsensical act that feels just dropped into the film.

The strength of *Something in the* Air lies in its perceptively conveying the feeling of adolescents (albeit mostly privileged, financially comfortable ones) seeking to define themselves, by taking on new roles and identities. The film's fragmentary, drifty style perfectly suits the collective psyche of Gilles and his friends. It's both a heady and difficult time for them. They are adolescents free to make choices, travel about the world, and have a great deal

of unself-conscious, pleasurable sex. And a number of them, including Gilles, seem to drop their political activism without much reflection or guilt, though without turning to the right.

At the film's conclusion, Gilles is working in London as a gofer on a ridiculous science fiction movie complete with papier-mache monsters and a Nazi U-boat. He has stopped searching and found his calling, but this is just the first fledgling step on the path to making the kind of films he ultimately wants to direct. Those are the films he goes to see at the avant-garde Electric Cinema in Notting Hill, where while he is sitting in the theater the image of Laure is suddenly resurrected on the screen—strikingly embodying the artistic life that Gilles will follow.

S*omething in the Air* does not delve deeply into Gilles' internal life. But without being formally virtuosic or in any way experimental, Assayas utilizes the underground music of the period, and stirring images of chaotic parties and street battles which leave an indelible portrait of a time, and of a sophisticated adolescent's coming of age. Though the politics of many of the adolescents may be rigid or ephemeral, Assayas is a director with a keen political intelligence, and critical commitment to the Left. This is a film that has never received the attention it deserves.

Leonard Quart

.

Sheldon Krimsky and Jeremy Gruber, eds. Genetic Explanations: Sense and Nonsense (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013)

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

This timely and important collection brings together a group of prominent geneticists, biologists, medical researchers, psychologists, philosophers, and historians to engage in what Stephen Jay Gould in *The Mismeasure of Man* referred to as "debunking as positive science": "sound debunking must do more than replace one prejudice with another. It must use more adequate biology to drive out fallacious ideas"[1]. In the words of coeditor Sheldon Krimsky, "The chapters in this volume provide a counterargument to exaggerated, erroneous, or overly simplified claims about the role that DNA plays in cells, organisms, evolution, human behavior, and culture" (13). Such claims have spread far beyond the pages of academic journals. A reductionist, deterministic conception of DNA has imbued a molecule with almost supernatural power and transformed it into what Ruth Hubbard calls "a central icon of our time": "[T]he gene is simultaneously a material object and an ideology, full of political, economic, spiritual, individual, and social content" (25). What is this ideology?

It can be summed up by a quote by James Watson, who in 1953, together with Francis Crick, uncovered the molecular structure of DNA. In a 1989 interview he declared that, "We used to think that our fate was in the stars. Now we know in large measure, our fate is in our genes" [2]. Our fate is in our genes because, in the words of Richard Dawkins, "our genes have made us, body and mind" [3]. And indeed, as innumerable studies appear to have shown, what is "in our genes" is not only the cause of, or "genetic predisposition" for, almost every conceivable physical and psychological malady, but almost all complex "normal" human behavior as well. Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists have adopted the quantitative methodologies of the hybrid discipline of behavior genetics, and published findings purporting to show the heritability of, or a gene predisposing for, everything from voting [4] to the amount of time spent texting on a cell phone [5].

The media are enamored of claims that a given behavior is "in our genes," and the more counter-intuitive the claim, the bigger the headline (e.g., "Too Many One-Night Stands? Blame Your Genes," [6]; "Lost it all in the stock-market? Blame your genes" [7]). As Shirley Shalev notes, "the media play a major role in stimulating public awareness and disseminating information and conceptions about genetics in general and in particular, about the rising power of isolated genes to explain a variety of human behavior" (210). The media, however, only slightly exaggerate, and the sensationalism characteristic of media headlines is found in the

titles of papers published in academic journals (e.g., “Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout” [8]). Such deterministic genetic reductionism promotes a discourse that blames behavior on genes and “a terminology that relieves or even absolves individuals of any responsibility or blame for their imperfections” (211). Indeed, such ideas have made their way into the criminal justice system: In 2009 an Italian court reduced the sentence of a man convicted of murder on the grounds that he possessed the “aggression gene,” and hence was genetically predisposed to violence [9]. And they have fueled the rise of what Eva Jablonka calls “Genetic horoscopes,” companies such as *Geneplanet*, that by means of a DNA sample will enable you to “get to know everything you ever wanted to know about yourself,” including “your special talents and abilities” (71).

While the authors do an excellent job of laying out the ideology of DNA as it exists today, the bulk of the book, and by far its most important contribution, lies in the scientific debunking of this ideology. This debunking involves showing what studies of the sort “a gene causes/predisposes to/is a risk factor for trait x” have in fact found to date, and evaluating the validity of the genetic paradigm that underlies all such studies in light of advances in molecular genetics.

Jonathan Beckwith recounts the fate of several influential studies purporting to show a link between genes and criminal/anti-social behavior. In 1965, researchers reported in an article in *Nature* their finding that a high proportion of males in a state hospital for the mentally insane had an extra Y chromosome (i.e., were XYY males). Attempts to replicate these findings produced conflicting results until the idea of the “criminal chromosome” was finally dismissed by the original authors in 1982 (which did not stop, as Beckwith notes, James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Hernnstein from using the supposed link between XYY and criminality to support their arguments in their 1985 book *Crime and Human Nature*). In an influential study in 2002, Caspi and colleagues reported a link between a polymorphism (a common gene variant) of the MAOA gene, an abusive upbringing and antisocial behavior. As with the XYY chromosome, attempts at replication have been consistently inconsistent (although this association is commonly characterized as a scientific fact in psychology textbooks). As Jay Joseph and Carl Ratner note, despite all of the highly publicized claims, beginning in 2008 behavior geneticists began to acknowledge the consistent failures of replication and ultimately the failure to find a single genetic locus reliably associated with any complex behavioral traits, including intelligence, personality, and psychiatric disorders (94-95).

The situation is similar in regard to physiological – as opposed to “behavioral” – traits, although there are differences. As several of the authors note, a handful of risk factor polymorphisms have been identified, the most well-known being polymorphisms of the tumor suppressor genes BRCA1 and BRCA2 and an increased risk of breast cancer. At the same time, as Carlos Sonnenschein and Ana M. Soto point out, cancers due to inherited genes – “inherited errors of development” – account for less than 2% of clinical cancers and only 5% of cases of breast cancer are associated with BRCA1 and 2 genes (86). In a report published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics* in 2012, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that incorporating genetic information did not improve doctors’ ability to predict disease risk

for breast cancer, Type 2 diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis above and beyond standard risk factors, including things like family history, lifestyle and behavior [10].

If “genes have made us, body and mind,” why have the particular genes been so hard to identify? As Hubbard observes, genes do not in fact “make” anything, including proteins. All of the numerous enzymes and cellular structures necessary for DNA transcription (the process of copying a segment of the DNA molecule to RNA), and for translation (the process of constructing proteins from the RNA transcripts) are external to the DNA. DNA neither “self-replicates,” nor “self-transcribes,” nor “self-translates.” Rather, *the cell,* in response to a host of internal and external signals, transcribes segments of DNA and translates the resulting RNAs into proteins (17-25). Nor is it the case that each gene is “coded” for a specific protein. David Moore describes how “alternative splicing” is a process in which RNAs transcribed from the same gene can be rearranged (by the cell) to produce different proteins called isoforms, something that occurs in 95% of all “protein coding” genes. Isoforms can exhibit widely divergent and even antithetical effects (47-48).

Heritability estimates depend upon the assumption that the biological causal universe can be divided between “genes” and “environment.” This is to ignore however, that genes are not the only biological agent of inheritance. Jablonka describes four non DNA-based systems of cellular inheritance, which she terms “epigenetic inheritance systems.” Included among these four are “chromatin marking” and “RNA-mediated inheritance,” two mechanisms that are part of what is commonly referred to as the “epigenome” (in a narrower sense of the term “epigenetic”) (76-80). The epigenome regulates the extent to which any given segment of DNA can be transcribed, effectively turning genes “on” and “off.” A skin cell differs from a kidney cell not because of differences in its DNA, which is presumably the same in both cells types, but because of differences in its epigenome. The consequence of a skin cell having the same genome as a kidney cell but a different epigenome is that the two cells look and act in radically different ways (i.e., have different phenotypes). These epigenomes can be inherited because each cell type, when it divides, results in cells of the same type (e.g., skin cells only give rise to skin cells and kidney cells only give rise to kidney cells).

While the epigenome can be stable, as in cellular epigenetic inheritance, it can also be highly environmentally responsive. Mae-Won Ho describes studies in which, for example, factors such as pre- or post-natal stress can alter the epigenome, and hence, the manner in which particular genes can be transcribed. This can result in significant phenotypic differences in the absence of any changes to the DNA sequence. For example, mice raised by high stress mothers tend to exhibit, as adults, high stress behavior as well as epigenetic changes consistent with an increased stress response. Cross-fostering studies in which offspring are separated at birth and raised by “foster” mothers, consistently show that the main determinant of these changes is the rearing and not the biological mother (260-269).

The ability of the environment to “reprogram” the epigenome and thereby alter gene transcribability and phenotype is a central component of what Jablonka refers to as *plasticity*: “plasticity is defined as the ability of one genotype to generate different phenotypes depending

on environmental cues that act as inputs on an organism's development" (76). Plasticity can play a key adaptive role, adjusting the organism's phenotype to the demands of its environment (e.g., in a dangerous environment, heightened stress responses can be adaptive). In sufficiently "hostile" environments (e.g., pre-natal malnutrition) plasticity can also be a cause of disease.

There is growing evidence that environmentally induced epigenetic changes can be inherited, allowing for the intergenerational transmission of acquired traits in the absence of any changes to the DNA sequence. The idea the environmentally induced changes can be inherited has long been deemed the "Lamarckian heresy," but as Stuart Newman points out, it is now being incorporated into evolutionary theory: "evolutionary change can be "saltational" (phenotypically abrupt), rapid, and influenced by environmental change in a direct (i.e., Lamarkian fashion) and not just as a consequence of election of marginally favorable [genetic] variants" (33).

The view of DNA presented by the authors reflects current scientific understanding of the relationship between genotype and phenotype. Our genes do not "make us, body and mind." DNA is not the sole biological inheritance. The relationship between genes and the environment is so intimate that if the environment is taken to include everything other than the DNA sequence (which would include the epigenome and the cellular environment) then the dichotomy between genes and the environment, and ultimately nature and nurture, breaks down. The environment is not a backdrop in which the developmental program, inscribed in the DNA, is activated. As Moore expresses it, "We now know that DNA cannot be thought of as containing a specific code that specifies particular predetermined (or context independent) outcomes" (47). In the words of Evelyn Fox Keller, DNA "does not even encode a program for development" (41). The idea of a predetermined code, of DNA as the rigid template of heredity in which our fates are transcribed, is at odds with phenotypic plasticity, the ability of organisms to adapt to the demands of their particular ecological niches. This plasticity extends to the DNA molecule itself. As Stephen Talbott poetically expresses it: "The chromosome, no less than the organism as a whole, is a living, continually metamorphosing sculpture" (55).

It has been the hope of heritability and gene association studies, along with the entire mythology of DNA that they have spawned, from genetic horoscopes to MAOA criminal defenses, that we could predict and understand phenotype formation and variation solely on the basis of a person's genotype and skip everything that intervenes between the uniting of the maternal and paternal DNA and, e.g., entering a voting booth. Such a hope – and numerous studies appear to confirm this possibility – entails that in a certain sense, all of our traits are "in our genes" (e.g., "Is There a Party in Your Gene?" – the title of a study published in *Political Research Quarterly* in 2009 [11], "Infidelity Might Be in the Genes" [12], "Is Empathy in our genes?" [13], "Studying Adam Lanza: is evil in our genes?" [14]).

In 1694, Nicolaas Hartsoeker produced an image of a tiny human, a homunculus, curled up inside a sperm cell. This famous image embodied the theory of "preformationism": A human develops from a tiny, preformed human that already contains, in miniature form, all the characteristics of an adult human. Historically, "epigenesis" represented the opposing view:

Humans do not develop from little preformed humans; rather, development is a process that gives rise to new and emergent structures and processes. We may smile at the naiveté of the homunculus but for the fact that today, this homunculus has been resurrected in the form of the genome, not the genome of science but a supernatural "homunculus-genome." What is it to say that all the features of a person are "in her genes," but to take all the attributes of a person and ascribe them (or their "predispositions") wholesale to what is in effect a little latent person – the inherited homunculus-genome? The reigning ideology of DNA, as an explanation as to why children resemble (or differ from) their parents, or why some people are, e.g., liberals and others conservatives, is essentially Hartsoeker's homunculus wrapped in the language of DNA. This demonstrates the utterly regressive nature of this ideology.

This collection constitutes a potent debunking of the homunculus-genome and the ideology of DNA of which it is a part. It is an example of debunking as positive science at its best, utilizing positive science to drive out fallacious ideas. It also forces us to realize, if somewhat uncomfortably, that what needs debunking are not simply defenses of intelligent design or denials of climate change, but articles that appear in prestigious science and social science journals and are reported on in glowing terms in the science section of *The New York Times*.

Notes

[1]. Gould, S. J. "A Positive Conclusion," in *The Mismeasure of Man*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 351-353.

[2] Interview in L. Jaroff, "The Gene Hunt," *Time*, March 20, 1989, 62-67.

[3] Dawkins, Richard, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 21.

[4] Fowler, J.H. and C.T. Dawes, "Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout." 2008. The Journal of Politics 70 (3):579-94.

[5] Miller, Geoffrey, Gu Zhu, Margaret J. Wright, Narelle K. Hansell, and Nicholas G. Martin. 2012. "The Heritability and Genetic Correlates of Mobile Phone Use: A Twin Study of Consumer Behavior." Twin Research and Human Genetics 15 (1):97-106.

[6] Time, December 2, 2010, https://healthland.time.com/2010/12/02/too-many-one-night-stands-blame-your-genes/

[7] Discover Magazine, February 11, 2009, https://blogs.discovermagazine.com/80beats/2009/02/11/lost-it-all-in-the-stock-market-blame-your-genes/#.UfA1NmTg12Y

[8] Fowler and Dawes, 2008.

[9] Baum, Matthew. 2011. “The Monoamine Oxidase A (MAOA) Genetic Predisposition to Impulsive Violence: Is It Relevant to Criminal Trials?” *Neuroethics*:1-20.

[10] Aschard, H., J. Chen, M. C. Cornelis, L. B. Chibnik, E. W. Karlson, and P. Kraft. 2012. “Inclusion of gene-gene and gene-environment interactions unlikely to dramatically improve risk prediction for complex diseases.” *Am J Hum Genet* 90 (6):962-72.

[11] Hatemi, Peter K., John R. Alford, John R. Hibbing, Nicholas G. Martin, and Lindon J. Eaves. 2009. “Is There a ‘Party’ in Your Genes?” *Political Research Quarterly* 62 (3):584-600.

[12] *Business Week*, December 3, 2010, www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/healthday/646957.html

[13] CNN Health, Nov 15, 2011, https://www.cnn.com/2011/11/15/health/empathy-genes

[14] The Telegraph, April 10, 2013, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/9968753/Studying-Adam-Lanza-is-evil-in-our-genes.html

Evan Charney *is Associate Professor of the Practice of Public Policy and Political Science at Duke University, and a Fellow at the Duke Institute for Brain Sciences.*

The Life and Times of the Underground Press — Part 2: Art and Design

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Books reviewed:

Power to the People: The Graphic Design of the Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974, edited by Geoff Kaplan.

Full Circle: The Life & Works of Karl-Heinz Meschbach, written by Karen Black.

BUSTED!

It was late 1968, after the protests and repression around the Democratic Convention. KOed by asthma, I looked forward to diving into the pages of The Chicago Seed—the underground newspaper I edited—when my then-girlfriend, the eponymous "Mary Sunshine," brought the latest issue home. The Seed was one of hundreds of radical / counter-cultural periodicals of the 1960s and early 1970s. As Karen Black, the biographer of one of The Seed's best artists, puts it:

> Articles on the latest "far-out" musicians appeared next to mantras about
>
> rights and equality for Blacks, Women and Native Americans…prison life, abortion and draft-dodging.[1]

A highlight of this particular Seed was a typically meticulous pen-and-ink spread—"Memories"—containing scores of images by Black's subject, Karl-Heinz Meschbach. Karl's finely detailed cornucopia included "Thou Shalt Not Kill" and soldiers with rifles, Jesus and "Hope," a local DJ and a Chicago cop. If you looked hard, a headshot of Mayor Daley sat just below an image of, well, someone giving head.

Karl wasn't arrested, but two paper sellers and I were, for obscenity. One count of the indictment had me being "reckless in my editorial responsibility." Charges eventually were dropped but not without a verbal slap from the judge: "The Seed was "trashy, but not obscene."

We ran the arbiter's quote on the masthead. But Karl, who'd trained as a Certified Decorative Painter, had the last word, in an open letter:

> I demand that my work be judged solely on the basis of artistic merit…

I am willing to defend my work in any time in any place to intelligent

people….[2]

Most every underground paper had an encounter like this one, because they deliberately pushed the envelope, or because the authorities wanted to repress their dissident politics or cultural expressiveness. Whichever it was, design was key to their message. The papers' visual presence varied far more than that of typical mass-circulation dailies. The Seed wasn't as "Tibetan Book of the Dead" as The San Francisco Oracle, with that paper's swirls and third eyes,[3] but it used far more graphics than photos and illuminated them through a split-fountain press process that allowed colors to flow into each other. While legibility could succumb to production glitches, realistic and metaphysical images alike flowed through their pages.

In contrast, The Berkeley Barb was an enraged inkblot, with black-and-white photos augmenting street-fighting dispatches. New York's East Village Other (EVO) probably was the biggest exponent of underground comix, hipster-themed panels that substituted The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers for Dick Tracy. Boston's Avatar and the San Francisco Good Times were crisp; others barely rose above the mimeograph level even as they got the word out.

To date, most accounts of underground press graphics have centered on the comix of R. Crumb, Gilbert Shelton and other celebrated cartoonists.[4] Now, two profusely illustrated books—a strong overview of the papers and a loving tale of one artist's evolution—enrich the literature.

IMAGES AND ESSAYS

Power to the People: The Graphic Design of the Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974 notes how technology from margin-justifying typewriters to cheap offset printing presaged today's Internet disruption. To this end, Power starts with a found document: "How to Make a Magazine," rescued from the lesbian magazine Amazon Quarterly as a template for organizing through media. Today it's at once primitive and redolent of endless hours spent around a light table forging "news from below."

Power's editor, Cal Arts design professor Geoff Kaplan, cites the papers' "…do-it-yourself ethos, their fervent belief in freedom of expression and their staunch advocacy of both a politically radical and countercultural lifestyle."[5] Their design fueled "…a vehement challenge to the dominance of official media and a critical form of self-representation."[6]

Power is oversized, and its meat consists of hundreds of well-reproduced illustrations. Though dates are noted, the collective arc is non-sequential, stressing energy rather than evolution. Perspective comes from several incisive essays, which themselves are offset by colorful yet highly legible typography.

This combination makes Power to the People a worthy successor to a 2006 collection, Free Press: Underground & Alternative Publications 1965-1975.[7] Free Press, also oversized, carries striking images and author Jean-Francois Bizot drew on his time as founder of the French undergrounder Actuel to annotate issues into a lively concluding timeline that is missing in Power. But Power's imagery is more comprehensive, and it explores corollaries such as The Whole Earth Catalog (early Wikipedia in print) and video collectives.

Power could use more recollections of artists conjuring up images to capture the latest street clash or psychedelic journey, more snapshots of the layout nights that East Village Other veteran Steven Heller elsewhere described as "the closest thing I had ever come to a tribal ritual"[8]

But Power's essays, though sometimes slipping into sociologese, do add a thoughtful layer to the work. Speaking about the Oracle, San Francisco State art history professor Gwen Allen cites an article by uber-Beat William Burroughs extolling LSD, laid out with circles, mandalas and distorted columns—truth in packaging, indeed. Allen's larger point: "…these alternative papers did not report on reality but sought to transform it.[9] The montages published in underground papers were not seamless, but announced their constructed nature through uneven, torn edges and jarring contrasts in scale and perspective. They registered a sense of crisis, of rupture and conflict, of things breaking apart.[10]

Clenched fists and images of cops as pigs "defined shared struggles and common enemies,"[11] Allen notes. However, Allen admits that sexist and racist images not only offended "conventional social codes" but were "walking an exceedingly thin line between lampooning stereotypes and perpetuating them."[12] This led to internecine conflict, especially over how women were represented. One person's sexual liberation could be another's sexism.

The general appraisal is warts-and-all positive, as summarized by author / musician / UC Davis professor of technocultural studies Bob Ostertag:

"created shattered under the combined weight of state repression, sectarian politics and too much drug use. But if instead of looking at flags and governments, we look at real-life human relationships, a quite different picture comes into view. Nearly every type of human relationship emerged from the era profoundly changed, and in every case the change was toward greater equality.[13]

Ostertag then goes all-in:

Measured by how real people live real lives, the 1960s can be considered the most successful revolution ever, certainly far more successful than those revolutions that succeeded in seizing the reins of state power.[14]

And these ideas "…were first introduced to the world in the pages of the colorful, zany joyous, tripped-out pages of the underground press."[15]

ART AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Power to the People covers papers that largely ceased fire nearly 40 years ago. For every artist who kept his (most were men) Rapidograph pens honed, several became mainstream or commercial designers, or simply left their craft behind. Comix artists seemed most likely to stay the course, but even the archetypal R. Crumb recently illustrated a faithful version of the Book of Genesis.[16] Steven Heller has authored scores of books and is an expert on typography and graphic design at The School of Visual Arts after a long career at The New York Times Book Review.

Karl-Heinz Meschbach continues to create evocative art.

A frequent Seed freelancer, Karl's background differed from most others at the paper. While we were rebelling against middle-class conformity and U.S. interventions, Karl's drawings were informed by secret-police interrogation in his native East Germany, a stint in a refugee camp and being penniless not by choice. He'd later served in the U.S. Army, as a gunner—ironically in (West) Germany. This wasn't necessarily predictive—the biggest "freak" at The Seed had spent time in a displaced person's camp in Italy—but, perhaps ironically in light of "the bust," Karl's work avoided trendy beliefs. As Black notes, "…in many of his [early] works, there is a lone figure musing about the world."[17]

Black, herself a painter, characterizes Karl's work as "some earthy, some ethereal."[18] Even drawings of chained Black Panther leader Bobby Seale circa the Chicago Seven trial and the Statue of Liberty as a crowned skull convey an elegant sensibility. But as the paper's politics moved toward hyper-militancy Karl, like others, headed for the exit. "Having escaped Communism, Karl had absolutely no tolerance nor understanding for that ilk,"[19] Black writes. The paper became more internationalist, with more talk of revolutionary violence. The art became coarser.

Being in The Seed launched Karl into the larger society, but Full Circle goes far beyond his relatively brief radical-press period to trace the evolution of a talented artist. Black's oversized book depicts Karl's move toward oils and an array of female nudes, gatherings of men, landscapes, abstracts, flowers—most marked by the lushest of color palettes. Karl's work receded from public view, then gained national attention with a burst of decorative murals for homes. Walls and ceilings became his canvas, trompe l'oeil a specialty. Now he lectures internationally and continues to paint—"skyscapes" are one recent subject.

In 2010, Karl made the first of what have become several working and teaching visits to Berlin. There he received an Honorary Master Certificate from the Berlin Master Painter School. He has, indeed, come "full circle."

Notes

[1] Black, Karen, writer, Full Circle: The Life & Works of Karl-Heinz Meschbach, Studio K Galleries, 2012, page 31.

[2] Black, ibid.

[3] Oracle editor Allen Cohen anthologized a facsimile edition of the paper in 1990 and a CD-ROM “digital re-creation” in 2005. A posthumous paperback appeared in 2011 (Global Recording Artists).

[4] In addition to works by individual underground artists, overviews specific to underground comix include: Estren, Mark James, A History of Underground Comics: 20th Anniversary Edition, Ronin, 2012; Kitchen, Dennis, and Danky, James, Underground Classics: The Transformation of Comics into Comix, Abrams 2009; Rosenkranz, Patrick, Rebel Visions: The Underground Comix Revolution, Fantagraphics, 2008; Skinn, Dez, Comix: The Underground Revolution, Thunder’s Mouth, 2004.

[5] Kaplan, Geoff, editor, Power to the People: The Graphic Design of the Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974, University of Chicago, 2013, page 6.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Jean-Francois Bizot, Free Press: Underground & Alternative Publications 1965-1975,

Universe, 2006.

[8] Heller, Steven, Steven Heller’s Dada, The Local East Village, January 15, 2012.

[9] Ibid, Gwen Allen, page 81.

[10] Ibid, page 101.

[11] Ibid, page 111.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid, Bob Ostertag, page 197.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Crumb, Robert, The Book of Genesis, W. W. Norton, 2009.

[17] Black, page 27.

[18] Ibid, page 49.

[19] Ibid, page 35.

———–

Abe Peck *is a professor emeritus in service and senior director of the Media Management Center at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. He is the author of Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press, edited The Chicago Seed underground newspaper and was on the steering committee of the Underground Press Syndicate during the 1960s. He edited Dancing Madness and co-edited Medill on Media Engagement, worked at Rolling Stone, Outside, The Chicago Sun-Times and The Chicago Daily News, has written for numerous publications and consults on media worldwide.*

Stanley Aronowitz, Taking It Big: C. Wright Mills and the Making of Political Intellectuals

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

"Where have you gone, C. Wright Mills? Sociology turns its lonely eyes to you"—with apologies to Simon and Garfunkle—would have better captured Stanley Aronowitz' recent intellectual and political biography of Mills than the uninspiring title chosen. Yet this reviewer implores readers not to get caught up with the chosen title, but rather to dive right in: the water is fine!

Aronowitz, a public intellectual to his own credit, has taken the latest look at Mills, and implies that the world of macrosociology has never recovered from the loss of this shit-disturber from Texas. He makes a very strong argument.

Mills was an iconoclast, which means heretic or challenger of tradition. According to Aronowitz, by trying to get to the root of American life (writing from the 1940s to the end of his life in 1962), Mills was challenging the whole of American macrosociology, its understandings, and its role in the burgeoning US Empire, the latter which was expanding ever-outward in the early post-World War II era. Yet his concern was not limited to sociology; he really was trying to understand the Empire itself, and to seek the social sector in the US that could overturn what he saw as the "main drift" toward (post-World War II economic) slump and war.

The interesting thing was that Mills was a sociologist writ large, and he was using the tools of the master to attack the master's house (Audre Lorde). Trained at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and working first at Maryland and then Columbia, Mills stood outside of (mostly) liberal academia, and cast his impressive sociological gaze at both sociology and larger US society, and found both troubled and troubling. Unfortunately dying way too young, we never got to hear his ranting about the US invasion of Vietnam and subsequent wars, but his writings served to inspire students in the New Left and anti-war movements. (And how many other sociologists can say this?)

Mills was interested in the big picture, trying to understand power and how it actually worked in US society, not how it was said to work. His three master works—*New Men of Power, White Collar* and *The Power Elite*—were, according to Aronowitz, efforts to get to the root of power and to find ways to undercut it.

Aronowitz finds three things in Mills' work which to recognize, honor and promote: Mills refused to stay within sociology's "box," rejecting efforts to ensure he limit himself to finely-tuned deductive studies based on this empirical data or that; he was a visionary—reading Mills today, one feels that you are reading a contemporary; and he was personally brave, rejecting

the pressures to “tone down” his analyses, to accept the “American Century” where the power of the United States was legitimate and desirable, instead of railing against it. Mills was not a saint—and Aronowitz does not suggest this—but here was a sociologist writing about the world as he saw it, with the scope and breadth he thought it deserved, and during a time when this simply was not desirable—nor acceptable. Mills—whose work has been translated in 23 languages to date—has been all-but-ignored by academia here in the US.

Unlike many of the public intellectuals writing in this country today, Mills was able to get his views into the public discourse to a considerable extent. Part of that ability was his connection with the “New York intellectuals” of the post-World War II era, at least before most of them shifted to become apologists for the US Empire (can we say Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.?). Tied closely to that, of course, was simply his location in New York City, the major communication center in the country while being employed at one of the major centers of sociology during the period, Columbia University: his influence on his graduate students and then their participation in the New Left and in sociology certainly contributed to his reputation. Yet part of this certainly included his personal boldness, his willingness to put out what he saw as clearly and unequivocally as possible: I’m quite sure many of his colleagues were personally troubled by the outsized persona of this cigar-smoking, motorcycle-riding Texan in the astringent hallways of academia.

However, as Aronowitz shows clearly, Mills was always more than an “act”: he was a conscientious scholar taking a serious approach to understand the world and sociology’s part within it, willing to let the chips fall where they may. Mills’ work stood firmly on the shoulders of Marx and Weber, but he refused to limit is thinking to their viewpoints; in fact, part of his importance was his willingness to challenge the “masters,” and to develop original ideas that he disseminated as widely as possible.

And he was willing to challenge his own, previous thinking. When Mills published *The New Men of Power,* he saw the labor movement to be a strategic site for social leadership against (what he saw) as the forthcoming drift toward slump and global conflagration. However, by his next book, *White Collar,* he knew the labor movement leadership could not play the role he had ascribed to it, and he continued his search.

Aronowitz gives Mills a lot of credit, but he’s also not willing to give Mills a free pass. One of his most trenchant critiques is of Mills’ attitude toward the Communist Party of the United States of American (CPUSA). Mills was an anti-communist, but Aronowitz quotes Nelson Lichtenstein from the latter’s forward to the 2001 edition to *New Men of Power:* “Mills was an anticommunist but one who saw the enemy as pathetic rather than dangerous” (in Aronowitz: 118). Yet, as Aronowitz argues, while not ignoring the limitations of the Communists, the contributions of the CPUSA to the building of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) in the 1930s-early’40s were substantial and important. As Aronowitz writes:

To see the communists as merely a tool of Soviet foreign policy is uncharacteristic of the rest of Mills’s evaluation of the fate of the unions. His treatment of the communists, although

containing more than a grain of truth is, at best, partial.

There is also no discussion of the Communist Party's importance in the formation of unions comprising at least half of the CIO membership and its part in the administration of unions representing a third of the CIO membership . . . These omissions constitute a serious flaw in his understanding of organized labor in the 1930s and 1940s (118-119).

Now let's be clear: Mills' work is not the end-all and be-all of sociology. Mills himself died before the re-emergence of the feminist movement and the more recent LGBT movement. More questionable was his lack of interest in the escalating African American liberation struggles, particularly in the South, and their attacks on white supremacy, a key pillar on which the Empire at that time was dependent.

Nonetheless, I think Aronowitz has done an excellent job producing this intellectual and political biography of C. Wright Mills: it brings to life the thinking and courage of arguably one of the most important American-born theorists in sociology. In my opinion, it *should* be made essential reading in every sociology graduate program in the US (if not around the world), and should be given to advanced undergraduates: basically, through this book, Aronowitz has thrown a bomb into the ossified world of sociology. Unfortunately, however, I doubt this will happen in most American graduate programs: my sense is that they are too busy teaching grad students to be quiet and "toe the line" while completing their studies and especially until after they get tenure—and by then, many young professors have learned this message so well that they will continue with their heads down even after gaining tenure.

We need more radicals within academia: they are the ones that challenge the status-quo, and rattle the boxes of sterile thinking and complacency. Stanley Aronowitz has introduced many of us in depth to one to whom is given great lip service—can you say "sociological imagination"?—and argues there's more to the work of C. Wright Mills than this overused phrase suggests. Sociologists today can no longer say, "we didn't know."

Kim Scipes, *Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Purdue University North Central in Westville, IN. He has published books on the radical wing of the Filipino labor movement—KMU: Building Genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines: 1980-1994 (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1996)—and on the foreign policy program of the AFL-CIO: AFL-CIO's Secret War against Developing County Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage? (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010 hardback, 2011 paperback). He is currently working on a book on building international labor solidarity. Scipes has published over 140 articles and book reviews in the US and in 10 different countries. He can be reached through his web site, https://faculty.pnc.edu/kscipes.*

B. Jack Copeland, Turing: Pioneer of the Information Age (Oxford University Press, 2012)

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

Alan Turing was an outstanding British mathematician who joined the Government Code and Cipher School (GCCS) at the renowned Bletchley Park on the first day of the Second World War. He was just 27. Before the war he had made a name for himself by introducing the concept of a 'universal computing machine'. At Bletchley he unlocked the German Enigma cipher machine and thus became a legendary code-breaker. Immediately after the war he turned his pre-war abstract computing machine into a universal electronic computer. He became a pioneer and advocate of Artificial Intelligence.

B. Jack Copeland's *Turing: Pioneer of the Information Age* was published on the centenary of Turing's birth. Many books on Turing preceded it, including Andrew Hodges's excellent biography *Alan Turing: The Enigma,* 1983; and, especially valuable for less numerate readers, David Leavitt's *The Man Who knew Too Much,* 2006. All three books are recommended. Although Hodges's *The Enigma* was reprinted in 2012 with a preface highlighting the topics that in 1983 attracted scant attention but are now the subject of lively debate, Copeland's volume has the edge in topicality.

Turing was born in London in 1912, the second son of Julius Turing, an administrator in the Indian Civil Service, and his wife Ethel. Julius arranged leave from India so that his son could be born in England. Alan grew up in a privileged world of cooks, maids and holidays abroad, but it was 'the life of a near orphan, lodging with carers, and seeing his parents only when they returned from India on leave'. For three years he attended a modest day school to learn Latin (which he never mastered) before being moved, at age nine, to Hazelhurst boarding school in Kent. Hazelhurst prepared pupils for the Common Entrance examination – the test for admission to Public Schools. Turing took a detached, if not hostile, view of Hazelhurst. He had been given a textbook on elementary biology, which opened his eyes to science, and he liked to invent things, but there was nothing on these subjects in the public schools examinations. Indeed, the staff did what they could to damp down his interest in these areas. But his mother discovered a public school that had a science master: Sherborne School in Dorset, in the west of England. Turing was accepted.

Sherborne School is one of the oldest all-male public schools, with monastic origins. Like most public schools, Sherborne was a nation in miniature. The headmaster told students: 'In your relations with us masters and in the scale of seniority among yourselves, you have become familiar with the ideas of authority and obedience, of cooperation and loyalty, of putting the

house and the school above your personal desires'. Turing was an independent-minded young man, but he seemed resigned to the prospect of incarceration there. 'It is run on the same principle as the Gallic councils that tortured and killed the last man to arrive,' he wrote to his mother. And in spite of the headmaster's priorities for intellectual pursuits: 'Classical, Modern, and Science, in that order', it was at Sherborne that he became a mathematician and a scientist. But it was touch and go. Even his mathematics teacher, who thought him a genius, sounded a warning. 'He spends a good deal of time on investigations in advanced mathematics to the neglect of elementary work. A good groundwork is essential in any subject.' But Turing did well in examinations, and survived.

He eventually became school prefect, won a major mathematics prize, and obtained a scholarship to King's College, Cambridge in 1931. There he embarked on the most difficult honours course in mathematics and soon was punching above the weight of other new entrants. He attended a series of lectures on methodology of science by Arthur Eddington, professor of astronomy, who suggested to him a topic for a dissertation should he decide to apply for a fellowship. In 1934 he passed his finals with flying colours. The following year he was elected a Fellow of King's at the age of twenty-two. There were celebrations back at Sherborne School where the following ditty circulated:

Turing

Must have been alluring

To get made a don

So early on.

But Turing was far from alluring at King's or later in his tragic career. He was a loner in work and not a team player. King's was feudal in its structure but that would not be unfamiliar to someone from a public school. The freedom to smoke, drink, and work as one pleased was a joy. But the King's scholars mostly formed a self-consciously elite group, and he was on the margins. His work often was poorly expressed and seemed muddled. Max Newman, a fellow of St John's College, later noted that Turing 'found it hard to use the work of others, preferring to work things out for himself'. But work wasn't everything. Turing did become an accomplished oarsman and tennis player – unusual for students who were expected to be either 'athletes' or 'aesthetes'.

Turing attended lectures on the foundations of mathematics and logic by Max Newman. One aspect fascinated Turing so much that it was to lead to close collaborations with Newman. Newman discussed systematic procedures in mathematics (simple methods that anyone can carry out, step by mechanical step, without the need for any creativity or insight.) The basic feature of these procedures is that a *machine* could do them. Turing worked on this for months without, characteristically, telling anyone. In April 1936 he surprised Newman by presenting a paper 'On Computable Numbers'. It proposed, among other things, an idealised machine which in Copeland's words, 'consisted of a limitless memory – an endless paper tape – and a 'scanner'

that moved to and fro along the tape, reading it, and in turn printing further letters and numbers on the tape. The machine's program, and whatever data it needed for the computation, were printed on the tape before computation started. By placing different programs on the memory tape, the operator could make the machine carry out *any* procedure that a human computer could carry out.' Turing dubbed the device a 'universal computing machine.'

The remarkable paper was published in 1936. Turing was interested in building a working machine, but the electromechanical switches of the day were far too slow. Only when they were together at Bletchley did Turing and Newman learn how a fast electronic universal computing machine might be built. Turing accepted an invitation to study at Princeton University where he got to know distinguished mathematician John von Neumann. After a year, Turing decided, with the backing of von Neumann, to stay on at Princeton to work for a PhD, which he was awarded in June 1938. Turing was offered a research assistantship at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies but, with war in Europe threatening, he returned to Cambridge.

The British security services were unable to cope with the volume of German wireless transmissions. The Germans were using increasingly secure versions of Enigma machines, so GCCS planned to take on more cryptanalysts. Turing was a natural recruit who worked for them part-time, until he took up residence at Bletchley Park in September 1939. He quickly became involved in the Enigma problem and chose to tackle the most difficult task of all, deciphering messages from German U-boats. This was of critical importance as Britain relied heavily on North America for food, munitions, and oil and merchant ships were easy prey to torpedoes.

The Bletchley code-breakers were organised into a system of large huts surrounding the main building. Each hut was numbered and the numbers soon came to refer to the activities within them. Turing and his team moved into Hut 8 to deal with Naval Enigma. Turing may not have been a good team player, but this was his 'baby', and he led through enthusiasm. The period in Hut 8 was probably the happiest in his working life. The basic operating system of Enigma machines was well known as they had been introduced in the 1920s for use by banks: at the heart were a key board, a lamp board, and three rotating wheels. Each wheel could rotate through 26 positions (one for each letter of the alphabet) and each could be turned to a different starting point before each message. When a key was pressed, one or more wheels would turn, and a different letter would be illuminated on the lamp board. Plain text entered on the keyboard would be shown on the lamp board in encrypted form. This would be written down and sent by wireless to a receiving machine, where the process was reversed. The German military introduced yet another stage of encryption: a plug board, which greatly enhanced the security of the system. The U-boat version had other security measures built in and, later in the war, four wheels instead of three. The number of possible settings was astronomical.

The earliest successes against Enigma were made by the Polish Cipher Bureau. Just weeks before their country was invaded they passed everything they knew, together with details of a

machine for speeding up decoding (called a bomba), to Britain and France. Unfortunately the Polish techniques depended on a single weakness in German operating procedures: a flaw in the method by which the sending operator used to tell the receiving operator which positions he had moved the wheels to before starting to type. Because the Germans might at any time remove this defect (which they did in May 1940), GCCS decided that a new approach was needed.

All this information was available to Turing when he took up the Enigma challenge. The old methods were unsuitable. He realised that they would have to rely increasingly on 'cribs', segments of plain text in messages (for example, the standard wording of a weather report) that could be matched to a segment of encrypted text. This would be done by feeding a message containing a crib through settings at which the Enigma cipher process might begin and see if any generated acceptable plain text. If none did, it would be necessary to start again matching the crib to another section of encrypted text. It would be impossible to tackle the large volume of incoming messages using such a time-consuming process without the aid of a machine. Turing drew up the specification for such a machine, called a bombe, which was much faster and more technically advanced than the Polish device. Each bombe was made up of 30 (later 36) replica Enigma machines connected in whatever configuration seemed best for attacking a given message. The first one was delivered in the spring of 1940 and Bletchley Park suddenly became a code-breaking factory. Turing, meanwhile, became engaged to a female co-worker but broke it off, admitting to her that he was homosexual.

The bombes began to deliver answers, but productive cribs were proving hard to create. The best way to get good cribs was to capture ('pinch') decoded German messages. The Navy obliged: they boarded a weather ship and disabled U-boats and took their hardware and paperwork. These activities and continuous improvements to the bombes increased success: the sinking of allied ships sharply declined. The threat that Britain might be tipped into starvation had been removed.

Bletchley faced another challenge. British wireless operators were intercepting streams of messages from an unknown machine. At first the decoding was assigned to a team in the research department which made some progress despite the absence of any knowledge of the hardware involved. The Germans were using a new state-of-the-art cipher machine (codenamed 'Tunny'), for the transmission of messages between Hitler and his top brass in Berlin, and the commanders-in-chief on the principal battle fronts. With some inspired guesses the team managed to deduce the form of cryptology and how the machine might work. Turing was brought in from Hut 8 and within a few weeks had come up with a paper, pencil and eraser method for breaking the messages. This method became known as Turingery. Mechanising this process fell to Max Newman, Turing's mentor and friend, and a brilliant electronics engineer, T H Flowers. Together, and with ample facilities at their disposal, they built a giant all-electronic computer called Colossus using 1,500 vacuum tubes. It speeded up enormously the decryption of Tunny messages. At the Normandy landings in June 1944 the Allied commanders knew almost exactly the dispositions of all the German divisions. Turing's contribution was the basis for every main algorithm used in Colossus.

Turing in 1946 was awarded the OBE for his wartime work. It was not a very high honour – two steps on the ladder below a knighthood, and two steps up from nothing. Turing described it as 'ludicrous' and kept the shiny medal with its red ribbon in a tin box full of screws, nails and other odds and ends. A better measure of his value came from GCHQ who offered him a large sum of money for consultancy on post-war code breaking. Towards the end of the war the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), a few miles upriver from London, formed a new mathematical research division. Its superintendent, John Womersley, had read Turing's 1936 paper and had heard about the potential of electronic machines. In June 1945 he invited Turing to join his division. There Turing drew up designs for his stored –program electronic computer and called on Flowers and his team for help. The machine was promptly dubbed the Automatic Computing Engine (ACE). At first all went well, but top management at NPL was in disarray at the time and priorities changed at a whim. Turing became frustrated, although he was in part to blame. In late 1947 he took sabbatical leave for Cambridge for theoretical work on whether a computer could learn by experience. He never returned. Max Newman had established a Computing Machine Laboratory at the University of Manchester and Turing accepted a timely offer of a position. A Pilot Model ACE was commissioned at NPL, and the development of a marketable version was carried out. The result, DEUCE, was immensely successful.

At Manchester Newman's team had a programmable machine up and running as Turing arrived. It had a smaller capacity than that projected for ACE, and was called the Manchester Baby, but it was the first electronic machine to run a stored program. A larger machine followed, developed by the Manchester firm, Ferranti. Turing played no part in the design of the Manchester Baby, but helped to get it working and used it to pioneer Artificial Intelligence. Other computers were being built in the United States but although designs differed all (except pure number-crunchers) embraced Turing's 1936 idea of a universal computing machine. The same can be said of today's laptops.

In January 1952, Turing formed a relationship with a 19-year-old man and brought him home to live. The house was burgled and in the course of their investigations the police learned of the relationship between the two men. Homosexual acts were then illegal and both were arrested for gross indecency. The case was brought to trial. Turing pleaded guilty, but he himself felt no personal guilt. He was given the choice of imprisonment or a year on parole during which he would receive female hormone 'treatment'. He chose the latter, and took a pragmatic attitude towards his probation, even laughing about it to his friends. Newman gave him full support and Turing was able to use the Manchester computer to assist with his new studies of biological growth, a precursor to the field of Artificial Life. In the following year, with the therapy over, this work was in full flow. But he was never able to work for GCHQ again. The patriot had become a supposedly grave security risk.

In June 1954, Turing was found dead in bed. An autopsy revealed cyanide poisoning. At the inquest, the coroner returned a verdict of suicide. Copeland in his book questions the verdict pointing out that no evidence was presented to indicate that Turing intended suicide, while friends and neighbors had spoken of his recent enjoyment of life. Copeland suggests other

possibilities: Turing used cyanide at home to gold plate certain objects, so an accidental death was a possibility. Less plausibly he might have been murdered because of his secret service background. Hodges in his biography accepts that Turing killed himself. No doubt the debate will continue. In 2009 the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown issued an official apology for Turing's trial and punishment in 1952-54, but campaigns for a full pardon have so far not been successful.

Colin Hughes *is an historian of science and technology and a former Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Defence in London. He is a regular reviewer for Logos.*

John Nichols, On Top of Spoon Mountain

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

John T. Nichols (not to be confused with The Nation columnist), age 73, is a novelist, non-fiction author and screen writer who moved to Taos, New Mexico from the East Coast following the success of the 1969 film version of his best selling novel, *The Sterile Cuckoo.* Nichols fell in love with his adopted home, and applied to northern New Mexico his exceptional skills as a writer and environmental-political activist while hiking the region's peaks and gorges with fishing pole, hunting rifle and camera. His "New Mexico trilogy" includes the novel *The Milagro Beanfield War,* which in 1974 was adapted into a famous movie by Robert Redford. He is the subject of a 2012 documentary *The Milagro Man: The Irrepressible Multicultural Life and Literary Times of John Nichols.*

On his own rather whimsical web site, Nichols states, "I've been married and divorced three times, helped raise two kids, and survived open-heart surgery in 1994." He also comments on his own puzzlement about "where all the money went" and on the currently precarious state of his health: "my heart is locked in permanent atrial fibrillation, I'm in congestive heart failure, I take Lanoxin and Carvedilol and aspirin every day, and my doctor says I'm a walking time bomb ready to have a stroke. So it goes."

Nichols's unflagging good humor and deep concern for our collapsing environment show through in this bemused autobiographical sketch, just as in his latest novel, On Top of Spoon Mountain, whose main character and narrator is an aging Taos-based author named Jonathan Kepler, who wonders early in the novel, "There is a new sense of foreboding in my life that makes me anxious. Hungry wolves are gathering on the edge of my perimeter. Have I segued into my own end game?"

Jonathan Kepler is a 64 year old, unrepentantly-radical sometime mountain-climber ("I ate Spoon Mountain for breakfast.") and formerly-famous novelist and screen writer who hasn't had a best seller or a hit movie in many years now. Jonathan lives in semi-obscurity and declining health in a New Mexico mountain town where the forests are burning up, the rivers are drying up and both the planet's and his own future prospects seem dim, and where he might understandably have surrendered to isolation, cynicism and despair. Jonathan is even bogged down in a frustrating effort to complete an unwieldy final book which he calls "my Magnum Opus": "The Magnum Opus is a novel, a massive, and, I would like to think, clever satire about pending Armageddon. . . . At nearly a thousand pages so far, the manuscript of my Magnum Opus is daunting. There are over fifty characters. I like to think big (hence I usually fail big). . . . Although the entire project is a muddle I am not discouraged—yet I need to wrap it up, don't I? . . . Time is of the essence. And these days I hear Time's winged chariot drawing near. . . . I don't know what is wrong with my shit detector."

Still, despite a long series of disastrous marriages and liaisons, Jonathan clings to love, or to the hope of love. He does have a still-beloved movie adaptation of one of his most loved novels, The Lucky Underdogs (which closely resembles that famed New Mexico book-movie pairing Milagro Beanfield War) under his belt, and he has a little grand daughter whom he deeply loves and who loves to play with him.

For those reasons, Jonathan still clings to a cock-eyed optimism, despite all evidence to the contrary, that his life might turn out alright in the end. Just as the aging T.S. Eliot, despite being the 20th century's prime poet of rational despair, found comfort in late-life love and the company of cats, Jonathan clings to what works for him. Jonathan and his grand daughter conduct raucous private conversations in the squawking lingo they've learned from the ravens observed munching garbage behind a popular Taos, New Mexico bakery and breakfast stop which bears more than a passing resemblance to Taos's Michael's Restaurant. Likewise, the often-arrogant yet self-deprecating fictional Jonathan Kepler himself in many ways resembles the author who created him, Taos writer John Nichols. (How much of this story is true autobiography, and how much is pure imaginative metaphorical invention? Only John Nichols himself knows the answer to that one, and I for one would love to ask him, though I doubt he would give a straight answer.)

Understandably, Jonathan's daughter, Miranda, the grand kid's mom, is skeptical about the educational value of Raven-speak, and lets Jonathan know her doubts in no uncertain terms. That's not the only doubt Miranda has about her wayward Dad. In a hilariously cacophonous family gathering scene well into this hilariously bittersweet novel, Miranda blows a cork and unloads some four decades of filial exasperation and disappointment upon poor Jonathan, who is attempting in his own befuddled way to celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday with his family. Even Jonathan's usually taciturn and stoic son, Ben, lurches into the melee, fists-swinging and bellowing. Jonathan, of course, is appalled, and only vaguely aware to what degree he himself has precipitated this emotional family melt-down.

You see, Jonathan wants nothing so much in the world as to be surrounded by his kids and grand kid, and perhaps to have his current girlfriend and some old pals also on hand. Yet, when he actually gets such good folks close, Jonathan seems unable to resist his inherent tendency to blow it. At one point, he even fears he may have unwittingly alienated his worshipful grand daughter just as he unintentionally alienated his children: "You would not believe how fast things can fall apart when promises are broken. I lost touch with my own children. I lost touch with the earth. And the years whizzed by like rooftops blown off by a hurricane."

Seems that's been Jonathan Kepler's life story, at least according to Jonathan himself. He gets close to the emotional and material and familial prizes he so desires, then boots them out of reach, snatching defeat from the jaws of triumph. But if he could just gather his family around him and hike them up one more time to the daunting heights of thirteen thousand foot tall Spoon Mountain. Then all—including Jonathan himself–just might be redeemed. He might turn out to be a winner after all. Even if he has to match wits with a bedraggled and hungry bear to get there. Sometimes you do eat the bear!

What happens? Does Jonathan reach the heights he belatedly longs to reach? Does the bear eat him? Does he achieve any reconciliation with his daughter and other distanced relatives and friends? You will have to read this brief, fast-moving book to find out. Be warned, though, you will have to stop reading often to indulge yourself in chuckles, guffaws and outright belly laughs. And perhaps a few sympathetic tears for poor old Jonathan and his entropic world.

John Nichols is that kind of a writer. And On Top of Spoon Mountain is John Nichols at his funniest and most humanely engaging. This is John Nichols, one of our best story tellers, at the top of his game. In this book he confronts both his (and our) inevitable mortality and the awful prospect that the earth itself may soon die. He doesn't back down from that ultimate facing up, and readers are very likely to enjoy climbing along with him. This is a bravely-written, highly entertaining and, ultimately, surprisingly encouraging read.

Bill Nevins *writes for Z, Roots World, Eco-Source and other magazines and teaches English, Journalism-Communications and Screen Writing courses for the University of New Mexico (Valencia and Rio Rancho West campuses) and has lived in New Mexico since 1996. An active poet and grand-dad, he curates the annual New Mexico Film Festival and is profiled in the award-winning documentary film Committing Poetry in Times of War (available via HULU and Netflix). He can be reached at bill_nevins@yahoo.com*

Gregory D. Johnsen, The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia

By | 2013, vol. 12, no. 3

As medical personnel descend on Guantánamo Bay to cope with a dramatic hunger strike, President Barack Obama renewed efforts to close the detention facilities at the U.S. naval base, a policy objective that has eluded him from his first days in office. On January 22, 2009, two days after his inauguration, Obama issued Executive Order 13492, which required that the detention facilities be closed no later than one year from the date of the order following a review of the grounds for detention for all detainees. Section 2(a) of the order stated that of the approximately 800 individuals detained, at the time of signing "[t]he Federal Government has moved more than 500 such detainees from Guantánamo, either by returning them to their home country or by releasing or transferring them to a third country".[1] The nature of the evidence against them and the opaque channels that filled detention cells made these releases inevitable, and the Obama administration sought to continue to transfer those eligible for release.

Of the hundreds of former detainees, however, at least a handful had been released only to plot attacks against Western targets and the United States. Two released detainees helped to found a new al-Qaeda affiliate, a merger of the Saudi Arabian and Yemeni branches, whose ominous intentions were announced via a video days after Obama assumed office. Based in Yemen, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula quickly came to complicate the administration's efforts to remove Guantánamo as a controversial component of America's counter-terrorism policies.

In the aftermath of the attempted bombing of a Detroit-bound passenger jet on December 25, 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmuttallab revealed to investigators that he had traveled to Yemen to seek out the radical Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, whose internet sermons inspired him to participate in violent jihad. His admissions confirmed what had previously been a tenuous link between Awlaki and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which provided the explosive device, and also suggested that the firebrand preacher played a role in the group's operational decisions. The near success of the suicide attack, the advanced bomb design, and AQAP's involvement combined to create the perception of Yemen as a nexus of Islamic militancy and grounds for the Obama administration to cease returning Yemeni detainees to their home country. A moratorium on transfers from Guantánamo, where the majority of the remaining 166 detainees are Yemeni, remains in effect. The prospects for release for Yemenis who have been administratively cleared are contingent upon security conditions in a country experiencing a precarious political transition and where al-Qaeda's ranks swell. Gregory

Johnsen's book, The Last Refuge, provides an excellent account of historical developments that produced the current situation.

Johnsen sets out to place Yemen in the larger historical context of modern global jihad. This approach provides a comprehensive background for readers with little to no knowledge of the subject, and also highlights Yemen's importance in the development of militant Islam. Indeed, Yemen's relevance to the religion stretches back to its founding. While this may have been merely a function of geography, the ancient evocative symbolism with which the country is imbued persists to the present. Johnsen notes that Yemen's role as a safe haven for Muslims, mythically, began when Muhammad purportedly instructed followers during the flight from Mecca to seek refuge in Yemen should disaster threaten. The author draws a parallel between this fable and how Yemen is viewed today by the most fundamentalist adherents of the Prophet's teachings. Despite the fact that Johnsen goes on to construct a profile of a country that offered a physical landscape and a security atmosphere with obvious strategic appeal for Islamic militants, this is at the very least one way of synthesizing the past and present in a literary sense.

The Last Refuge opens with an examination of the country's unique role in the Afghanistan conflict during the 1980's. North Yemen, entering its last decade as a separate state, encouraged young men to join the fight against the invading Soviet army. Three forces were at work in this effort, each reinforcing the message of the others. President Ali Abdullah Salih, shayks from Yemen's powerful tribes, and clerics all sought to inflame these young men's sense of duty to help protect fellow Muslims. While recruits for the fight came from across the Muslim world, "[f]or an entire generation of young Yemenis, a trip to the front lines in Afghanistan became a rite of passage."

It was after Soviet forces withdrew that al-Qaeda took firm root in Yemen. Osama bin Laden created the organization towards the end of the fighting in 1989 and pursued his vision of liberating all Muslim lands from foreign invaders. Governed by a Soviet-friendly regime who forcibly took political power, South Yemen came into bin Laden's sights. In addition to the men bin Laden sent into the mountains, Afghanistan veterans flooded into a newly unified Yemen with the tacit approval of President Salih, who reckoned these fighters could aid his plans to destabilize the government in the south and consolidate state power.

Johnsen here begins to establish the link between al-Qaeda, Yemen, and the U.S. Bin Laden had watched the ruling family in his home country of Saudi Arabia invite American forces to construct bases near the holiest sites in Islam during the Persian Gulf War, bases remaining well after the conflict ended and the pretext for their presence evaporated. Following the 1992 U.N. declaration authorizing the use of "any necessary means" to ameliorate the violence unfolding in nearby Somalia, the U.S. negotiated an agreement with Salih to use Aden, Yemen's large southern port city, as a base for operations in Africa. Alarmed by America's creeping presence and citing a *hadith*, or saying of the Prophet Muhammad, bin Laden ordered his operatives to attack American targets in Aden to "expel the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula". Although the attacks proved unsuccessful, they were al-Qaeda's first act of

aggression towards the United States.

Johnsen's book divides into three sections, (1) the rise of al-Qaeda in Yemen, (2 its disruption and suppression following the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 and the 9/11 attacks, and (3) resurgence and reorganization that produced the virulent affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula. Each chapter flows seamlessly into the next owing to a narrative that reads more like an engaging work of fiction than a history textbook. Johnsen's scope is perhaps overly precise, notably omitting certain pertinent events. The reader will find no mention of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in the chapter addressing this time period, and although the simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 are mentioned, details of their planning and execution are not examined. Relevance to Yemen is Johnsen's stringent criterion of inclusion. Every subplot and character coalesce to provide the reader a near complete picture of the particular story the author strives to tell.

A former Fulbright scholar who spent extended time in Yemen, Johnsen draws on on-the-ground expertise. Not the inside perspective of a diplomat or a former administration official, although he spoke to many such, The Last Refuge offers readers a dispassionate account of an obscure country drawn into global prominence as a result of al-Qaeda activity within its borders. Currently a PhD candidate at Princeton University, Johnsen contributes to many broadcast and print media outlets on Yemen and AQAP. He maintains a blog, Waq al-Waq as a forum for analysis of developments there.

In a country of 24 million, the United Nations estimates that approximately 10 million Yemenis go to sleep hungry every night. Thousands of children suffer acute malnutrition, unemployment is estimated at 22 percent, and sources of potable water are almost exhausted. Reductions in crucial fuel and food subsidies, required by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as conditions of financial assistance, have devastating effects for a nation in which half or more of the population lives on less than two dollars a day. The vast majority has long been neglected by a corrupt central government in Sanaa which has operated on patronage, rather than notions of equity or need. And although longtime president Ali Abdullah Salih has relinquished state power in a transitional plan brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council following sustained popular unrest in early 2011, experts warn that the resulting political instability has put Yemen at risk of collapsing into chaos.

In an impoverished nation where suffering appears nearly universal, Yemenis have been increasingly subjected to an additional and unique form of terror. Despite denouncing counterterrorism policies of his predecessor, President Obama escalated use of drone and missile strikes to assassinate high-level AQAP operatives in Yemen. While these attacks may achieve short-term objectives, the intelligence that informs U.S. operational decisions is often faulty. The result has been a growing number of civilian casualties, the implications of which were elaborated in recent Congressional testimony of a Yemeni journalist who attended high school in the U.S.

Errant strikes that kill civilians are generating new recruits for al-Qaeda, as Yemenis who do

not espouse the group's ideology seek an opportunity to avenge the deaths of friends and families. Farea al-Muslimi, who testified in place of his friend and fellow Yemeni Ibrahim Mothana, described the impact of a drone strike on his village, saying that the attack "accomplished in an instant" what years of al-Qaeda's anti-American propaganda had failed to do.[2] In prepared remarks, admitted into the Congressional record, Mothana confirmed this development by citing estimates from both Yemen's government and the United States, which indicate that al-Qaeda membership in the country increased from hundreds in 2009 to thousands in 2012. Muslimi rejected the Obama administration's assertions that missile strikes are ordered where capture isn't feasible, stating that the target of the strike was well known and could have been easily apprehended. In what portends a continuation, any constraints on the campaign deriving from sovereignty concerns were relaxed by Yemen's interim president, who granted the U.S. greater freedom in carrying out strikes. As the implications of developments in Yemen grow increasingly dire, Gregory Johnsen's book serves as a valuable resource for anyone seeking a better understanding of the country that has become al-Qaeda's last refuge.

Notes

[1] https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/closure-guantanamo-detention-facilities

[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/24/world/middleeast/judiciary-panel-hears-testimony-on-use-of-drones.html?_r=0

Michael Kropp *holds a B.A. in Political Science from Rutgers University. He currently works in the Pharmaceutical industry*