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CRITICISM IN THEORY

by

Jeffrey Allen Berg

B.A. University of California, Irvine 1971

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL PULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English



Jeffrey Allen Berg 1981

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

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CRITICISM IN THEORY

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the necessity, use, and limitations of theory within three "paradigms" of literary criticism: Murray Krieger's "contextual" formalism, David Bleich's "subjective paradigm", and Fredric Jameson's Marxist dialectics. Each chapter is divided into an exposition of metatheoretical coordinates (THE TEXT, THE WRITER, HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT, THE CRITIC, and HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC), the description of an abstract theory proposed by the critic, and my critique of its practical application in one published essay.

Krieger's work is based on an existential, paradoxical premise of the "fictionality" of all texts and the "truth" of literature's formal reflexivity. His theory of thematics, as applied to Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim, and Victory, identifies each novel's aesthetic quality with its ethical stance. Yet Krieger's conclusions require acceptance of a narrative perspective that is unwarranted by a close reading, and his "tragic vision" can be found aesthetically and ethically flawed, accommodating a "fatal" loyalty to imperialism and cultural chauvinism.

Bleich's conception of the critic's subjective production and validation of knowledge, for which group motives are the criterion of importance, gives literature a special value in

evoking motivating feelings and associations. My term paper for his seminar included an anecdotal "response" to D.H. Lawrence's "The Rocking-Horse Winner" which can be critically posed against Bleich's own. The self-protecting qualities of both responses illuminate theoretical tenets which maintain "normal" classroom practices, a standard of fluency in responses, and an uncritical attitude toward the institutional "role" of respondents.

Jameson's "dialectical criticism" follows Jean-Paul Sartre's in proposing a double-method of positivist analysis and hermeneutics, concluding in a moment of historical self-perception which involves the ideological efficacy of criticism itself. The style of Alain Robbe-Grillet and the second half of James Joyce's Ulysses can be explained using Sartre's theory of "seriality", in which relations to things appear to replace group dialectics. Proposing Joyce's "recuperation" of seriality in a post-narrative textual materialism, Jameson ignores formalist theories which explain the phenomenon as aesthetic, and bypasses Joyce's own treatment of such theoretical possibilities in "Scylla and Charybdis".

DEDICATION AND THANKS

Dedicated to Laura, without whom I wouldn't have written it.

My thanks go to the English Department, for financial support and a trip to Binghamton; to Paul Delany, who read drafts he shouldn't have had to; and to the many people who have talked with me.



#### EPIGRAPH

"Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws.--The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities.)

Of course, what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print. For their application is not presented to us so clearly."

Ludwig Wittgenstein

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Three Criticisms in Three Chapters

This thesis treats the work of three contemporary critical theorists: Murray Krieger, David Bleich, and Fredric Jameson. It examines their very different theories and methodological orientations, but also the common problem of their use of theory in criticism. In major books each has ambitiously delineated a "paradigm"--literary contextualism, subjectivism, Marxism--to create the conditions of possibility for a meaningful and effective critical practice. Yet the very fact of different possibilities, with incommensurable methods and concepts of literary objects, makes such practice a developing project rather than anyone's accomplishment. Thus, I have taken up the critics' own commitments to an explicit dialectics of theory and practice, as a responsible, systematic, and continual testing of critical concepts against the felt qualities of literary experience.

Because even basic theoretical assumptions are contentious, I have treated the three critics' work in separate chapters, each in its own terms, rather than from any privileged explanatory perspective. Each of these orientations can, in

fact, effectively reduce the others to its own advantage: instead of playing them off in this way, the structure and method of this thesis serve to describe alternatives which emerged during a recent "moment" of theoretical discourse, clarify the impressive scope and cogency of the criticisms they propose, and suggest the limits and difficulties of even their carefully "dialectical" practice. The discussion of each criticism is organized in terms of a relationship of components: "metatheory", theory, and practice.

1. Each chapter begins by explicating the epistemological, psychological, sociohistorical and linguistic assumptions that underly the use of relatively commonplace and fundamental critical concepts. A framework of such assumptions --acknowledged or not--is implicit in all forms of literary interpretation, functioning as what we can call "metatheory".<sup>1</sup> Some kind of metatheory now informs concepts of literary analysis which might once have seemed "given" or self-evident, but which have become problematical with the recent proliferation of theoretical possibilities. I have subdivided the initial discussion in each chapter to focus on crucial postulates defining THE TEXT, THE WRITER, HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT, THE CRITIC, and HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC. Broadly defined, these can accommodate all the kinds of knowledge normally generated in literary criticism: I am trusting the chapters themselves to

validate this somewhat programmatic assertion. As construed by many different critics they could not be today, terms to be taken for granted, as foundations for self-assured "approaches" to literature. They are problems, posed and resolved in the metatheory of each critic.

Thus, I have treated the work of critics for whom explicit attention to metatheoretical principles is a self-conscious imperative. Krieger's systematic metaphysics of poetic and critical "fictions", Bleich's "subjective paradigm", and Jameson's "metacritical" dialectics are contributions to contemporary criticism which may outweigh the critics' "practical" applications. Each has written a full length treatise on his metatheory and my project has been to summarize and organize these for the following purposes:

- to show how metatheory informs the critic's work with literary texts: how it defines the enabling concepts of the objects of criticism and the context of theory and practice;

- to consider several nominally familiar critical phenomena or concepts across the critics' different, incommensurable understandings of them;

- to show that the importance and the increasing diversity of metatheories have made critics self-conscious, and require a dialectical application of theory.

A metatheory is more than a received or selected system of hypotheses. Rather, as such, it affirms a predisposition to

experience literature in a particular way. In making explicit the assumptions which may lie tacit and unexamined in other critics' work, Krieger, Bleich and Jameson recognize that the premises and definitions which surface will effectively constitute the "phenomenon" of literature itself, at least for practical purposes.<sup>2</sup> This recognition entails the dialectic in each critic's work between theory and the notion of a "natural" or spontaneous perception of literature, and also redefines the traditional mode of polemic with other critical theories. Where fundamental assumptions about the reality of an object of criticism are in dispute, the assumption that the phenomenon itself is "the same" for two critics becomes a misleading, coercive, or merely frustrating assertion. Yet all three seek to provide a convincing framework for literary interpretation which can contain both the agreements and contradictions in these traditional concepts.

Before going into details of how the five categories of concepts structure my discussions and why they might be useful for considering other modes of criticism, it is worth noting that several theorists have approached the "field" of alternatives in similar ways<sup>3</sup>, but that my categories have been carefully named to recognize and accommodate more recent, perhaps unprecedented, complications. M.H. Abrams, for example, proposed the "Work", "Artist", "Universe" and "Audience" as what he called "coordinates" of criticism.<sup>4</sup> In 1955 Abrams could take



it for granted that critics would agree about what he meant by these terms, and that they constituted and mapped a single domain.

Although any reasonably adequate theory takes some account of all four elements, almost all theories...exhibit a discernible orientation toward one only. That is, a critic tends to derive from one of these terms his principal categories for defining, classifying, and analyzing a work of art, as well as the major criteria by which he judges its value.<sup>5</sup>

This remains a valuable observation: I found that Krieger's could be fairly characterized as "A Theory of the Text", Bleich's as "A Theory of the Critic", and Jameson's as "A Theory of Historical Circumstances". But it is crucial to my discussion that Krieger's TEXT and Bleich's CRITIC and Jameson's HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES are not coordinates of the "same" domain or field of literary criticism: for example, Krieger's definition of a text requires concepts of the critic and history which are largely unacceptable to either Bleich or Jameson. Such disputes about the metaphysical status of the text, the meaning of history, the writer's intention, or the critic's ideal response are not merely esoteric: they entail radically different attitudes toward traditional literary study and different priorities for the future of the discipline. They reflect basically opposed values and ideologies. Thus, Abrams' nomenclature presupposed a universal liberal humanism and aestheticism which has now become theoretically (and ideologically) problematical.

The advent of radically different metatheoretical assumptions, especially structuralist reassessments of the language of criticism itself, obliges critics to rethink biases in the earlier theoretical concepts. The concept of the uniquely artistic "work", with its implication of a hierarchical literary canon, has opened to concepts of THE TEXT in which the literary work's potential completeness, objectivity, and autonomy from other texts, are questionable. Bleich and Jameson propose other ways to think of a text. The "artist" or author, connoting the originality of an "act of creation", may be redefined or even revalued in the larger notion of THE WRITER, to recognize what is common rather than unique about the biographical subject, and to differentiate a "persona" in discourse from the living person (however related). Abrams' "Universe" implied some timeless ontology, possibly a "human condition", which tended to discount historical changes and thus the ideological function of any of the "facts" our universe-referring texts contain or represent. To account for recent conceptions of extrinsic context I categorized problems of HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, which could then be divided between those of the objects of historical analysis, THE WRITER AND TEXT, and those of its subject, THE CRITIC. In recent theories history is no longer necessarily considered a series of variations on the human condition, or even a developing continuum or mechanism. By dividing HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES between a "written" past and a "critical" present

I have tried to open the discussion to other ways of conceiving time, potentially including radical and unexplained discontinuities. Finally Abrams assumed that THE CRITIC was, or represented, an ideal of the "Audience". Today the relationship of academic criticism to even acceptably "literate" readers outside the university is a problem. In this I am referring both to the technocratic specialization of a class of professionals and to the way a professional role informs or contradicts different notions of the reading subject, as a potentially "whole" woman or man, or even as the "decoded" subjectivity of recent radical psychoanalysis.<sup>6</sup>

The five categories are meant to contain and "coordinate" the discussions of very different criticisms, and in principle could apply as well to other theoretical approaches and to criticisms which deny or obscure metatheoretical problems. Yet the coordinates do not preclude the attempts of Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson to self-consciously define and dialectically question their domains of critical activity. Instead, the common terms "text", "writer", etc. pose strategically naive questions about how students and other scholars gain access to a critical system or discourse, of the scope of the ideological commitment this involves, and of the potential resolution of the crisis in the language of criticism.

2. The second component of each chapter is a discussion of a literary theory used by the critic: Krieger's "thematics",

Bleich's "subjective response", and Jameson's application of Sartre's "seriality". Here I use the concept "theory" more narrowly than in the catchall sense it has come to have in literary studies, where it combines the premises and values of metatheory with the specific sense here, of a hypothesis about literary phenomena, an analytical formula or model. The need to specify was determined by the status Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson give to their own uses of such theories: as abstract, heuristic, potentially inadequate, and subject to critique. The metatheory of each critic defines his method of applying theory, the truth-value of knowledge produced with it, and a self-qualifying phenomenological critique of the limits of theory.

This emphasis on the priority of metatheory, methodology, and critique is an important, even "revolutionary" change in attitude from the previous generation of literary theorists. For the New Critics, Northrop Frye, psychoanalytic or Marxist critics of the 1940's and 1950's the metatheoretical coordinates of criticism were recognized and defined more or less as preliminary to the important task of legitimizing specific theoretical models: e.g. the paradoxical structure of metaphor, Frye's aesthetic cosmology, psycho-biographical symbolism, or socioeconomic "reflection". Metatheory was thus a position to be taken rather than a continuing and contradictory project, and the main purpose of theorizing (in the large sense) was to

articulate a field of literary knowledge with a priori credibility and importance, especially with respect to scientific knowledge. Thus a Kantian humanism, empiricism, or dialectical materialism could be posited and almost forgotten while specific formulas or models were developed and applied. By contrast, I am contending that Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson are less interested in particular theories they propose than in their variously qualified and contextualized modes of application. For this reason my expositions in the "Theory" section of each chapter are somewhat briefer than those in "Metatheory" and "Criticism in Practice". A specific theory for a particular interpretive problem is not the end of theoretical criticism, but rather an extension of the priorities and strategies which emerge in the larger context.

3. The emphasis on Criticism in Practice in this thesis might be controversial at a time when theoretical issues, in the abstract and sometimes without allusion to specific literary works, have become subjects of coursework and publication in themselves. While the reaction against "practical criticism" in North America has sometimes seemed like avante garde snobbery and ambition, it should also be associated with a needed reassessment of academic priorities: the theoretical and ethical importance of teaching, the inundation of trivial and badly-thought-out researches, the need for a coherent and purposeful context within which academic literary study can

proceed. Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson can be considered part of the movement to introduce theoretical awareness and direction to practical criticism, but all three try to preserve forms of practice that do not require every student to be a theoretician. For example, we will see that all three critics adapt rarified "structuralist" concepts with a characteristically North American, pragmatic attitude toward intellectual work and the training process for it.

I think it is accurate to compare the kinds of theoretical framework proposed by Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson with the structure of American "normal science" described by Thomas Kuhn in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.<sup>7</sup> They seem at once to suggest the advantages of an intellectual community, sharing explicit goals and procedures, and to caution against the constraints on permissible thought, action, and even feeling which this specialization demands. Kuhn's hypothesis is that any science is governed by a "disciplinary matrix" comprised of "paradigms". This is a flexible conception of the structures of belief which define a scientific community: Kuhn uses it globally to describe pan-scientific gestalts (e.g. the Copernican revolution, relativity theory) or to define specifics of a given field's metatheory, theory and practice. For Kuhn the key to the continuity and progress of scientific paradigms is the production and use of their "exemplars", i.e. the normative experiences of doing science in the lab or field, reading and

composing published contributions, and classroom instruction. Citing Michael Polanyi's Personal Knowledge and a pragmatist tradition going back to Wittgenstein, Kuhn proposes that learning to work in terms of paradigmatic practical experience is the way in which theoretical abstractions become meaningful, so that a student in effect learns to "see" phenomena in a way shared by colleagues but limited to the discipline.\* Such exemplary practice is not only reducible to the science's metatheoretical postulates, but also constitutes the testing of the shared "reality" of them:

When I speak of knowledge embedded in shared exemplars, I am not referring to a mode of knowing that is less systematic or less analyzable than knowledge embedded in rules, laws, or criteria of identification. Instead I have in mind a manner of knowing which is misconstrued if reconstructed in terms of rules that are just abstracted from exemplars and thereafter function in their stead.

...To the extent, of course, that individuals belong to the same group and thus share education, language, experience, and culture, we have good reason to suppose that their sensations are the same. How else are we to understand the fulness of their communication and the community of their behavioral responses to their environment? They must see things, process stimuli, in much the same ways. But where the differentiation or specialization of groups begins, we have no similar evidence for the immutability of sensation. Mere parochialism, I suspect, makes us suppose that the route from stimuli to sensation is the same for the members of all groups.

Returning now to exemplars and rules, what I have been trying to suggest, in however preliminary a fashion, is this. One of the fundamental techniques by which the members of a group, whether an entire culture or the specialist's sub-community within it, learn to see the same things when confronted with the same stimuli is by being shown examples of situations that their predecessors in the group have already learned to

see as like each other and as different from other sorts of situations...'

As "paradigms" of literary study become more precise and exclusive it seems useful to consider whether reading, discussing, and writing criticism is not more constitutive of education and further criticism than the literary texts themselves. In one way or another Krieger, Bleich and Jameson acknowledge that critical interpretation does not grow directly out of primary textual reading any more than horticulture is an immediate consequence of the perception of plants. Yet the laboratory-induced sense of direct perception is precisely what has facilitated science's authority and unimpeded progress in modern times: an intellectual community comes to see plants as horticultural objects. Similarly, the abstract formulations of Krieger, Bleich and Jameson, and the modes of practical interpretation they propose, must have a quality of immediate and visceral experience if they are to be convincing and important. As we will see, these are different and incompatible paradigms of practice and experience, but for all three there is a crucial dialectic of the student-critic's trained, professional perspective and a more general "human" or social self-perception, and this dialectic must be engaged at the surface of critical practice.

I have chosen to explore this dialectical possibility by critically re-examining an essay by each theoretician on works



of narrative fiction. The interpretive essay remains the dominant form of critical publication and classroom assignment, and apart from its intrinsic interest serves to authorize and legitimize theoretical departures. (This has been a consideration of mine, as well, and the three critiques might also be read in the respective contexts of Conrad, Lawrence, and Joyce criticism). The three practical essays have a roughly similar place in the development of each critic's oeuvre: each was written in the period preceding a major "theoretical" monograph, and published before it. Each interpretation exists in an explicitly defined relation to abstract theoretical principles, and is referred to by the critic as an example of successful application. Each "exemplar" was thus chosen for its consistency with the larger theoretical program of the critic, and has qualities which I mark as typical of his subsequent writing.

In addition to being appropriate for each critic, the three essays share certain concerns which focus and connect my three critiques. These include themes of cultural alienation and extremity, the relationship of knowledge and ethics, and the sociohistorical implications of professional success. They also include the technical or formal exigencies of a narrative perspective, and the structure and ideological function of its mediation. Again, while the critics have radically different conceptions of these problems, according to their different

premises, common concerns indicate another level of similarity and sympathetic interest among them. These are also matters of my personal interest and they suggest directions for my continuing study. This subjective involvement does not subvert the analysis: rather it is in this way, through exemplars that answer to a current interest and aptitude, that these or other theories of literature will become important. Through them a "way of seeing" or otherwise perceiving literary objects becomes a way of experiencing the world and one's work in it.

#### Premises and Constraints

It should be clear that this thesis must answer to the same critique it proposes, i.e. its three chapters are practical criticisms, and I have just described the theory, or set of theories, used to write them. This work entails metatheory as well, and in the context of the radical alternatives I have been describing, the premises here are as important for what they have precluded as for what they have allowed me to produce.

I have tried to employ a form of dialectical criticism in this writing, involving both a positive moment of descriptive analysis and a negative delimitation and critique, but have not "synthesized" the work of the three critics and do not claim to have superseded their methods. Rather, concepts of their critical texts, academic personae, and our historical circumstances are defined precisely so that I can work within

the frame of reference of each, sympathetically adopting his critical vocabulary and method. In each case this is to follow and "experience" the dialectic as one among other potential members of a critical community. My status as a potential critic at the beginning of a new decade is significant and problematical in this thesis, in theory and in practice, subjectively and objectively.

It was ~~the~~ confusing diversity and apparent incommensurability of critical languages which initially led me to this project, and I began with an impartial, non-referential conception of texts and discourse for purposes of description and exposition. This has become a common strategy in recent years, with both European and Anglo-American traditions behind it. The source is Wittgenstein's later philosophy, in which a word's "meaning" is its "use" in a particular, rule-governed "language game". While this is not a whimsical or cynical notion of the meaning of critical concepts, it certainly is pragmatic and "pluralistic" in ways I feel obliged to qualify later. The value of this contextual concept of meaning is that works of criticism need not be evaluated with respect to an assumed, ontic "referent"--a primary text, author's real intention, or other standard. In the plurality of critical approaches such assumptions are simply paradigmatic. A critical text cannot, in principle, be a representation or repetition or picture of

ulterior objects, but rather defines and constitutes such objects itself, in terms of its own rules of use. Criticism is "the experience" of what it defines literature to be, and I can understand Krieger, Bleich and Jameson or other critics by learning a critical/theoretical language and its "rules".

By carefully describing and engaging each criticism in turn, it is possible to follow the dialectical logic each proposes, using it myself, in a form of dialectical criticism that does not alter basic premises or impose alien reductions. Each is a professionally contained, ideologically limited experience (as the critics themselves admit), but whether aesthetic, intersubjective, or political it is vividly lived and shared among those who have access to the discourse. Because the criticisms I have chosen purport to be dialectical, the polemical critique I begin in each discussion has its point of departure in the critic's own frame of reference. I have been concerned to understand how Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson can accomplish the practical, teachable critique each has, in his way, assumed as a theoretical imperative. Beyond this, I have looked for what the constraints on it might be.

My knowledge of the three critics as biographical subjects, as "people", is subsumed in considering their academic writings and activities. This is a professional "courtesy" conventionally extended to other critics (but not to literary writers), which

need not, and likely ought not, be taken for granted. The convention of professionalism was complicated here by my personal experiences as a student of Krieger and Bleich, especially since the "subjectivity" of any writer or critic is overtly in question in the latter's method. We will see that professionalism prevails even for Bleich, however, and here it is only feasible to note a few interesting parallels in the three critics' careers. All three worked with respected, even pioneering predecessors, and wrote exploratory "practical" criticism in the sixties. Each has developed his perspective in some dialectical relation to the dominant New Critical formalism. The three produced their major "metatheoretical" expositions in the early or mid-seventies, setting an agenda for their continuing work. All are currently publishing and speaking to issues in terms that are consistent with the major works. Each considers himself part of a contemporary movement, and promotes a cultural ethic shared by other critics.

It would be interesting to consider these parallels, and differences, among the critics, outside my methodological limit of their textual production. Even within the constraints of professionalism this might include styles of teaching, status in their home departments, choice of journals and public forums, charismatic qualities and the fates of graduates who work with them. It is probably safe to assume that different modes of literary study appeal to and encourage particular psychological

orientations (in the way Thomas Kuhn found science to attract and cultivate "puzzle-solvers"). A psychological study of successful young critics who share so many concerns but approach them so differently would suggest a great deal about what theoretical affiliation, in the abstract, means and how it feels. But such analysis is outside the parameters of my project here, which is to remain within the critic's own explicit contexts. Krieger, Bleich and Jameson are, for reasons they give, subjects of the professional discourse; This is a methodological constraint which determines practice and an ethical stance within it: their object is not to bring "real life" into the university or to relinquish or deny institutional authority; rather, each attempts to self-consciously pose and use his status in the university, as limited or alienated as it might be, to good effect. It is a constraint I have affirmed for the purpose of this thesis.

Along with the specifications of a textual analysis and a professionalized concept of its subjects, this thesis is limited in its treatment of the social and historical situation of criticism in the 1970s. New forms of theory appeared in North American universities along with the issues and problems that required them. Scholars needed to deal with the threatened decline of the humanities in influence, enrollment, and budgets; the new limits to the apprentice-master-reference relationship

in post-graduate study; increasing demands for an interdisciplinary and functionalist orientation; the demand for a new curriculum and/or new justifications for the traditional curriculum. At this level theories are attempts to manage and coordinate the interests and demands of students, faculty, and budget-minded administrators. We will see how the three critics' approaches to textuality, subjectivism, and critical sociology indicate new and urgent uses for literature and new relationships with other branches of the humanities and human sciences. They evaluate, create, or accommodate new fields of study (foreign literatures, women's, children's and popular literatures, interdisciplinary texts) and new institutional demands (student activism, reevaluation of publication versus teaching, emphasis on seminar over lecture, the crisis in "literacy" and composition) in ways that question or antagonize the assumptions of traditional scholarship, but also provide a new context and justification for that scholarship.

Moreover, the sheer diversity of theoretical approaches seems to have fragmented the "field" of literary studies in the process of redeeming it. In the aggregate of theories it has become difficult to evaluate or understand other critics' work, or even one's own, apart from the assertion or denial of linguistic, philosophical, and other metatheoretical premises. Critical dialogues break down often, not only because of errors or confusion, but in stalemates of basically incompatible

concepts or interpretive priorities. We can somewhat polemically compare the crisis in theory to the inflationary spiral: individual critics deal with the multiplication of theories by attempting to synthesize ever more elaborate or precise or conciliatory positions, which only seem to further increase and devalue interpretive activity and the "meanings" it produces.

Explanation and description are the two classic, alternative methodological orientations of knowledge, and the critics I treat are each concerned to implement them, dialectically, in this situation. Explanation affirms the causal and determining priority of one theoretical factor over others, and Krieger's existentialism, Bleich's psychoanalytic concept of the subject, and Jameson's dialectical materialism posit different agencies and different solutions for the crisis we are in. Each thus proposes a disciplinary ethic and a polemic, and accommodates the desires of fellow critics to participate in a purposeful and effective community activity. The limit of this must be, of course, a tendency to dogmatism and irresponsible reductions of antagonists. Alternatively, description begins with the assumption of a state of disjuncture and diversity, and considers the situation from a hypothetically detached analytical perspective. A rigorous descriptive method, which defines itself as heuristic and provisional, should be open to diverse details without prejudging their relation to each other or their relative importance. This is a pragmatic orientation



with tendencies as various as Wittgenstein's linguistic philosophy, the American "pluralism" of the Chicago School, and Michel Foucault's "archaeology" of discourse.<sup>10</sup> In either its conservative ("pluralist") or radical (Foucauldian) modes, a pure descriptive methodology accedes to rather than engaging the crisis of fragmentation and proliferation, and may even welcome it.

Working through my own interests and initial confusions, I have followed Krieger, Bleich and Jameson in exploring their respective methods or continuing criticism. Each has had to come to terms with the contradictions of explanation and description, partisanship and pragmatism, in the alternative paradigms of liberal humanism, subjectivism and Marxism. Hypothetically each of the three critical theories reconciles the contradictions in its own terms, projecting dialectical "syntheses" in a redemptive aestheticism, personal adjustment, and a sociopolitical program, respectively. Their strategies for this, like their basic premises, are intrinsically convincing but different and incompatible. Thus I faced the same methodological problem in considering them: I could anticipate and align with the explanatory reduction of the others by my favorite, or I could simply "present" them as equivalent alternatives with an attitude of self-congratulating pluralist appreciation. Instead I have tried to subscribe to and extend each mode of criticism in turn, and to implement the dialectical critique in the way

each projects it: whether this is possible is the crucial question for each of them, and for this thesis.

My work here describes and exemplifies the problems of recent history, rather than explaining them in the existential, psychosocial or socioeconomic terms the theories themselves make available. If some of my current priorities have surfaced in the discussions which follow, these are in the "Criticism in Practice" and are reducible within the critic's system. As such, my interests become analogues for the divergent concerns any other critic might bring to the problem of theory.

Like Krieger, Bleich and Jameson, I consider my status as a critical writer to be that of a professionally codified persona. I consider this a provisional limit, but not necessarily an obstacle: following the three critics, I hope my text indicates how a particular engagement of life in literary experience can lead to professional choices and accomplishments. This does not deny the "subjectivity" of my thesis, since this work largely recapitulates my education and can be read as a metaphor for many of my "institutional" relationships, e.g. in a dialectical but hopeful relation to an apparently disoriented discipline. Psychoanalytic mechanisms of identification, projection, introjection, repression, or transference could be accurately imputed to it, and could generate a great deal of phenomenological speculation about "literary theory" in the

explanation of my choices of subject and method. Instead, my critique of Bleich's subjective paradigm will have to suffice as a rationale for the stance I have taken, which is to see my work as a step in the formation of an academic career, conforming to a discourse and mode of debate current among the scholars I know. For example, rather than recuperating the enlightened and exhilarating living-room conversation with my father, and how I then had to straighten the garage out by myself, the subject of my discourse here is a professional concern for meaningful and substantial dialectic, agreement, and mutual endeavor.

My personal interests and motives might, finally, be subject to generalization in the context of a larger contemporary concern for questions of theory and methodology among students of literature. Such a study would attempt to assess the functional importance of these three modes of criticism from some polemical perspective on contemporary historical circumstances and the future of the discipline. Instead I have assumed that it is not yet possible to do more than speculate on this, since we are still in the conjuncture of circumstances that gave rise to the theories themselves. Of course, we can also use these theories as best we can, trying to maintain a radical awareness of their place and time. In this light, there are important common values and priorities I have looked for in the work of the three critics, however differently

each has sought to implement them:

Comprehensive scope. The "structural" conception of the relationship of metatheory, theory and practice suggests that it is possible to have a coherent, yet open, overview of what one is doing in any act of critical writing or teaching. This seems crucial if critics are to understand each other, use concepts responsively and productively, to participate in a mutual endeavor. This is an explicit concern of the theorists in question. All three "paradigms" effectively account for and evaluate the gamut of work being done in literary studies, in a system of definitions and method which can appeal to the interests and priorities of many other critics. This prospect of total theory may be a provisional "fiction", a subjective projection, or a Utopian glimmer, but has the appeal of a way out of confusion.

Delimitation. If comprehensiveness is a virtue, megalomania is not. The seeming paradox in the theoretical projects of recent years has been that of articulating the length and breadth of a critical "field" while knowing that there are other, incommensurable ways to do it. For theoreticians, this has required a mobile orientation with reference to other or antagonistic criticisms, and a continual revision of the boundaries of analysis and interpretation. Krieger's reliance on "fiction", Bleich's on the emotional bases of thought, and Jameson's on "ideology" are methodologically similar

affirmations of the limits to knowledge and claims of "truth". At the same time, positing their work as provisional and heuristic, these concepts explicate limitations as such. The method of juxtaposing their criticisms must serve to delimit and qualify my work here.

Practice. The following chapters attempt to clarify how "practical criticism" tacitly or explicitly answers to theory, and the reverse. Krieger's rationalization of literary "formalism", Bleich's use of student "responses", and Jameson's theoretical dialectic all define and develop a shared frame of reference for literary interpretation which can orient the work of students who are not theoreticians. The cost of practical efficacy, however, can be difficulty in maintaining the self-conscious, dialectical perspective that theory was supposed to provide. In sorting this accessible mode of criticism out from the critics' more abstract work, the three "Criticisms in Practice" use and possibly extend the practical analysis of literary texts in order to test its effective relationship to theory. Such work is no more than a form of accountability to the professional community with which each critic hopes to work.

Critique. Writing and studying literature has come to have a critical and even subversive relation to institutional modes of thought and communication. The decision to focus our intelligence on literature implies, in itself, a negation of much of what contemporary academic scholarship calls knowledge.

This negation is bad only if it leads into the arcane or a noddering delight in the archaic, and it is good only if the alternatives opened up in literary experience can be made accessible to students, and mediated in their relation to the dominant social forms. This latter is the critical function of theory, and it implies an internal, active critique of the institution of literary criticism, which can no longer rely on literature "itself" for either the credibility or importance of its work. In contradictory, and very problematical, ways the potential for such a critical, ethical self-consciousness is common to Krieger, Bleich, and Jameson. My experience, exploration, and accommodation of their differences in this thesis is a self-standing critical declaration: the difficulty, and apparent arbitrariness, of our choices and commitments is an oppressive cultural condition.

Change. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, the point is to change it". It should be clear that the modes of theoretical understanding embodied in the following discussions come after the fact of profound historical/cultural changes, and that this work serves strategic purposes for or against certain directions change might take. This self-assessment is the most difficult that criticism has to make.

## II. Murray Krieger: A THEORY OF THE TEXT

### THE TEXT

Murray Krieger is aware of the epistemological paradox in his claim for both critical objectivity and the "fictional" quality of all texts. He identifies this contradiction with the troubling necessity of his world view: an existentialist's sense of the contingency of the empirical world, the false assumptions and antinomies which constitute it.<sup>11</sup> Loss of faith in the self-evidence of ordinary experience or even scientific fact makes necessary and valuable a special study of poetic "fiction" based on the unique experience and mode of being of a work of art.<sup>12</sup> Thus, for Krieger there are two kinds of texts: those which purport to represent or articulate a prior order of experience, and those which create or imagine their own intrinsic worlds. The value of ordinary or referential texts in "representing" the world is vitiated by the limits of conventional linguistic forms. Our real lives are too complex and confused to be simply "retold" in language. The literary text, however, can be wrought to aesthetic resolution and perfect adequacy of form to content, making possible a complex and authentic existential vision which can not be conveyed in

any other way.<sup>13</sup>

Krieger's interpretive method is, we shall see, an extension of New Criticism, but it is philosophically grounded in a subjective Idealism which can be traced back through existential humanism and phenomenology to Coleridge and Kant. For Krieger there are none of New Criticism's naive ontological guarantees.<sup>14</sup> Literature is held to draw subjective awareness into the form of the aesthetically perceived object, a man-made "fiction" which can be known certainly and contemplatively in a way that real life cannot. This closed, self-serving text of our aesthetic perception is an act of Husserlian intentionality: first, a function of our subjective will to be absorbed in a fictional world, and then an act of critical recuperation and hermeneutical understanding.<sup>15</sup> The "objective" existence of the literary text and its enabling form is thus a phenomenological fiction necessary for criticism. Krieger's metaphysics makes this fictionality the defining condition of human understanding and experience. The sad truth is that no text can fully represent underlying reality (whether historical, social or psychological), and the poetic truth reveals that representation itself is the only object of conscious experience, and that it can be sufficient and even beautiful. By means we will explore, Krieger proposes that literary texts make the relativity of empirical truth known, even while establishing a privileged and absolute ontology of their own.



Krieger's theorizing has always taken the form of a dialectical polemic, successively against the Chicago School, Freudian and Marxist criticism, George Poulet's phenomenology, Structuralism, and lately the post-structuralist deconstructive methods.<sup>16</sup> Typically he attempts to establish the theoretical necessity for an autonomous and unique poetic text by undercutting whatever reductive forms are imputed to it by the competing methodology. "Extrinsic" criticism of literature is always found to have a dubious fit to the rich complexity of either lived or literary experience.

In Theory of Criticism (1976) Krieger reconsidered the dialectic of literature and criticism in the context of French theories of discourse, and especially Jacques Derrida's linguistic critique, the "grammatological" deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence.<sup>17</sup> As with other apparently antagonistic theories, Krieger attempts here (with surprising facility and success) to "co-opt" the other by acknowledging and then incorporating his premises. Krieger gleefully accedes to the condition that absence of the thing represented, the determinate "signified", is the defining condition in language.<sup>18</sup> (In structuralist terms the bar between the signifier and the signified (S/s) at once dissociates the medium from its object and makes possible a rational and controlling world-vision in the form of the system of signification.) Krieger agrees with Derrida that the reasonable self-evidence of empirical-deductive

discourse, which seems to contain the phenomenal world, will dissolve under examination into a paradox-ridden veil of tautologies, reductions and conceptual aporias.

Yet poetic textuality acknowledges and uses the problematics of absence and circularity and paradox to fashion, in striking distinction from other language, an object made of signifiers in and for themselves.<sup>19</sup> Unlike discourses which can be deconstructed, to show their dependence on the form of writing, poetic texts are invested with an aesthetic form that is proclaimed as artifice, detached as fiction from the real, and therefore reveals its own status as writing. Poetry is then self-deconstructing discourse. In this sense Krieger can say that the dualistic relationship S/s can be reunified as an object poem which is miraculously present in the material signifier (S) itself, now a metaphor for the fiction of perfect mediation of existential circumstance. Precisely because it does not pretend to mediate existential reality the poetic text transcends the problematics of the absence of its referent:

...the poet forces the word to deny its emptiness and behave in a way that leaps the bounds of ordinary discourse, turning signs into things. Unlike what structuralists teach us to expect, this signifier, having turned its arbitrary relation to its signified into an inevitable one, has constituted itself as a signifier filled with meanings it alone has created.<sup>20</sup>

Poetry foregrounds the formal constraint that other discourse denies with the claim of transparency. Thus Derrida's unravelling of the pretence of discourse can only vindicate

poetry's own denial of the worldly truth, to necessitate the truth of its own being. "A poem should not mean/but be".

The relationship of poetic to referential discourse goes beyond this ontological reversal, and must be examined in each work in detail. Every poem must be read as a language which is semantically, grammatically, etc. common with referential language, but fashioned into a self-consciously structured fiction according to the mimetic criteria of its culture. By freeing reference from the outside world the language is at least potentially freed from larger systems of signification, their conventions and platitudes. By transforming the medium of vision into an immediate object of vision, the poetic act is of paramount ethical importance.<sup>21</sup> It implies human freedom, if only in the freedom to invent a fictional transcendence of cultural constraints. This freedom within the intentional constraints of an aesthetic order, is very different from Derrida's liberating notion of the "freeplay" of discourse, i.e. as a subversive moment of logical dissolution. Criticism cannot find "freeplay" in a poetic text, but rather an ordered unity of every detail and semic level, which is possible in fiction only to the extent that it is "free" from the embarrassing exigencies of life.<sup>22</sup> For a modern critic, this intentional freedom at the aesthetic heart of the poem must be earned by hard reading and a continual answering of the critic's theoretical assumptions to the text "itself".

The premise of the difference of poetic textuality returns Krieger to a New Critical emphasis on poetic unity, the autonomy of discrete works, and formal analysis.<sup>23</sup> Paradoxically, however, the limit of critical practice is that the very theoretical concepts which refer to the specific ontology of the literary text become questionable fictions by their own rule.<sup>24</sup> Because the critic is not a poet, we will see, he is doomed to paraphrase the terms of the fiction in a discourse which must be humbly aware of its contingent and subservient status. (The "parasitic" relation of criticism to primary text is rejected by Derridean critics, cf. Hillis Miller).<sup>25</sup> Thus criticism can only circumscribe, providing a way into the text's visionary center. As a critical project, this attempt to articulate the inexpressible is in many ways analogous to and derived from a historical problematic of narrative which we will take up in Krieger's discussion of Joseph Conrad: Conrad's Marlow is not only a protagonist of plot action and the source of its containing narrative, he is an interpreter/critic as well.<sup>26</sup> Krieger's special interest in this multivalent textuality, and the ideology which is its thematic content, can lead us to a critique of the practice of experiencing a text as if having lived it, and the tragic subversion of mediation and the rational order which follows from that.<sup>27</sup>

As a category or "coordinate" of criticism, Krieger's literary TEXT supersedes any other text, so that the value of

information about a WRITER, HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, or CRITIC as a subject of discourse can be valuable only to the extent that it contributes to the working unity of the "aesthetic fiction". We will see that this imperative determines Krieger's notions of each of these concepts, universalizing and fictionalizing them in a paradigm of textual function. Even the subjective response of the critic is bracketted and imputed to the literary text for the duration of reading, to become a compelled normative attitude of aesthetic contemplation. Finally, as the critic works to earn objective clarification of his reading, his effort becomes a project of the complex humanist ethic, an attempt to share a privileged vision with other initiates.

#### THE WRITER

Where extrinsic criticism would reduce the writer to a psychological or sociological context, giving the text a "rhetorical" function with respect to the writer's conscious or unconscious intentions, for Krieger the act of writing is as autotelic as that of reading: the text is an end in itself whose completion is an occasion of totalized comprehension and aesthesis.<sup>28</sup> This is not an empirical conception of a writer. In keeping with New Critical tenets a writer is not a particular personality or speaker for a particular sociohistorical class so much as a kind of heuristic. He engages certain raw experiences

✓  
which are specific to his subjectivity and culture, certainly, and with literary conventions that determine literary historicity, but these details are subordinated and transformed in an essentially timeless and ubiquitous writerly situation: Krieger's paradigm of THE TEXT.<sup>29</sup> All good writers are eventually preoccupied with the inefficacy of their culture's means of expression, as the limits of convention conflict with the commitment to unique and anti-conventional vision.

The WRITER as such interests Krieger only for the TEXT: extrinsic information which is referred to in the aesthetic context should not (in good art will not) distract from the essential mode of literary interpretation.<sup>30</sup> Thus for Krieger's version of intrinsic explication the "genetic fallacy" is not ultimately that biography is unavailable or specious so much as that it is simply not important or useful in comprehending the real object of criticism: the reconstitution of life in the text.<sup>31</sup>

Each element behind and before the work--a biographical character or incident, a neurotic obsession, a self-conscious urge, a literary source, a philosophical idea or social-political position--is an inadequate measure of its transformed appearance in the work, even where it may be recognizable.<sup>32</sup>

We may recall that the New Criticism developed among poet-scholars as a problematics of writerly craft. In Krieger's abstracted version, the writer's creative urgency and unformed experience confront the stale rigors of conventional linguistic

and previous poetic forms. Out of this perennial struggle, with its frustrations and compromises, aesthetic form emerges and the text is fashioned:

So the mythic creative act proceeds. As the poet attempts to transcribe his intended poem (that is, his grasp of the prepoetic entity insofar as it is an entity), he encounters the recalcitrance of his medium together with the resistance of his developing work itself as it seeks to maintain it own integrity, often against his initial intentions.<sup>33</sup>

In effect, THE TEXT, supplied by THE WRITER, with raw materials and motives, intends and writes itself as the aesthetic criteria overrule the rhetorical or communicative intentions of the writing subject.<sup>34</sup> This myth of aesthetic self-determination of the text links the New Critical tradition with the French theories of discourse accommodated in Theory of Criticism. By the time a work is finished any referential function has been superseded by the text's self-recognition of circular and fictionalizing propensities, a psychological problem has been transformed into one of poetic craft. The subjective experience has been universalized in the formal encounter with the medium, so that in great art the writer's expressive passion is controlled in objective, contemplative recognition of an irreducible human condition.<sup>35</sup>

To accommodate the phenomenon of aesthetic vision, Krieger's conception of subjectivity becomes something like a linguistic "shifter"<sup>36</sup>: the controlling intentionality moves alternately between THE WRITER and THE CRITIC, but is finally

understood as a function entailed by the system of mediation (TEXT) itself. The aesthetic is a transcendent, "objective" imperative. This displacement of the question of intention informed Krieger's polemics against George Poulet in the late 1960's and tacitly aligns him with structuralists who posit the reader as "producer" of the text.<sup>37</sup> But unlike the structuralists, Krieger's concept of the intentional fiction of the poetic text makes it different from and irreducible to alternative discourse<sup>38</sup>; rather it is a closed and perfect vision of a world, and can be interpreted as whole and perfect.

The approach has as its ground the fact that the interpreter's apprehension of the object is an intentional act: he intends it as an interpretable aesthetic object. The potential perfection of the form of each poem--each "book" --which the post-Aristotelian or post-Kantian critic assumes (as his fiction), allows the possibility of the complete interpretation of itself, though it explicitly interprets nothing else.<sup>39</sup>

This critical intentionality dominates Krieger's concept of THE WRITER so much that the act of composition is not invoked as a source or authority for interpretive meaning, but is rather evaluated in order to praise or blame the work's aesthetic quality.<sup>40</sup> In the reading of Joseph Conrad's Victory we will see that this critical imperative ultimately entails a moral judgment of the writer, based on the premise that aesthetic perfection both depends on and constitutes a universal ethical vision.<sup>41</sup>



### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT

Historical discourse, like any other attempt to represent or record a facet of lived experience, suffers from the inevitable failure of language to contain real life.\*<sup>2</sup> Conversely, poetic fiction goes beyond the fiction of "history" by being, and formally incorporating, the limits of what discourse can be, i.e. itself. Thus, although both historical discourse and poetic writing do reflect the circumstances of their production and reference, the crucial difference is that the writing of history claims responsibility and authority over the reality beyond its text, some complex of "empirical" events. This impossible premise is the "fiction" of history, involving it in problems of reduction and proclusion of meaning and in an inevitable ideological function, ~~mediating~~ mediating any ultimate claim to truth.\*<sup>3</sup>

Yet it is true that in its patterned reductions, its interpretive consistency, every historical model has something of self-referentiality about it, however doggedly we think we are holding it accountable to the "evidence", its raw data. Each systematic model is constructed out of, and in response to, its own forms, its reductions, its historical commonplaces, though these commonplaces do claim responsibility to the data. And this responsibility marks the point at which the historical structure, however it approaches self-referentiality, differs from the poetic structure as the formal tradition from Aristotle defines it. As this responsibility attests, it is a difference between the two "materialities", the empirical and the illusionary.\*\*

While there is no doubt about the relevance of literature as a cultural reference for the study of history, its historical importance as literature is not exhausted or even properly addressed in empiricist studies. Moreover, the fictional materiality of the text, the objective presence of the self-referring textual artefact, can substitute for the lost presence of the truth of history.\*5

...we can value fiction because of its power, as our metaphorical truth for now, to give us a vision of equivalence and oppositions that less free disciplines must disdain. The deviations and transformations make the poem discontinuous with the other kinds of discourse that seek to contain that reality. Yet it supplies the forms that become our norms to frame that reality. Far from being a repository of available ideologies of its period or demonstration of our historical knowledge about its period, the poem can become a newly constitutive word, a measure of the inadequacy of our older words, those historical formulations which seek to account for all that is thought and felt in a moment of culture.\*6

In Krieger the normal categories conceptualizing historical experience can be transcended in the heightened aesthetic construct of the poetic text. Where a Marxist, for example, would insist on the subordinate status of ideological forms to a "materialist" conception of history, for Krieger "In exceeding his own history, the poet--as if still true to Aristotle's injunction --conquers history itself."\*7 As a wholly perfect and telic Aristotelian "imitation", free from the claims and constraints of empirical reference, the work frees us from the meaningless details and accidents, and controls the

contradictions, of empirical existence.

Still, a reading of poetry has to return to historical reality if it is not to be taken as an escape from it. For example, Northrop Frye's aesthetic of the order of desire and myth is finally rejected by Krieger as escapist: it is correct for Frye to debunk "existential projection", but we need also to understand and account for the historical and ethical importance of the aesthetic object as such.<sup>18</sup> It is the possibility of the conscious creation of aesthetic forms, whether artifice in chaos or the rebellion of personal vision against oppressive convention, which has a special social value and historical lesson for us. Texts which are ever and imaginatively new, which both reveal and transcend their moments of origin, are metaphors of life which can contain it yet still affirm what is human and richly particular against the reductive abstraction of historical generalities.<sup>19</sup>

The poem has a special capacity to revivify and renew our awareness of the mediation of historical knowledge. In its intensive development of the problem of mediation, its struggle to embody an immediate truth in a verbal construct, the fiction's difference "defamiliarizes" the historical meaning of words to provide an enriched comprehension of their existential reference. (See, for example, the complex ambiguity of the word "dear" in Krieger's reading of Shakespeare's Sonnet 87, its condensation in metaphoric puns of the affectionate and the

marketplace connotations).<sup>50</sup>

The critic's operative norm requires the "total interpretability" of the text in terms of a set of conventional expectations of genre, period, subject matter, etc.<sup>51</sup> The comfortable preconception of the work must be violated in great art by its formal discrepancies and differences from the norm, which contribute to a yet more complex and convincing aesthetic order. The myth of total interpretability, as an aesthetic potential within an empirical experience, is the theoretical basis for a New Critical practice of "close reading". It demands that the critic find every detail of the text at work in the fictional text (we will return to this "work ethic" and its earned vision in *Criticism in Practice*, and David Bleich has observed it polemically in his own theoretical framework).<sup>52</sup>

The historical vision achieved by a writer who is true to his text will never be polemical or morally prescriptive. Krieger considers "allegory" an inability to close the aesthetic text off from the discourse of its origin: allegorical art is incapable of surpassing the tautologous and reductive confines of some parallel analytic discourse. Because of the one-to-one correlation of its images to fixed dogmas it is ultimately a totalitarian frame of mind, unaware of its difference and duplicity, taking itself for the real.<sup>53</sup> Krieger posits the emergence of "modern" aesthetics in the Renaissance, with the advent of Cartesian doubt and dualism.<sup>54</sup> Against the medieval

metaphysics informing the practice of allegory, Krieger identifies a "reformation" of the concept of mediation in the use of metaphorical structure.<sup>55</sup> It is important that the patent illusion of metaphor cannot be sustained at the level of daily experience: it is explicitly otherworldly and removed from practical affairs. Its function is critical, however, in maintaining our awareness of the inadequacy of all lesser modes of the Word. Krieger has no nostalgia for medieval certainty or any wish to restore the "transparency" of discourse. As an attitude of interpretation, allegory has been dangerous not only because it will deprive the world of an inexpressible phenomenon (metaphor tantamount to secular miracle), but because it promulgates the oppressive and stultifying limits of a standard language.<sup>56</sup>

In this light, the historical content of a proper poetic fiction cannot be allegorically paraphrased back into a critical discourse. Rather the poem is the only language which can articulate historical vision in its unique way. In the fusion of form and content the poem becomes a condensed microcosm of culture at the same time it is a triumph over the confines and conventions of the culture:

Hence we come upon the vision, but not any vision that pre-existed the work in an individual psyche or in a culture's "humanitas" or in a normative structure held in potentiality for individual entities to fulfil; rather the vision that is attained figurally by cutting so fine as figure as the work. Yet it does become the culture for the moment and for the minds that so

constitute it metaphorically. The extremity of total transfer, of metaphor, becomes window to the reduced moment of vision which characterizes the reality created for a culture (created as the culture) by its most gifted seer-makers.<sup>57</sup>

Metaphor becomes the only and unique contribution of a poet as poet to his society. The presentation of a cultural vision at once reduces and comprehends and seems to render the whole of its complex facticity. Krieger's hypothesis of such a visionary moment enables him to develop his metatheoretical premises about mediation and the fiction of transcendence into social and psychological necessities. We will see that the concept of metaphoric vision, an essentially panhistoric aesthetic, cannot be separated from the humanist literary tradition in which Krieger has defined his own contribution. His defence of that tradition, in a specifically ethical context, will be the decisive and limiting strategy of his practical criticism of Conrad.

### THE CRITIC

Krieger considers the reader's experience and response to a poetic text as a paradoxical and illusory mediation of subject and object. We have seen that a naive "objectivist" theory of reading, based on the referential power of a discourse, would devalue the aesthetic and lead criticism into "Platonistic" reduction and a reified concept of the poem's "mimetic" function.<sup>58</sup> Alternatively, "subjectivist" relativism or

scepticism of meaning will imply interpretive license, the impossibility of communication, and confusion.<sup>59</sup> Both of these constitute real dangers to the practice of literary criticism, and Krieger's resolution of their opposite tendencies is admittedly a theoretical sleight of hand--a fiction carefully designed to convince us of the necessity of both accurate formal investigation and the subjective immediacy of an aesthetic response.

Krieger observes the phenomenon of literary complexity and ambiguity, and the endless variety of readings and interpretation, to "demystify" analytical approaches to literature and their extrinsic frames of reference. Then he resorts to a neo-Kantian concept of objective form to reestablish norms of detailed and true interpretation, with absolute standards of literary evaluation.<sup>60</sup> From this standpoint, the problem of poetic form is epistemological, and Krieger addresses it through a concept of "symbolic form" which is derived from Ernst Cassirer through Krieger's early teacher, Eliseo Vivás.<sup>61</sup> In Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, transcendental categories of human experience constitute a spectrum or continuum of human symbolic activities, ranging from the "subjective", synthetic forms of Art and Myth to the increasingly "objective", diacritical forms of Language and Science. In this Idealist notion of consciousness all objects of perception are a synthesis of sensory/emotional content and

categorical form, i.e., every object of consciousness is an actively created "symbol". The diversity of human formal possibilities explains how the "same" object can be perceived by different subjects as "art" or as functional and ordinary, or in an analytic relation.<sup>62</sup>

We will see that both Krieger and David Bleich cite Cassirer as the precursor of a humanistic epistemology. For Cassirer "subjectivity" and "objectivity" are identified as the sensory-emotional and the cognitive aspects of a single human activity: symbol-making. Cassirer (or Bleich) does not worry about a troublesome "fictional" relationship to underlying reality because the symbolic is effectively sufficient for human purposes: ontological concerns for the Ding an sich are not tragic frustrations, the necessity for mediation is not psychologically, socially, or ethically debilitating.<sup>63</sup> Cassirer's neo-Kantian reassurance and progressivism do not satisfy the criteria of Krieger's existential "materialism":

But unlike an idealist I do insist that one must see around the categories of vision to existential fact, since it is fact that wins in the end: it is man's humanistic triumph that he is a myth maker--so long as he sees the myth as myth and does not so reify it that he makes it his only reality.<sup>64</sup>

Existential fact continually subverts our attempts to symbolically mediate it, and this gives the "aesthetic" fiction its saving virtue. There is a "reality" about the poetic text which makes the diacritical interpretive text a "critical



fiction", the subjective limit to the critic's vision. The "signifieds" of the literary text (its writer, history, etc.) are more conspicuously "absent" in poetic textuality than in the referential text because the poetic is, above all, a refusal of the metaphysics of representation. What is existentially present to the critic is the literary work itself, its opacity forcing the critic to be aware of its artificiality and difference from any other real or imagined object. This special aesthetic mode of being of the poetic text is a positive and humanistically affirmative synthesis of existential awareness and the common language that is inadequate to it.

The paradox in formalism's claim to the material objectivity of the text is that it depends on a privileged, and often merely hypothetical, kind of emotional response; the aesthetic experience.<sup>65</sup> Again Krieger has recourse to Kant in positing the aesthetic as an alternative type of response to either the cognitive or the moral:

What would characterize the experience as aesthetic rather than either cognitive or moral would be its self-sufficiency, its capacity to trap us within itself, to keep us from moving beyond it to further knowledge or to practical efforts. It would thus insist, to the extent that it was aesthetic, that we stop and behold it for that interplay of elements that satisfies us, so that we do not see those elements as signs leading to consequences outside and beyond. To "use" the object would be, aesthetically, to abuse it: instead of using it, we must love it, and loving it is enough--provided of course, it is a disinterested love.

...The major advantage to the literary theorist of defining experiences as if they came in pure, distinct types is that such a definition enables him, by

projection, to read back to a description of the aesthetic quality of objects, which--in a circular way--he defines by those characteristics which induce us toward (or seduce us into) the kind of experience dominated by its aesthetic components.<sup>66</sup>

Having circled Krieger's epistemology from the position of "fictional objectivity" we found that it rests in a transcendental subjective experience of aesthetic contemplation, a categorical necessity. Paradox asserts itself here, with Krieger's full knowledge and acquiescence: it is impossible to claim that the work will predictably evoke the state of "rapt, intransitive attention" proper to it.<sup>67</sup> Thus, where the object had been phenomenologically constituted by the critic's perception, now the aesthetic mode of perception becomes a norm constituted by the object.

In fact Krieger's concept of the CRITIC as subject does not emphasize actual feelings or responses to the text. This level of experience is, first of all, only articulated in those mundane discourses we have already repudiated (e. g. psychoanalysis).<sup>68</sup> Moreover, real experience would open the aesthetic fiction to that pre-formal chaos, meaningless and threatening, which the metaphoric order contains. For criticism, the CRITIC is only credible and important for what he makes of himself, not for what he is, and against the contingent and erratic reading of an existent person, Krieger posits a normative public personality, the critical persona.<sup>69</sup> The Freudian model lends itself to this distinction:

If we think of the persona as the critic's superego, we may think of the person as his id ... the totality of the critic is to be seen by the shrewd reader as compounded of both ... And we witness the critical performance as a drama between them, while the work, alternatively obscured or revealed, but assaulted, hides in the wings.<sup>70</sup>

This is a tacit acknowledgement that criticism is a reflection of the critic's personality<sup>71</sup>, and Krieger has explicitly invited "both trust and distrust" (although not psychoanalysis) on this account. The neo-Kantian aesthetic serves to universalize Krieger's sensibility, so that the vaguely Freudian scheme only reinforces the irreconcilable schism between existence and essence which is the root of all experience.<sup>72</sup>

Qualified as it is, the definition of the CRITIC as a fictional persona enables Krieger to make a norm of the aesthetic experience and the formal criteria for it in the TEXT. From this can follow all the tenets of critical formalism. The critic in person reads diachronically and perhaps erratically, and may even be momentarily convinced of (cognitive) truths or (moral) imperatives. But it is the superegoistic persona who closes the hermeneutical circle of the text, able retrospectively to experience its sequence as a synchronic totality and a successful transcendent vision--the frozen movement of Keat's Grecian Urn--or else as an aesthetic failure.<sup>73</sup> The humanist aesthetic tradition places this cathartic, perfectly detached because uninterrupted<sup>74</sup> involved, contemplation of the text at the summit of a normative hierarchy of experience. It involves

both a higher cognitive truth and a higher ethical imperative because it supersedes practical necessities and contingencies. The poetic text can, then, be "purposefully purposeless": the Kantian oxymoron miraculously transcends 1) the banality of writing bound to rhetorical "purpose", and 2) the frightening emptiness of the existentially "purposeless".<sup>7\*</sup>

#### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC

We have seen that for Krieger the TEXT, as a self-confirming fiction, is the category of literary information to which all others are subordinate. If we try to take a writer, history, or a critic's subjectivity as "facts" in some comprehensible real world, in which writers simply write about things to readers who read about them, the concepts we use will deceive us. The empiricist discourses of biography, psychology, history, or sociology demand a finally dangerous credulity, obscuring their theoretical biases and difference from the referents they purport to signify. Moreover, any analytic fragmentation of the metaphorical text will ignore its most salient subjective and objective qualities: aesthetic integrity and totality.

We have described the aesthetic quality of THE TEXT as a fiction premised on a metaphysics of mediation: although the formal structures or devices a critic finds to verify the aesthetic cannot be validated empirically, empiricism itself has

been obviated as another mediating fiction. We must give critical privilege to fictions which are aware of themselves.<sup>75</sup> Literature is writing which by its aesthetic design calls attention to itself as writing; criticism is an analytic discourse which calls attention to this non-empirical "fact". Krieger cannot deny that his entire enterprise rests on circular and epistemologically controversial grounds, but he maintains that the circularity is hermeneutic and not tautological, and that the alternatives to it are either chaotic subjectivism or the technological dehumanization of reductionist approaches.

We saw earlier that the metaphoric reduction of historical content in a literary work can provide true historical vision, but only when we understand in its full significance how the poetic fiction is discontinuous with empirical circumstances. We have noted that Krieger presupposed for all literature the same relationship of writerly consciousness to the general culture (what could be called a form of "alienation") that holds for modern times; and even his definition of "modern" as the Renaissance-to-present is a broad one.<sup>76</sup> He traces the contradictory relations of texts, writers, and history back to the origins of western philosophy and aesthetics: in this way literary history consists of constant variations on a perennial existentialist/humanist problematic.<sup>77</sup> And because literary fiction itself transcends the facticity of historical discourse, because the production of aesthetic fiction and experience is a

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saving virtue of civilization, literature's aesthetic quality determines a unique social role for its critics.

We can understand Krieger's work in relation to other contemporary criticism only by way of his sense of the continuity and universality of the "Humanist Tradition", and the increasing threats to it of subjectivism on one hand and reductionist or ideological thought on the other.<sup>78</sup> Humanism is treated, through various ages and cultures, as an essentially given formal dialectic of generic Man with the exigencies of his existence: Man fathoms the world only by the categorical formalization of its contents. Human consciousness manifests itself either in the reductive and stereotyping "signs" of ordinary and technical language or transcendently, even miraculously, in poetic "symbol".<sup>79</sup> Thus, Krieger's readings of Aristotle's or Coleridge's aesthetics are not exegetical or scholarly researches but an attempt to articulate them, living, into his own very current discourse.<sup>80</sup> As poetry is "timeless" in its quality and function as metaphor, the formalist tradition of literary criticism has had to evolve, subservient but indispensable, to maintain its mediating social role. This will become clearer in the specific discussion of Krieger's theory of "thematics".<sup>81</sup>

Because the paradoxical qualities of metaphor are difficult to convey in criticism as such, Krieger's writing at the theoretical level is a captivating whorl of questions,

provisional assertions, qualifications and counter-qualifications. Every propositional line is at some point brought around to the paradoxical implication at its premise.<sup>82</sup> There is a certain tangible life, properly enough an organic complexity, to his prose that manages at once to convey the humility of a subordinate discourse and yet inevitably gain the last word--even if that word is the necessity of humility. Through his own contextual self-sufficiency Krieger leaves extrinsic critics little to grab onto; amoebically his presuppositions yield to others only to consume them:

More than most theorists, I have tried to work in accordance with what counterpositions (to mine) in the history and in the work of my contemporaries have forced me to take account of, but to co-opt them without undoing my own construct, to swallow them without getting indigestion. So I appear guilty of trying to turn what appear as inimical elements into cooperative supports for my own theory...

I have tried to demonstrate the power of the traditional aesthetic to accommodate alien perspectives and to thrive. But finally, for its preservation, it must insist--with all its newly won self-consciousness--on the illusion of verbal and aesthetic presence in that beckoning structure that confronts us. So I have tried to outmaneuver anticipated contradictions...by including them within the terms of a paradoxical model.<sup>83</sup>

This strategy of survival by assimilation has become necessary with the successive retreats of humanist ontological and teleological claims since the Renaissance. Chains of Being gave way to idealistic aestheticism and subjective alienation in the Nineteenth Century; social Utopias were replaced in the Twentieth by the technological nightmare. Deprived of

metaphysical status the human order of self-definition has nothing left but the word as a self-proclaiming fiction.<sup>84</sup> The modernist author or contemporary critic now

... knows the make-believe nature of the substitute reality he has seized upon, and knows that the other "real" reality--though outside his terms --will yet call upon him to succumb to it. <sup>85</sup>

This existentialist precedence of an essentially unpredictable "real" reality" is the condition of Krieger's distrust of empirico-deductive language, and of any call to a religious or social ethic premised on such a language. For Krieger, writing about the "real" world with a strong moral sensibility leads to disillusion, to finding oneself in the confines of an inadequate "discourse". Life's great lesson is the betrayal of ideals by experience. Krieger's, unlike Sartre's is an existentialism without authentic choice, since we know in advance that every rational initiative will be subverted in time. The necessity of mediation between ourselves and the real reality becomes the necessity of the inauthentic (c.f. Sartre)<sup>86</sup>, the inevitability of illusion.

Ineluctable facticity has not led Krieger to despair, as we have seen, but to the affirmation that the word itself, self-realizing, is humanism's last stand on the unshakeable ground of self-consciousness. Humanism's ultimate possibility is literature, as a socially efficacious fiction:

At any cultural and psychological moment, there is, outside and before the poem, a broad and as yet



undefined area of variegated experience, emotional and intellectual, which seeks to become an identifiable symbolic entity and which the poet -trying to identify it and make it available to himself and his culture--seeks through extremity to reduce to a manageable reduction.<sup>87</sup>

Paradoxically, its properties as fiction make the poetic discourse capable of a metaphoric "totalization" of social content, giving the text its relevance in history to social reality. This total vision is not like allegorical social "realism"--the form of metaphor is a momentary triumph or transcendence over a depressing historical process, and not a reference or solution to it. We will see that in Krieger's theory and practice textuality is not considered a mode of acting in a social context but a way of seeing it (either well or badly). The literary text and criticism are valuable in providing a moderating critical, contemplative, and culture-sustaining perspective.

#### THEORY: "Thematics" of the Literary Context

Krieger's criticism is founded on a humanist-idealist problematic: Man, as alienated subject, is immersed in a reality he cannot fathom without categorical forms. These mediating forms can be the reductive, abstract "signs" of a discourse, or they can be wrought to metaphorically recover and contain a rich and authentic reality, in the visionary "symbol".<sup>88</sup> We have seen that the mode of existence of a literary text is "useless", that

it is an object of contemplation which (in its negative capacity) foregrounds and limits our dependence on "useful", but self-deluding, discourses. Special among these lower forms is criticism itself, and we will see that the founding paradox of Krieger's practical work is his theoretical self-consciousness, which is meant to give that practice credibility and importance, while radically subordinating it at the same time.<sup>89</sup>

We can think of Krieger's critical enterprise as a persistent effort to establish and maintain literary "contextualism" in the face of antagonistic extrinsic or interdisciplinary critical approaches. He has relativized and "fictionalized", as we have seen, the conceptual underpinnings of New Criticism, but we need only review some functional tenets remaining in his work in order to see its influence:

1. The literary text can unify a complex "real" experience in an autonomous "fictional" context.
2. The literary text contains existential paradoxes and contradictions in the controlling form of metaphor.
3. The human condition is timeless, as are the forms of aesthetic transcendence, and thus the principles of critical interpretation and evaluation.
4. Given the fallen world, a Judeo-Christian ethos emphasizes the priority of faith over works, and a myth of redemption in a reconstituted Word.<sup>90</sup>
5. The properly aesthetic response is detached, visual,

cathartic, revelatory and unworldly.

6. The task of criticism is to interpret form as an objective, intrinsic relation of textual device and subject matter.
7. A standard of completeness functions in both composition and interpretation, entailing close reading and accountability for textual detail.
8. Criteria for evaluation of the aesthetic object are central to criticism and they are universal, within a pan-historical canon of great works.<sup>91</sup>
9. The social function of literary criticism is to serve Humanism against encroaching scientism, relativism, and analytic reduction.

Humbling the CRITIC'S active but frustrating use of language is the normative experience demanded by the poem. It draws him into the rich complexity of metaphor, which can only be an intensely private, useless, identification in or with the poem itself. Krieger's theory of literary "thematics" proposes that there are important social/ethical implications for the control of metaphor over historical circumstance.<sup>92</sup> It explains how artistic craft is the defining human triumph over the contradictions that face ordinary practical work in the world. Unfortunately, tragically, this triumph is limited to art-for-art's sake, as a momentary feat of visionary genius. The tragic confrontation and accommodation of the extremities of consciousness are beyond the rest of us.<sup>93</sup> As reader/critics we

participate in their visions only vicariously and within the context of the received text. When the visionary moment has ended we have nothing to do for ourselves but go back to work, in the world of perpetually threatened commonplace, "sadder but wiser" like Coleridge's *Wedding Guest*.

In the two volumes of Visions of Extremity in Modern Literature, completed in 1970, Krieger defined his personal practice in a theory of "thematics" applied to a series of respectively "tragic" and "classic" visionary masterworks.<sup>94</sup> Through them, he attempted to mediate the contradiction in literary humanism between "Platonist" moralism and the implicitly "Manichean" ethic of the organicist formal aesthetic. In brief, he did this by deriving an ethical problematic from the aesthetic form itself: metaphor's reduction of a complex of existentially unreconciled paradoxes:

And again, I suppose, I am allowing a single conception of the phenomenology of our moral life to support a single aesthetic methodology in that I acknowledge that, in support of this view of thematics, I must deny that the existential world--the world of felt human experience--can be anything less than a bewildering complex of seeming contradictions. Given this sort of world, how can any more systematic view of it--the kind of view we get in that dualistically conceived "Platonic" literature whose meaning really is exhausted by the extrapolation of its philosophical theme--how can such a view avoid, in its inadequacy, doing this world a grievous injustice?

Following the more organic aspects of the new-critical poetics, then, we can define thematics as the study of the experiential tensions which, dramatically entangled in the literary work, become an existential reflection of the work's aesthetic complexity.<sup>95</sup>

"Aestheticism" has been a charge against the humanizing claim of formalist criticism, and its historical neglect of thematics relegated the study of specifically historical, social, or psychological content to extrinsic frames of reference.<sup>96</sup> Because the basis of Krieger's world view is a human condition which does not change, the aesthetic modes which correspond to historical epochs and struggles, or the lives and experiential contradictions of individuals, are not critically analyzed as "ideology" but rather defended as saving fictions. Krieger attempts to reconcile and accommodate us to the necessity of fiction, since existence is the prior, unalterable fact. Life's paradoxes cannot be remedied with truer concepts or with social or individual practice, but may only be fictionally transcended in the unity and purpose of a momentary vision. The essence of art is "Manichean" insofar as it remains true to life, and the thematic critic is forced in his turn to confront the anti-ethical, double-edged implications of the Manichean fiction.<sup>97</sup>

In modern works, Krieger analyzes the tension of ethical contradictions in a thematic dialectic, or "dialogue". At the level of literal reference, the artwork describes actions of characters who live out an extreme ethical or ideological imperative ("tragic existence") or a classic reconciliation: the textual form of the work contains existential contradictions of the plot within the synoptic vision of the narrator or author.<sup>98</sup>

The thematics of The Tragic Vision involves a character driven toward an extreme realization of truth, God, or self in a way that must conflict with established social-moral possibilities. Krieger identifies Conrad's Kurtz or Jim as archetypes of this "tragic existent."<sup>99</sup> The thematics of The Classic Vision proposes a character capable of relinquishing this extreme totality in the face of consciousness, who can thereby work with tolerant detachment for a modicum of worldly satisfaction.<sup>100</sup> In both cases the tragic or classic "existent", as an active individual, must be understood as trapped in a larger dialectic of existentially unresolvable ethical contradictions, which are given to us in the interpretive perspective of the narrator/author.<sup>101</sup> This self-reflective understanding constitutes the total tragic or classic vision. For Krieger every modern fiction enacts some variation on the tragic-ethical or classic-ethical dialogues, and every writer is to be evaluated for the kind and quality of the comprehensive vision which emerges from the text.<sup>102</sup>

True vision is always ironic and metaphorical. In every case the merely ethical is debunked as a coercive and empirically untenable standard. An ethical vision (i.e. an allegory) can only be maintained by a sort of doublethink: an ability to retain dogmas uncomplicated by the contradictions within one's own practice.<sup>103</sup> Rejecting the inevitable hypocrisy of the ethical, a tragic existent is goaded to follow the doxa

to its self-destructive limit, while the classic existent, who is intuitively ruddered by a benign temperance or a sense of humour, lives to finite rewards. The visionary/author contemplates, comprehends, and comments-but is not ethically implicated. His objective detachment is the "fictional" possibility for producing the aesthetic object itself.

Like the other critics in this thesis, Krieger is pre-eminently concerned with the quality and the effect of the cultural affirmation that is experienced in literature. Krieger identifies four kinds of thematic affirmations in the modern works, and he evaluates their authenticity in terms of his problematical Manichean ethic. Implicitly, Krieger's intrinsic approach to thematics invokes a standard for the literary value of the work, as condition for the credibility and impact of its "message":

1. Aesthetic affirmation formally condenses the tragic experience into the perceptual unity of a poetic text. Unhappily, although it reshapes life's absurdities into a created beauty, "... it does not return us to the world soundly renewed, except as we are ready--as aesthetes--to retain the world permanently as a work of art".<sup>104</sup> This is the successful mode of Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim.<sup>105</sup>
2. Thematic affirmation amounts to claiming that a workable ethic can be derived from experience. Krieger interprets

Conrad's Victory in this way, to its detriment, as an inevitably inauthentic and Platonic vision.<sup>106</sup>

3. Religious affirmation in modern works is a Kierkegaardian "leap of faith" in the face of absurdity. Krieger rejects it as an "unearned" vision, even while there is need to "account for the simple joy, the hallelujah chorus of affirmation--however modest--that fills some of our best literature".<sup>107</sup>

4. Krieger's answer is to interpret these texts beyond the spurious religious moral, in effect as varieties of the Classic affirmation. Facing tragic extremity, "... the classic refuses to choose it. It rather wills a retreat from it to an all-to-human acceptance that accepts also the significance of that retreat. Yet its movement is a positive and knowing one, a willed affirmation and no mere failure of nerve".<sup>108</sup>

The critique which follows will focus on the relationship of Krieger's critical vision to what he finds in the literary text. Krieger has been explicit about the reductiveness of his theory, but not about the functional ethic that is implied by it. For him, the critic's cultural role is that of an intermediary and moderator, whose text is meant to paraphrase aesthetic vision and to promote its special status as fiction. The rhetoric of criticism must be devoted to anti-theoretical, contemplative "objectivity", as the attitude proper to authentic



aesthetic experience. The social function which corresponds to this is the humanizing influence ascribed to liberal arts education: to provide breadth and a "balanced" view of things, questioning any ethic and any authority, including one's own. The existential basis of criticism entails a powerfully equivocal social ethic:

We ourselves, even less bold than our cautious literary visionaries, dare not give up the ethical as our order of existence; but we are forever newly broadened by our dialogistic visions and the dialogue we conduct among them. As we return to walk our ethical path, we walk the more tentatively as our sadness becomes the more certain: our forbearance rises as our expectations fall. Softened by vision, we tread with a light foot and a heavy heart.<sup>109</sup>

#### CRITICISM IN PRACTICE: Action, Inaction, and the Medium

For Krieger the ethical dilemmas faced by Conrad's protagonists and/or narrators correspond to those faced by a practicing critic: "Action, Inaction, and Extremity" respectively define the orientations of a tragic existent, a tragic visionary, and the nature of the paradox they face. Krieger follows in a philosophical tradition that includes Conrad himself: individualism, social organicism, and a political conservatism that developed out of Burke and Rousseau, and continued among 19th century British literati as an antidote to Utilitarianism and scientific positivism. Thus Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Conrad are direct precursors of the social philosophy and the aesthetic which inform Krieger's

thematics.<sup>110</sup> My intention is not extrinsic analysis, however, but to make use of Krieger's own methodology to test its self-critical claim by its own standards. I will try to understand its uses and abuses in these terms, and thus pose Krieger's Humanist Tradition, and its apology for traditional modes of criticism, as a point of departure for David Bleich and Fredric Jameson. The focus of this critique and those to follow will be the nature of the critic's identification with a narrative perspective: here with Marlow, the storyteller of Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim, and with the authorial narrative of Victory.<sup>111</sup>

Krieger's brief treatment of Heart of Darkness identifies his critical "vision" with the narration and vindicates Marlow's role in the story. In the plot Marlow acts out a "work ethic" posed against all reason and against all use.<sup>112</sup> For Krieger, the kind of saving work that preserves Marlow's mental stability at his outpost of civilization has the same ethical value and limitations as the practice of criticism. As absurd as his preoccupation with rivets, for example, becomes, it is psychologically and even ethically indispensable in maintaining the "fiction" of a rational world and a concrete sense of accomplishment.<sup>113</sup> By contrast, Kurtz, the tragic existent, is characterized by an extreme commitment to rational ideals, and his fate is the "Manichean" consequence of his good intentions. Confronted with the dark heart of primitive reality, ethical

commitment reverses into demagogy and horror. Mundane daily work must be valued as an existential prosthetic, an ignoble but saving strategy: "Marlow chooses his crutches, knowing them to be crutches, and thus knowing that his choice must shut him off from areas of vision which are Kurtz's".<sup>114</sup> Analogously, the "crutch" for literary critics is the fiction that interpretive discourse can be a shared medium for independent aesthetic experiences--that poetic meaning can be found within its circle. To take such a fiction as an authentic order of vision would be self-deluding and pretentious. Yet as an order of social existence the work of "earning" the aesthetic and the community of its initiates (as Marlow does in telling his stories), is both necessary and valuable.<sup>115</sup>

We will return to examine Marlow's ethical implication, as both actor and narrator, in the fates of his friends. Here it is crucial that, for Krieger as for Marlow, work itself has been given honorific status even when it is of arbitrary, or doubtful, ethical value. Facing the Horror, Marlow maintains his precarious boat; the critic's discourse, similarly inadequate, provides both access and an ordered retreat from the vision of extremity. The means for this involves commitment to a critical "Standard" of analysis and judgment, a rational deduction of the transcendental qualities of aesthetic fiction. We have seen that for Krieger this is an act of faith in the aesthetic experience and a normative conception of literary reading. His elaborate

critical system both enables and limits his exploration of the jungle river.

The impossibility of adequate interpretation, for Marlow or the critic, leads us to the difficult question of the ethical status of the community of adherents for which they speak. In Heart of Darkness the narrator's solitude and the inordinate African environment create an extreme archetype of the humanist sensibility assailed on all sides. Marlow's subsequent listeners or Conrad's readers partake, through identification, in a kind of visionary communion: they are men who share and can appreciate the narrator's moral predicament. Vision reaffirms their commitment to daily work in the face of transcendently lurking horror, but it is also an acquiescence in moral futility:

For if we view Marlow as actor rather than merely as narrator--the observant representative of our own best selves--his position seems hardly adequate to the awesome data of experience organized by the tragic vision. 116

Krieger's discussion of Heart of Darkness is a prelude, a statement of the individual, subjective consequences of existential vision. With Lord Jim we move to its public and social consequences: to identify as "one of us" is to affirm and try to uphold an ordained, ethical "fixed standard".<sup>117</sup> Although visionary experience teaches us that it is riddled with inequities and contradictions, it is unalterably "ours": "Western and very likely Christian", and must be adhered to as a

practical, saving myth.<sup>118</sup>

Yet if Marlow is one of us, we have to recognize with him that Jim is too. Questions concerning the inclusiveness and the exclusiveness of the requisite ethical vision will be the main concern of the following discussions: the thematic treatment of the novels raises questions of method in the application of theoretical critical "standards". Krieger notes that "common guilt" enters the visionary community with Jim. For Krieger, this contradictory need to both condemn Jim and admit him within "us" is the confrontation of tragic extremity, and involves both the exigencies of tragic "action" and interpretive/narrative "inaction".

Our common guilt remains unproved and unabsolvable from the perspective of tragic vision because of the untenability of "common facts" when we want to decide the rights and wrongs of a matter.<sup>119</sup> The moral ambiguity of Jim's desertion of the Patna defines an act when viewed without commitment to a Platonic ethical framework or standard. The morally obvious point of view, of duty-bound sailors that Jim's was an immoral and cowardly act, assumes that he was or should have been committed to their code but was not man enough to live up to it. Marlow, Stein and Krieger see that Jim was without such ethical parameters: he was morally at sea in his romantic fantasies until the act of jumping established the Standard for him.<sup>120</sup>

Jim is not, in the eyes of visionary objectivity, guilty at all. At his fatal moment he stood transfixed before the particularity of his situation, with all the alternatives equal before him, until some blind panic decided.<sup>121</sup>

Conrad distrusts facts since they deceive us: the utter intimacy of personal experience is incommunicable, and this insulation belies the smug and pretentious claims of facts to tell us about the human history of each of us.<sup>122</sup>

For Krieger, rapt contemplation and moral ambivalence are natural, existentially imposed limits. Jim's paralysis is the upshot of his first direct confrontation of the extremities of experience, and all the subsequent interpretations of the event, are attempts to contain or derive meaning from the nameless Horror at its heart.

Debunking the efficacy of facts, however, Krieger has not questioned the status of lies and delusions, especially as they might function in the self-proclaiming discourse of tragic vision. I doubt, for example, that Jim's fear on the bridge could have been from a concrete possibility of death. An authentic sense of the future, life or death, is precisely what Jim's daydreams cannot have provided him:

"...I knew nothing about it til I locked up" he explained, hastily. And that's possible, too. You had to listen to him as you would to a small boy in trouble. He didn't know. It had happened somehow. It would never happen again.<sup>123</sup>

This is not the transfixed confrontation of transcendental horror. Marlow's use of the passive "It had happened" rather

than "He had done it", implies that Jim's is a determined, rather than a willed, "guilt", facilitated by his regression.<sup>124</sup> It was impossible for him, at that time, to affirmatively stick to duty because there was substantially no one, no moral authority, to make the decision. Jim was insubstantial because, absorbed in private fantasy, he was as yet without the socially, i.e. interpersonally, fixed "Standard" against which to apply his behaviour. The "action" of the uncommitted is hardly action at all: "It was their doing as plainly as if they had reached up with a boathook and pulled me over".<sup>125</sup> We can suppose he jumped because that happened to be the only thing being done by anyone else at that moment--it becomes important that "anyone else" can only mean white Europeans: "The two Malays had meantime remained holding to the wheel".<sup>126</sup>

In spite of Jim's reborn intentions afterward, it does "happen again" that he identifies as "one of us" with white decadence at the expense of a native group for which he has taken responsibility. Krieger's existential thematics defines an intrinsic "context" of interpretation of this, to find an almost Christlike redemption in Jim's final gesture.<sup>127</sup> Instead I hope to show how the circularity of this tragic vision carefully excludes contextual elements in order to protect cultural or ideological interests common to Marlow, Krieger, and "us".

Thus, Krieger's validation of practical "fictions" can be questioned if we consider Marlow's narrative, not as the

mediation of a self-discovering "vision", but as the enabling logic (or Logos) of the tragedy it contains. It is important that Jim's commitment to the "fixed Standard" of duty and courage only becomes real after the fact of his failing, in the context of numerous interpretations of the event: by the other deserters, the inquiry, public opinion, and ultimately Marlow's narrative. (Marlow's endless, tolerant comprehension is the quality that attracts Jim to him). As an idealized interpretive norm, the ethical Standard appears a detached and rational paraphrase of life, but because life is not rational the Standard is most effectively applied in retrospect. Its very cool objectivity was unavailable to Jim on the Patna: his guilt for this is the foundation of the new, heroic self-definition that binds him to "us". Jim becomes one of us when his self-assessment corresponds to the insistently objective assessment of Marlow. But Jim is an active, "tragic existent" because he does not have Marlow's (and Krieger's) qualified, practical sense of the Standard: he cannot recognize the difference between living according to the ideal and interpreting life according to it. Yet the novel demonstrates that Marlow's detached, "inactive" interpretive vision has an ethical status and a functional efficacy of its own.

What would have happened if the Patna had sunk? Its fate is almost a paradigm for the metaphysics of absence and presence, fiction and reference, that Krieger proposes. After jumping ship



the deserters concocted a fiction, and it is apparent that if the referent had sunk this fictional text would suffice in its self-evidence. It would make little difference what the details of the story are, so long as it formally implements the Standard by providing an objective, logical explanation in its terms:

"...What did I care what story they agreed to make up,  
he cried recklessly... 128

But when the lost signified is perceived, identified, and towed into port, with its passengers eloquently alive, the story which was predicated on its eternal absence is suddenly problematical for the seamen and the scoundrels alike. The functional ethical "fiction" that officers care for their ships, Europeans care for their colonial wards, human beings can depend on ordained social forms, has been threatened. The official hermeneutics of the justice system reopens the text in order to find the universal rule by revealing and expelling the guilty exceptions to it.

Thus it is a fact, the presence of the ship, which requires a new interpretive text adequate to sort the guilty out of the community of adherents to the Standard: this is the function of the Inquiry. Because the deserters fiction was composed with the Standard in mind, its falsification should provide an assessment that excludes them from "us", so that the verdict on them does not reflect on us. In understanding the debacle of the Inquiry, then, it is important to remember that the deserters truly are nonadherents of the Standard, that their fiction was a conscious

deceit by men who never felt themselves to have shared the Standard, but whose word was taken and held to account. It is the crucial, defining peculiarity of the Standard that it is most conveniently applied to scoundrels or natives or innocents, and that it doubles back when applied to one of us. This is necessary because without "us" no one would be good enough to hold the prerogative to interpret and to judge according to it.

Jim becomes one of us by adopting the Standard to judge himself. In so doing he forces us to become self-conscious of the judicial prerogative, of the guilty episodes in our personal life-fictions, of the idealistic conclusion that "nobody is good enough".<sup>129</sup> The contradiction Jim reveals is that, in the process of elevating its initiates to positions of authority and judgment, the Standard seems to require us to exempt ourselves. We can safely judge only people who are unconstrained by our Manichean wisdom: this discomfits the Inquiry, drives the extremist Briery to suicide, and fascinates Marlow.

The Standard is revealed as double. It is supposed to spell out protocols for the crew and passengers to face extremity or even death together. Yet it is secretly understood that, Standard to the contrary, if the ship is actually sinking the white crew might save itself, since the natives are not privy to their Western ethos and humanity. Given the anomaly of the Patna episode, if the crew had all been scoundrels it would still have been possible to maintain the letter of the Standard by finding

them guilty, and be relatively satisfied by the result. Jim's reversal of the burden of guilt consists of adopting the Standard and its verdict in good conscience, so that his inclusion devalues the superiority of the Western ideal and the unspoken privilege of its initiates. Thus Jim, who was "guilty" along with the rest of the crew, suddenly "deserves" an exemption they do not. Paradoxically, the reason he deserves it is the same reason he does not take his chance to escape with them, but faces judgment along with, implicitly, his judges.

For Marlow and Krieger this episode demystifies the Standard, or any ethical vision whatever. Marlow is a textualist like Krieger, who translates events into his system of signification. This process is foregrounded in the novel with the imbedding of the narration. Marlow's Logos is identically that of the Humanist ethic Krieger has qualified but continues to share. Jim, the inarticulate tragic existent, is taken up within the same ethical paradigm that Marlow has come to question, and he ultimately exercises its judicial prerogative in Patusan. There, Jim can apply the Western Standard successfully and unequivocally because, just like the Patna crew and himself before his conversion, the natives are not adherents of it. Here, the Standard authorizes detached and impartial evaluation. Unfortunately the law itself cannot bear the verdict of those who consciously question it. The same aoebic assimilation into "us" which opened to Jim must, tragically and

inevitably, include Gentleman Brown as well.<sup>130</sup> Krieger's elision of this is subtle and ideological, for it protects the Standard from a charge of chauvinism. He avoids analyzing the duplicity of the judicial prerogative by avoiding the crucial distinction between the class of judges and the judged. The "democratic" assumption is that the law applies evenly to everybody, even when it is untenable. This seems to lump Brown in with sinners like the Patna crew or Jim himself, and to disclose the radical impossibility of fairly judging anyone. Following this shattering revelation, Krieger can return to the need for a practical ethical "fiction" in terms of which heavy-hearted and light-footed judgments can be made.<sup>131</sup>

Yet Gentleman Brown is not of the same low calibre as the Patna's crew. From his desperate romance with the missionary girl, his demonic posturings, and his uncanny perception of his parallel with Jim we can understand Brown as an explicit product of the Western/Christian ethos. He is just as committed to it through conscious contradiction as Jim is in conscious affirmation: Brown is a romantic idealist in his own right. Having judged himself he is not only specially qualified to judge Jim, but is entitled to the special dispensation that Marlow and the others have shown Jim, as "one of us". Unlike scoundrels or natives, Brown is tragic too.

In this light, Jim's mercy does not have the radically inclusive quality Krieger will give it. In effect Jim has simply

followed to its limit the Standard's self-protective mechanism of granting special exemptions to its initiates at the expense of those who are not. With this demystification of the Standard its hegemony begins to lose the aura of fatal, aesthetically tragic, inevitability. What if Jim is good enough? That question cannot seriously arise for Krieger. In the narrative context it is Jim's moral paralysis before Brown that seems a heroic culmination of the Western/Christian ethos. Krieger, through fictional vision, has already experienced the futility of social action. Not as wise, Jim drives himself through the ethical to that extreme perspective. His final awareness that nobody is good enough, when it undermines his judicial mandate over his people,

gives him a maturity which demands more than the schoolboy heroism he can now turn on at will. 132

For Krieger it is tragically inevitable that Jim's initial self-condemnation returns to martyr him for the Standard rather than question it.

Marlow's vision of Jim's "victory" is morally pyrrhic. The Christian ethos leading to individual salvation is, in reality, premised on a society of Romans and Jews. Jim dies a "whole" man only by tearing down the moral temple on which his cross was erected. While Jim dies for Christian mercy, Hebrew justice is the "existential" precondition which made it necessary. The issue is not Krieger's stricken realization that the Standard is

double, however, but that the limit of Jim's decision to follow it is his solipsistic, elitist world-view. Jim lives out, as if it were tragically inevitable, the "Fortune" or Logos kindly provided by Marlow. An alternative does seem to exist, lurking outside the quotation marks, in a critical context which questions Jim's verdict. It could replace tragedy with ethical possibility by suggesting that Jim's confrontation with Brown might have enabled some extreme negation of the Western Standard, affirming some unarticulated knowledge of Brown, which would account for our "instinctive" rejection of him. This alternative understanding is not in the narrative discourse. Beyond legalism (Brown is guilty/ we all are guilty) and even medicine (Brown is sick/we all are sick), an ethical rejection of Gentleman Brown would have to follow from the enlarged "context" of the imperialism and class structure Marlow posed as "existentially" given in the narrative. Our re-contextualized instincts about Brown would not condemn him in terms of the Standard (Jim proves this is impossible), but are also not the moral confusion of the alienated, "instinctive" jump from the Patna: it was a fear of such rootless panic that ultimately motivated Jim's dogmatism. Beyond these contradictions, Jim's potential understanding might be "earned" in a substantive, material relationship with the native population: embodied love for Jewel and Dain Warris. This would require a practical self-understanding impossible in Marlow's discourse, in terms of

a group which has given Jim as much as he has given them. Jim would not be an alienated monad predicated against the universe (as on the Patna), and would not be a functional representative of an oppressive double Standard (as Lord Jim). A twentieth-century exemplar of this radical "jurisdiction" might be Brecht's Azdak. In Conrad's novel the uncomprehending, bellowing, but wordless Doramin carries out the mandate: what seems the apotheosis of moral self-realization under Marlow's Standard is murderous complicity to a native chief. Doramin is right: it is the Standard, abstract and contradicting lived relationships, that is guilty: along with those who continue to represent it.<sup>133</sup>

In Lord Jim this implication remains unexplored.<sup>134</sup> But at least Conrad continually calls attention to the limits of Marlow's narrative expression. The enquoted Logos pretends to delimit a total existential vision, and Krieger accepts the pretence as a "fiction" essential to liberal humanism. We should elaborate on how this Logos is complicit in the world (Marlow's, Krieger's) it envisions, since Krieger insists on the inadequate "inactive" relationship of the narrator to events. He stands back in order to see. Krieger does not account for the active role of Marlow in the story as one who speaks to, and organizes the destiny of, Jim. Marlow brings this to the surface in the strange episode of his visit to Patusan, just when he tells Jewel that Jim is "not good enough" to return to the white

world.<sup>135</sup> Although Marlow will play it down as "accident, hazard, Fortune" it is not a coincidence that he repeated Jim's "very words". It is equally important that Marlow's words, coming as confirmation, have a different status from Jim's chronologically prior statement. In fact the question of priority suddenly becomes problematical. We can see how Marlow himself, as storyteller-cum-benefactor, has been a formative instrument of the discourse in which Jim is situated. As two "existents", Jim and Marlow are both caught in the contradictions of East and West, judged and judges, "real life" and the situation constituted by an ideological narration. Aside from its impact on Jewel, which is unexplored but suggestive, Marlow's judgment of Jim more than foreshadows, it foreordains his end. Marlow persists in applying the Standard even while asserting that nobody is good enough to live by it. The Standard has the same metaphysical status as Krieger's aesthetic experience: a fictional norm, it is unrealized in life but held above us to facilitate the judicial ethic. Like Krieger's aesthetic, the ultimate vision is not truly "existential" but an imposition of Western/Christian form onto unsuspecting Patusan, and Marlow's discourse may be seen not as the inevitable articulation of a horrifying truth, but as fiction, effectively complicit in a formation which brings Jim to a not-tragic, but debilitated end.



Finally, what Krieger insists is the idealistic, almost academic moral choice facing Jim can be crudely undercut by the question of whether he is only another colonial racist: "as it must [seem] to Doramin."<sup>136</sup> It is not that Jim judges and kills only natives, but that under his adopted Standard this is inevitable. Brown's call on Jim becomes the call of the race when the burden of the Christian ethic, which should place him above mere racism, cannot be extricated from a specifically imperialist ideology. We can enlarge the question to wonder whether Krieger's humanist tradition has not always been predicated on some marginal species of the sub-human--a colonized people or an illiterate working class--who constitute that existential threat to the aesthetic order. Then Jim's liberal quandary, which seems a natural ethical upshot to Krieger, is rather a peculiar ideological permutation of his contradictory social position. Marlow functions to make Jim "one of us", even against the evidence of Jim's senses. Having falsified the moral foundation of the ideal community ("us"), and lost touch with the earthly one (Patusan), Jim becomes his own judge, jury and executioner.

Considering this, we can review Krieger's judgment of Victory: it is a mediocre novel. His thematics explains this in terms of its ethical inauthenticity: Conrad attempted to bring the protagonist Heyst to a realization beyond Jim's, to the

affirmation of a viable ethical orientation. Krieger organizes textual evidence to show that the book betrays its own necessary vision, resulting in aesthetic failure. In short, Heyst's detached and fatalistic world-view, the practical extension of his father's systematic pessimism, is persuasive. Worldly action and achievement can only be accomplished in a mental fog, clear thought doubles back on itself to become circular and oppressive, existential vision is paralytic.<sup>137</sup>

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A paternal legacy is the source of Heyst's romantic negation of life and finally his "ineffectuality" in facing the invaders of his island. In Krieger's interpretation this defeatism culminates in an ethical-visionary reversal. Heyst comes upon a tableau: he discovers Lena, ignoring his plan to hide, with Ricardo on his knees at her feet,

his knife (and masculinity) buried harmlessly in the folds of her dress between her knees. The seemingly defenseless girl, Heyst's helpless dependency whom he has protected so woefully, has now in unmanning Ricardo unmaned Heyst as well...<sup>138</sup>

For Krieger, Conrad's point is that Lena has taken effective action when Heyst refused to believe it could be done. The effect on Heyst is a shattering guilty recognition of Lena's heroism and her ultimately correct moral attitude. It is easy for Krieger to show that such a simpleminded victory is "unearned" by the text, that Conrad's attempted affirmation is doomed in its inception, and that this subverts the text's tragic-aesthetic potential:

It is a retreat from the tragic to the sentimentally ethical that asks for blind faith in life and love and for the comforting cinematic outburst, "Together we can lick the world, baby". For so they could have, Heyst and Lena, had Heyst seen his errors and found the courage to be resolute before it was, perchance, too late. 139

Krieger's interpretation underestimates the dramatic structure of the novel. Moreover it is an underreading which seems predetermined by his own thematic criteria, uncritically applied. I would speculate that opening his thematics to incorporate Victory would ruin them as a coherent normative framework: his analysis of Victory is precisely the application of a "fixed Standard" to its non-adherents which became so problematic in Lord Jim.

There is no Marlow in Victory, no voice Krieger can legitimately take to represent "our own best selves". The introductory narration establishes a commonplace nautical-colonial mentality and Heyst's enigma to it, but it is unreliable. Well-intentioned Davidson is not a visionary. Conrad's presentation of the main story is for practical purposes objective and "dramatic", and I think Krieger fails to appreciate this significant technical departure.<sup>140</sup> It is for this reason Krieger is forced to glean his tragic-vision from Heyst's father's philosophical scraps and from the son's gloomy self-evaluation. These are questionable in any context, and especially so if we reconsider the novel's concluding "affirmation".

Because he is exclusively preoccupied with Heyst's pessimism and its contradiction in Lena's success, Krieger ignores formal ironies in the juxtaposed relations between the expressed themes and the novel's structure: well within the context of its "intrinsic" thematics. Thus, we will see that Krieger's presuppositions have limited his reading of levels of paradox, irony, etc. which ought to enrich the novel under his own standards of judgment, and even subvert the false moral he finds in it. Instead of unearned "thematic affirmation", I find another existential vision.

Krieger insists that Heyst's "inaction" during the invasion has disastrous consequences: later we will see it is surprisingly effective. First, we should note that Heyst's malaise is thematically complementary to the antagonist Jones malaise, and the confrontation of the two is anticipated by a striking development of structural parallels. These do not escape Krieger's notice<sup>141</sup>, but he does not explore them. Aside from desultory attitudes, Heyst and Jones share aristocratic birth, negation and exile, rumors of the exploitation and "murder" of Morrison and of Pedro's brother, the recruitment of working class partners (Lena and Ricardo) by spiriting them away from dissatisfying lines of work, the visits to Schomberg's inn, mutual disaffection with the German, and the triumphs at his expense. All these precipitate their meeting at Schomberg's arrangement. The contrivance of plot can draw our attention to

aspects of the "aristocrats" involvement in similar group configuration: each is the titular head of a triad.

Ricardo's infatuation with Lena is not a crude manœuvre to the climax of the plot if we recognize that they share both their social class and their dependence on two soul-sick and unpredictable nobles whom they do not understand. Moreover, Lena and Ricardo are superciliously treated by Heyst and Jones, and this obscures the fact that they are indispensable. Recognizing this has the same importance as the colonial implication in Lord Jim--the dialectic of Lords and retainers implies a socio-economic tension of paradoxes parallel to that Krieger maintains as philosophical. We recognize a superiority of vision, demeanor, character, etc. in the aristocrats which balances lack of vitality. A corresponding contradiction is that the erotic, or even procreative, potential of the two secondaries seems nullified by their failure to live without masters: Lena and Ricardo seem to derive their humanity, i.e. above Wang or Pedro, from the reciprocal relationship with the superiors. Lena affirms this hegemony, while Ricardo's revolting proposals have the appeal of a kind of sensualist bolshevism. This repulses Lena, of course--her sights are set on the ethereal Heyst--but it is worth considering the sexual potential of two vital proletarians as thematically significant, given the state of the nobility.

Self-possessed, efficient Wang and subhuman Pedro are each, in his way, outside the ethical dialogue, and together they consolidate the parallel organization. Pedro's ape-like devotion to Jones is combined with ape-like impulses and stupidity; this should signify for our appraisal of the efficient and independent Wang. Wang has a wife and in-laws to consider, and is demonstrably not adherent to that "shadowy ideal" of Western/Christian conduct which offers (even in Victory) martyrdom as its ultimate fulfillment. In begging the question of whether Wang owes Heyst any more than Pedro owes Jones, Krieger's digressive polemic against the typically Chinese "total indifference of amoral practicality" has a "Platonic" rhetorical slant of its own, which is out of keeping with his general aesthetic principles. Krieger might have worked harder to earn his distinction between Wang's "amoral practicality" and the saving virtue of Marlow's rivet-fetish. (It is no more than that Marlow is "one of us").

There is a deeper problem than Krieger will recognize in Wang's stealing of the gun. It does symbolize Heyst's failed potency, but not in terms of his practical success. On the contrary, Ricardo stresses that Heyst's uncaring, self-possessed, even courteous comportment is unnerving to the gang. Their suspicion that he has an ace up his sleeve buys time to manoeuvre the "victory" that would not develop out of quick confrontation or flight. Contrary to Krieger, we have no reason

to doubt that Heyst was ready to do something with the gun if he had it. From a passage Krieger uses himself:

Truth to say, Heyst was not one of those men who pause much. Those dreamy spectators of the world's agitation are terrible once the desire to act gets hold of them. They lower their heads and charge a wall with amazing serenity which nothing but an undisciplined imagination can give. 142

Given the situation, it is hard to fault Heyst's plan for Lena to stay with the natives or hide while he confronts Jones. Thus, if we postulate that doing nothing and allowing the invasion to disintegrate was the best thing Heyst could do, Wang had unmindfully done him a final service. What remains anomalous is Heyst's mental abstraction--precisely the detached, even amoral, way he seems to go about these practical activities.

Krieger's interpretation reaches its low point when he finds it necessary to assert that "if Heyst had been less preoccupied with his will-lessness, he would have noticed how inconclusive the threat is..."<sup>143</sup> He asks us to believe that Conrad's killers are not to be taken seriously after all, that Heyst could have dispatched them at will even unarmed, and that Conrad puts the failure on his shrugging shoulders. For Krieger to allow even a hint of method in Heyst's madness (and the dramatic parallel could be useful) would raise the possibility that Conrad's book is more than the melodrama Krieger wants it to be. If indeed life, action, and success are naively held up against abstraction, inaction, and failure then Krieger only needs to

show the thematic falsification in a scene in which Lena's virtue teaches the lesson to Heyst. However, Krieger has distorted the context. Without belaboring the point, Conrad's villains are capable of killing Heyst the minute "he starts to prance". In context, this proposition is all that is necessary to begin considering whether, for Heyst and the ethos he represents, inaction is both ethically frustrating and a pragmatically successful strategy, while to act is heroically to die. Heyst's change of mind is not his realization of an ethical possibility, but the consequence of a "change of heart".

Heyst does not know about the events of the afternoon, Lena's deception of Ricardo, or the purity of her intentions (at least her conscious intentions, if we remember the sensual undercurrent of her encounter with the cat-man).<sup>144</sup> When Heyst comes on the scene, more than anything he must feel jealous and appalled that she is shamelessly selling herself to the bandit. But much more important and prior to these feelings, what might easily be neutralized in his father's reality-principle, is his staggering recognition of a bond with her that was there to be broken. His violent emotional reaction to the tableau should not be taken for granted in a character like Heyst. It is its own revelation: that his previously unacknowledged commitment had to be there even to consider Lena a "traitor".

This pre-ethical, pre-idealized shock has a power Krieger's "shamed ineffectuality" version lacks. Heyst tries to recover in



order to address Lena with ironic politeness: Krieger's version cannot explain why a newly-penitent Heyst would treat the heroine so coldly:

He bowed his head gravely, and said in his polite Heystian tone:  
"No doubt you acted from instinct. Women have been provided with their own weapon..." 145

Attributing her act to "instinct" is correct in a way Heyst does not understand. He takes it to be blind like Jim's jump. Rather, it is the kind of "instinct" Jim might have followed with respect to Brown, "earned" in interpersonal commitment. Yet once again Conrad undercuts this in the "objective" narrative of Victory: Lena's action is placed in the thematically ambivalent context of her affinity with Ricardo. This not only complicates the "purity" of her love for Heyst, it suggests there is no living way out of the paradox of her social position. Her victory is equated with martyrdom after all.

Heyst's revelation is undercut as well. The petulant courtesy breaks down when he discovers, simultaneous with her collapse, her more noble intentions. To find that she shares his deep feelings can shake his father's philosophy, but does not end its hegemony.

Heyst bent low over her, cursing his fastidious soul, which even at that moment kept the true cry of love from his lips in its infernal mistrust of all life. 146

Reading Heyst's conversion in this way makes a far more interesting novel since we can explore Conrad's ironic

subversion not only of romantic negativism but of the "victory" itself. This opens up thematic possibilities beyond a naive ethical affirmation, and even beyond Krieger's more sophisticated tragic submission. If the victory of heroic self-sacrifice is finally death (the "accidental" shooting symbolized an ineluctable philosophical consequence), Heyst's passive isolationism is a sin unto death when it is exposed as a repression and not a lack of object, and as a meanly pragmatic strategy. Self-sacrifice for others, which is the radical antithesis of aesthetic repression, is also constituted paradoxically as the tragic climax. Thus death defines the ultimate term of collective and individual ethical aspiration. Krieger ignores this rich Western/Christian paradox in favor of the naive ethic: "Practically the last words Heyst says are '...woe to the man whoses heart has not learned while young to hope, to love--and to put its trust in life!'"<sup>147</sup> We do not need to take the sentimental abstraction at face value as Krieger does. Conrad's anti-climax is the absurd assassination of Ricardo by his "governor": "This time he has not missed him." are Heyst's actual last words.<sup>148</sup>

The narrative context of Victory, like Marlow's narrative in the earlier novels, constitutes a closed vision which, for Krieger, demystifies the discourse of Western/Christian idealism at the same time it upholds it. In Victory Conrad's Europeans never become aware of this enclosure. To that extent the

artist's vision is consistent with Krieger's--in spite of Krieger's own reading --except there is one unrecognized "victory" in the book which belong to an unWestern, unChristian protagonist:

Wang was very pleased when he discovered him. That made everything safe, he said, and he went at once over the hill to fetch his Alfuro woman back to the hut.<sup>149</sup>

With this we cannot take the victory away from Lena to give it to Wang, an unthinkable judgment in the context of the novel. We can only find the naively affirmative surface of Victory undercut by dramatic ironies, to read it as a form of the same "tragic vision" of Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim. As such, it is a European discourse only vaguely projecting any possibility beyond itself. The story of Victory inevitably runs up against the contextual limits of its authorial narration. It seems even less ethically affirmative than the other novels. The not-said, what Marlow did not see but was embodied in a neglected Jewel, is not-indicated in the later book. Victory pretends that richly ironic and ideological narrative is an unmediated vision. In her "victory" the jewel Lena is found flawed and then broken under the pressure of relationships with Schomberg, Heyst, and Ricardo.

In reversing Krieger's interpretation, I judge Lord Jim "better" because its storyteller is not good enough, and Victory unconvincing because the text is left to the mute and insufficient self-evidence of the narrative. This reading seems

to confirm Krieger's "Manichean consequence" as the moral message of both books. This is true only if it is necessary to define "victory" as the successful qualification of an ideology: Victory perhaps is this, but Lord Jim is not. As such, Victory is a far more sophisticated melodrama than Krieger will allow it to be, but it is still a melodramatic, defeatist representation of the idealist vision. Its existentialist thematics does not guarantee aesthetic success.

Krieger has identified his critical vision with the textual surface of Conrad's work. In confirming and clarifying this, I have tried to show that unreflectively adopting this perspective precluded Krieger finding the very qualities he purports to value in art: a thematics of alienation, formal mediation of relationships, and a transcendental tragic vision. Conrad's pessimistic Logos steers the narration to the brink of death and despair, while Krieger's humble witness demands the eternal consolation of an Afterword. In considering the critics who follow, it would seem valuable to summarize the implications of Conrad's vision for Krieger's practice, as these have emerged in the foregoing critique:

1. The prerogative to judge in terms of a normative fixed Standard, which depends on a privileged metacritical awareness of one's personal inadequacy to it, carries with it a special moral exemption.
2. The interpretive discourse, based on the equivocal Standard,

- not only mediates a received vision but has a constitutive power over the events-it signifies.
3. Practical "professional" work under the "fictional" standard is no less amoral and is possibly more humanly disastrous than non-humanistic, non-idealistic (Wang-like) pragmatism.
  4. Inaction, as a philosophically inevitable consequence of vision, is not necessarily a penitential restriction on our heroic spirits, but can be an effective strategy for self-maintenance and aggrandizement.
  5. The abstract, philosophical articulation of the Western/Christian Humanist vision tends to neglect more material strata of motivation. This is true even when, as in Victory, social and sexual thematics might provide congenial paradoxes to claim the book for the same vision.
  6. Direct discourse, taken as "fiction", still seems to have its varying degrees of remoteness from the signified, which can be taken as commensurate degrees of self-recognition within the working discourse itself. The sense of fiction as obfuscation, in this light, is an ideological and not an aesthetic imperative.

Krieger's "Joseph Conrad: Action, Inaction, and Extremity" never calls into question its status as an objective and definitive statement on Conrad's thematics. Without Krieger's Preface and concluding chapter, his theoretical antinomies and qualifications savingly cut off from the real work, the notion

might arise that in novels in which objective facts are continually doubted, the objective facts of the formal constitution of the novels themselves are self-evident.

This raises the question of how a student learning to read "contextually" will make use of Krieger's metatheoretical insights. How will he take them seriously? Or, how will he persist in his practical work? The answer seems to be that a standard for being a serious student of literature is to already have, in advance, these concerns and preoccupations and doubts at the back of one's mind--to be already a "mature" humanist existentialist--and to be finally ready to resign oneself to finding some faith or diversion, like Marlow's rivets, with which to ward off the Horror. Thus Krieger's post-Kierkegaardian discourse may come full circle to embrace Calvinist predestination and the "work ethic" required to maintain existing social relations. Krieger's highly self-conscious and qualified theory (church on Sunday) justifies a practice whose very virtue is that it can divert attention from its own scripture (to enable work on Monday)--the schism exactly incarnates the Manichean contradiction Krieger is so bound up in.

Ironically, the practical limit of Krieger's self-circling paradigm is the previously noted organic complexity of his own writing, especially at the metatheoretical level where it is most free of the "extrinsic" interference of the poetic texts

which challenge it. In teaching and learning literature Krieger insists we are bound to the terms of unreflective "fixed Standards", in that to become aware of the paradoxical presuppositions of one's work is the paralytic vision of extremity. The vision occluded in referential discourse cannot be textually manifest except in artworks themselves. Then how can he account for the convincing tragic sensibility of his own essays? Is it the "aesthetic" quality of his own writing which gives Krieger his power as a critic?

### III. David Bleich: A THEORY OF THE CRITIC

#### THE TEXT

For David Bleich literary interpretation must be reconstituted within a "subjective paradigm".<sup>150</sup> The phrase, derived from Thomas Kuhn's work, implies a belief structure posed in advance and setting the limits of an organized community activity.<sup>151</sup> As such, the subjective paradigm is a context for reinterpreting the conceptual categories and resolving the contradictions of the "objective paradigm" it replaces.<sup>152</sup>

The objective paradigm posited the literary text as a "real" object, which was invested by the community of readers with an autonomous meaning and authority. For Bleich, objectivism establishes a priesthood of interpreters working toward a truth that is ultimately beyond dispute or change.<sup>153</sup> Under the subjective paradigm, on the other hand, every "object" is located in the consciousness of an individual subject, its significance validated by the community with which the subject is identified.<sup>154</sup> The reality of subjective truth is a function of inter-subjective agreement which derives from a continuing process of "negotiation", primarily through the medium of



language.<sup>155</sup> Language is the natural, evolved human structure by which an objective world is symbolically externalized and predicated on the subject's initiative.

The premise of the subjective and intersubjective construction of reality, that the world is a continuing communal production of symbolic forms, poses the interpretation of those forms as a question of subjective motivation for both author and critic. This holds not only for the immediate act of production of "objects", but for the various means of interpretation itself.<sup>156</sup> As a paradigm for literary criticism, the subjective situation of a text's credibility and importance has "revolutionary" consequences for critical practice and for the kind of authority traditional criticism can be granted. For example, THE TEXT, WRITER, etc. must be relativized within the particular interpretive communities which use them, and Bleich himself "resymbolizes" them toward openly personal ends.<sup>157</sup> (His practical method for this is the recording and contribution of "response" statements, the theory and practice of which will be taken up later).<sup>158</sup> The basis of any literary interpretation is an epistemological hypothesis: THE TEXT is a product of motivated subjective perception and symbol formation:

The subjective paradigm says that the level of primary reality is symbolic because that is how the organ of consciousness functions. Consciousness takes real objects for granted and directs its efforts either toward symbolic manipulation of real objects or toward symbolic manipulation of objects of its own creation--symbolic objects. In either case, reality is

defined symbolically. Reality is explained by resymbolization, which is the conceptualization of symbolized objects and processes in terms of subjective motives. 159

Bleich's conception of the existential basis of symbolic processes seems far less anxious than Murray Krieger's. Bleich tends to regard the symbolic as a sufficient and viable order for the human community, rather than as inadequate fiction. Like Krieger, Bleich has drawn heavily on the work of Ernst Cassirer, for whom the modes of active symbolization are defined in essentially linguistic terms.<sup>160</sup> The subject-object form of consciousness constitutes a range of present cognitive possibilities as well as implying a historical development (Bleich correlates the "ontogenetic" and "phylogenetic" development of language in Darwinian terms). Thus all forms of symbolization rely on the basic linguistic structure of the copular predication. The active linking of subject and object in a symbolic sentence is the irreducible unit of consciousness.<sup>161</sup> In THE CRITIC Bleich understands this basic symbolic activity through theories of the cognitive development of children. In terms of HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC he can explain how our concern for psychology and language has become the precondition for a new, interdisciplinary paradigm for producing knowledge in the educational system.

Initially, then, our consciousness of a literary or any other object is considered as a series of copular predications,

the result of a "subjective dialectic" in which we perceive an "other" and possibly problematic symbolic system which we predicate on the one we have learned.<sup>162</sup> This subjective dialectic can synthesize three possible modes of existence for an object (literary or otherwise), depending on interpersonal-historical circumstances at the moment of cognition:

I therefore conceive human perception to be governed by three possible perceptual initiatives: to see each experience as a real object, a symbolic object, or a person. The subjective perspective is constant and creates the occasions for perspectival shifts.<sup>163</sup>

An object can be considered "real" when there is total adequation of our initial symbolization to the experience, the dialectic is almost instantaneously resolved. For example, in an unreflective situation the phrase "pass the salt" names an indisputably real object which is dispatched from consciousness by simple sensorimotor compliance.<sup>164</sup> Interpretation (i.e. "resymbolization") is totally constrained by the occasion, and for Bleich is a triviality.

An object becomes "symbolic", on the other hand, where there is a disharmony of the symbolic systems of the subject and the perceived phenomenon, caused by some complicating motive for resymbolizing the immediate symbolization. Such motives are intersubjectively determined, e.g. as a dispute in interpretation.<sup>165</sup> We properly consider aesthetic or literary objects as "symbolic". In a discussion of his response method

Bleich criticizes the "negotiability" of responses to literature which treat it as "real" or as a personality projection. Thus a problematic "subjective dialectic" is the necessary premise for resymbolizing literature within concepts of meaning, intention, quality, or other knowledge-producing paradigms of literary criticism.<sup>166</sup>

Finally, an object is itself a subject, perceived as another person, when given authority relative to the subject's own needs for intersubjective negotiation and adequation. Of course, human beings are not always perceived or treated as persons (and it is possible to invest a non-human object with a "personality"):

People are "real", by universal agreement, but often they are only symbols, as when we live only with memories of people, or images of them. Most of the important people in our lives are cosubjects of our experience, and we confer reality onto them and then continuously renegotiate this reality with them. These negotiations are the ultimate authority for which objects are real and which symbolic and which communities shall be formed. In this way the subjective paradigm defines cognition. <sup>167</sup>

The controversial implication of this premise, i.e. that there is an immediate predicative response which is "unconscious" until resymbolized, is that a literary text does not "objectively" constrain the kind of response that can be taken seriously as producing literary knowledge. Here Bleich takes issue both with objectivist criticisms and with any "response" oriented critic who resists the quantum leap into the

new paradigm. For example, Norman Holland insists on a "transaction" of subject and object, and thereby holds on to the objectivity of a primary semantic level of linguistic meaning, while allowing for subjective variations according to "identity-themes".<sup>168</sup> For Bleich this reservation only overvalues the trivial "reality" of words-on-the-page:

It is not a matter of dispute or interpretation whether Emily [in "A Rose for Emily"] is an Eskimo or a salesgirl. But if someone says Emily is an Eskimo, this is an act of interpretation that can easily have meaning to an Eskimo. Holland is assuming that Emily is this or that: there are interpretations of Hamlet which say Hamlet is a woman: everyone understands that such interpretations are given over and above his putative designation as a man, since no one disputes the nominal designation. From a subjective standpoint, there is truth value in any such seriously given reading, and to moralistically claim violations of the text is only an attempt to say that one's own objectification is more authoritative than someone else's. At the same time, the text cannot be understood as constraining, except in a trivial sense. The prior agreement by a community of readers to accept this text transfers all constraining action to the community and its motives in handling its language. <sup>169</sup>

The objectivist assumption that "Emily is an Eskimo" must either be or not-be the case becomes either an uninteresting agreement on a trivial fact, or it is a pedantic assertion that the student's interpretive prerogative is remanded. In framing the same sentence within the subjective paradigm, we assume that "somebody says Emily is an Eskimo", and this does not qualify the credibility or importance of the statements, but rather it locates them within the intersubjective context into which the statement was contributed, consciously or unconsciously.

The motivation of the process of objectifying a text, in its relation to other people, constitutes the self-reflective and metacritical aspect of subjective criticism. We cannot understand an interpretive statement without understanding (i.e. having negotiated the parameters of) the intersubjective context of the community of interpreters. This theoretical precondition of accounting for the circumstances of knowledge production, before we can produce or accept a statement as knowledge, serves to relativize and continually question the priorities and methodologies of literary criticism. To begin, it demythologizes the New Critical norm of the pure aesthetic response, showing that it is not a function of a sovereign poetic text, but a group motive.<sup>170</sup> As a communally regulated experience of texts, the category "Literature" must be reconsidered and interpreted for what it is worth under a new paradigm of cognition and evaluation:

Literature is the locus for the organized cultivation of new language elements and habits. It has been traditionally conceived as play or amusement or art or nonsense, but these roles only contribute to its importance as a prime occasion for tangibly enlarging mental capacity and strength. Insofar as literature has been treated as a real object and criticism pursued as the local description of that object, the growth of language awareness is essentially inhibited; the decisive subjective action we all take with literature is subordinated, in educational practices and depressing cultural lethargy, to the dissemination of information and the moralistic, coercive demand to read carefully. To treat literature as a symbolic object is to shift our attention from the acts of informational perception first to the perceptual initiatives we automatically take with a work, and then to the more deliberate

conceptualizations we then synthesize from these initiatives. I have identified these latter conceptualizations as resymbolizations --the familiar act of interpretation; I am now saying that interpretation is an explanatory procedure toward a symbolic object, and I am identifying these initiatives as subjective response. 171

### THE WRITER

The subjective purpose of any act of interpretation is to arrive at a shared explanation and evaluation of a phenomenon. The very latitude of readers' individual responses is one prevailing phenomenon of literary experience. A second, and perhaps initially inhibiting, perception is that the text is an expression of the consciousness of the author.<sup>172</sup> For Bleich the subject reader and the subject writer provide the two basic pathways for criticism. Both the activity of reading and that of writing can be objectivized in terms of "response", such that the ultimate explanatory power of interpretation is in discovering the motivation of that response.

The idea of the author has special significance because we impute to the reading of literature "a feeling of communicative involvement with the author" as a natural symbolic function:

If the reader is already familiar with the author's language system--his biography--the symbolizations are governed, in part, by this knowledge. To the extent that a reader is unfamiliar with the author or his language system, however, he will invent an author as part of the normal activity of response and interpretation. The symbolization of an author is as much a perception of the text as the isolation of formal or thematic units. Increased concentration on the symbolized author serves

many familiar psychological functions: localizing one's own feelings and thoughts in someone else; providing a human, motivational origin for novel meanings; bringing authority into one's reading experience; and so on. Sometimes the cultic reputation of an author is part of the original motive to read his work. In a pedagogical situation, however, unless there is a deliberate separation of the individually symbolized author from the author synthesized by communally accepted documentation, negotiations between private perceptions and public knowledge cannot proceed. 173

Bleich is concerned to eliminate any confusion of the "real" author, nominal subject of biographical documentation, and the "symbolic" author of the reader's response. Under the objective paradigm this distinction was seen as the contradiction underlying the "intentional fallacy".<sup>174</sup> The fallacy was to invoke a putative author as final authority for interpretations based on his "intention":

To try to define intention where no negotiation is possible results either in a tautology --he did it; therefore he intended it--or in an imaginary fact--what he really meant was this. 175

The subjective paradigm reforms this to a "hermeneutical" circularity promoting a more epistemologically credible, emotionally independent and mature conception of the author. In the "subjective dialectic" the language system of the author is a perception which is resymbolized through negotiation in a reading community. The credibility and the importance of the concept of author is determined in the negotiative process, according to members' initial subjective responses and the kind of knowledge they seek. For Bleich, wanting to know why a



particular author wrote a work at a particular time is "analogous to the common interpersonal demand to account for one's behavior in important matters".<sup>176</sup> In this sense, readers question the putative author about the text, i.e. treating the text as a complex form of the same kind of dialectical predication as their own responses. Interpreting and explaining the text and authorship in this way implies human motivation shared by reader and author, removing the godlike patina of authorship.<sup>177</sup> It is worth noting that the importance of our knowledge of an author's motives increases with the availability of credible evidence.<sup>178</sup> Where a great deal of biography is available, Bleich finds that "biographical understanding becomes the starting point for response, interpretation, and other forms of literary pedagogy".<sup>179</sup> Bleich does not consider it a serious handicap for criticism if biographical data is missing for a writer: there are other subjectively valid initiatives to be pursued in these cases. What is important is that the real status of the author be made clear.

Bleich differentiates his approach to the author as source of meaning from the objectivist hermeneutics of E. D. Hirsch.<sup>180</sup> For Bleich, the latter's dependence on factual evidence tends, paradoxically, to limit his analysis at just the point where "determinacy" of meaning must level off anyway. Bleich criticizes Hirsch's distinction between authorial meaning and critical significance by locating the concept of determinate

meaning itself in Hirsch's contemporary paradigm, biased with its values and criteria. He notes that for Hirsch the author's "intended meanings" are non-negotiable, or "real", definitions of words in their historical contexts. These may be paradigmatically credible or correct, but they are not likely to satisfy the indeterminate, "symbolic" questions of literary authorship which define its collective interest. Bleich finds the fundamental limit of Validity in Interpretation to be that it cannot resolve, or even confront, a "major" interpretive issue, i.e. an issue in significant critical dispute.<sup>181</sup>

When Bleich subjectivizes the question of validity, then, he inverts (or dialectically reverses) the meaning/significance contradiction in order to negate it. He achieves this simply by emphasizing what seems to be a natural fact: the "response, or spontaneously significant symbolization by a reader, comes before the elucidation of "meaning" in a critical resymbolization. The problem must then be posed as Bleich's chapter title indicates: as "the conception and documentation of the author" in that order. Validity

... may be conceived in terms of two issues: the reader's de facto conception of the author before and during reading and its role in his perception of the reading experience; and the kind of biographical documentation sought in consequence of this perception.<sup>182</sup>

Discussing two responses of "Mr. D" to James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Bleich explores the consequences of second reading, especially in conjunction with

the author's biography, for the response and conceptualization of the author.<sup>183</sup> This involves subjective evaluation of the motives for literary creation, informing the reader's tendency to give the author a surrogate parental authority. Such critical understanding of the author is a way of growing up. The first theoretical issue is what it can mean to "know" an author at different times under different circumstances. In a context involving pedagogical authority it becomes misleading to claim that various critics "knowing" Joyce is more than a figure of speech by which they can "... say something different about what they think they know...".<sup>184</sup> Further,

Mr. D's responses show that the interest in the author to begin with can be directly understood as a subjective function; it follows that the way one conceives the author in a critical judgement is likewise subjectively governed and, more importantly, observable in oneself. For people with such interests, the locus of objectification is the author; the greater the familiarity with his work, the easier it is to conceive him as a distinct individual--to objectify him. But such an objectification is idle, and even unfair, unless it represents the construction of the author out of the materials of one's experience with his work and other available information. "Knowing an author" means knowing one's own conception of the author.<sup>185</sup>

The second theoretical issue involves the documentation of one's significant conception of the author, moving toward "determinacy" of authorial meaning in terms of the paradigm of literary biography. What is determinate is not the author's "original" meaning, but the imputation of it by readers in a critical community. Toward this end Bleich deals with the

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progress of his own complex conceptualization of the author of The Turn of the Screw.<sup>186</sup> Eventually he identifies James with the feminine narrator of the story. This identification is subjectively motivated by Bleich's strong response to her, and it leads him to adopt "for the purposes of the reading experience" the role of a biographer and "author" in order to manage the ambivalent feelings aroused by her.<sup>187</sup> The interpersonal association motivating this possibility is with Bleich's former teacher, and James's biographer, Leon Edel.

Following this, biographical documentation must acknowledge the circumstances which initiate the search for it. Bleich finds that as a child James often imagined himself a little girl in order to escape family demands. The conflict follows into later life:

For me, the biographical meaning of the story is overcoming both long-standing psychological fears of sexuality and conflicts of domestic power as well as then-current professional doubts partially precipitated by the catastrophic failure of his play, Guy Donville, and by the diminished popularity of his fiction. This meaning entails a somewhat different conception of the author than that proposed by the more authoritative reader, Leon Edel. But my documentation is the same as his.<sup>188</sup>

For Bleich biographical information is the privileged form of documentation of meaning, yet its function remains to substantiate and develop subjective initiative. Biography increases the authority and negotiability of a particular kind of response and interest, and it provides a critical perspective

on the quasi-parental author. In its lack of objectivity and in its functionality we can compare Bleich's conception of the author to Krieger's mythologizing of the "author" and the "creative act" for his aesthetic text, and aesthetic response. The crucial difference is that Bleich's "myth" of the author is radically dependent on current subjective and intersubjective factors, and its values are thus historically contingent, sensitive to nuances, and dialectical rather than programmatic in implementation. Even so, for both Bleich and Krieger the author serves as a locus of authority, and a reading process of identification and subsequent critical evaluation gives the critic a matured "vision" and independent perspective. Bleich's two stages of conception and documentation, based on affective response and resymbolization, share something of the quality of Krieger's movement from "person" to professional "persona". The public context in which a subject negotiates a conception of the author finally links subjective authority to existing authority structures and their contradictions: a problem we will return to in following discussions.<sup>189</sup>

#### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT

T. S. Kuhn's original concept of "paradigms" was in one sense a historiographic device to overcome what he described as a programmatic falsification of the history of physical science.<sup>190</sup> As presented in textbooks, the illusion of

continuous historical development serves to maintain a productive and harmonious intellectual community but also limits its subjective appeal and social interests to objective "puzzle-solving", as if science exists to no other end.<sup>191</sup>

Bleich notes that our ability to become conscious of "paradigms" coincides in history with the subjective paradigm.<sup>192</sup> Thus we must understand our historical perspective as serving the contemporary community and its members.

Historical consciousness, in these terms, becomes an activity of "group formation": this can mean either our own self-definition in a collective activity or a limiting circumscription of our group interests in relation to other, now historical, groups:

The term group formation may be understood in at least two ways. It can refer to a collection of people who form themselves into a group, or it can refer to a person (or collection of persons) who forms a group out of a collection of things (not people: if one person groups other people, those people accept themselves, provisionally, as things). Put another way, an individual can only join a group of "first persons" (in the grammatical sense); he can only propose that second or third persons are groups or parts of groups. Consequently, two sets of motives are of interest: motives for affiliating oneself with a group, or joining, or knowing what one has in common with certain others; and motives for cognitively distinguishing one's self and one's group from others by defining other groups in a range from "everyone else" to just "you" or "him". Through the idea of person all languages make either this distinction or analogous ones. Group definition is a natural result of the use of language.

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The definition of historical periods, genres, and other literary regularities is framed within the authorizing and

historical limit of the paradigm. Approaching these through subjective response statements both emphasizes the collective motives and interests behind the grouping, and

shows how subjective these categories are, suggests just what sort of truth value they can have, and provides a collective means of helping to establish new categories more responsive to changes in local motives for formulating new knowledge. Two matters will be of primary concern... collective self-definition expressed through the acceptance of a single author's cultural prominence and societal definition of a literary historical period through the exercise of its own subjective values. 194

Literary periods and other historical categories, then, have no objective value apart from the predisposition of co-respondents to objectify them in terms of contemporary needs and values. Under the subjective paradigm any need or value is self-consciously recognized to be an extension of one's personal historicity, in the shifting context of one's group affiliations and interests.

Bleich's presentation of twenty-one students' assessments of the poet Robert Frost is used to demonstrate not only that interpretive categories are socially pervasive and serve a unifying (one might say "ideological") function, but that they also discourage independent inquiry by proposing an "image" of the poet which is subjectively immune to new information or knowledge.<sup>195</sup> In recognizing it, Bleich does not explain this comfortable image of Frost irritably (e.g. as ignorance or "mystification"), but notes the positive motive it serves, i.e.

the implicit demand of young readers for a more responsive, emotionally satisfying knowledge:

The popularity of Frost and his work is due in large part to the motives of younger readers (in our culture, at this time) to find authorities and heroes who express traditional American values, to engage the sentiments attached to those values, but to bypass moralistic pressures for objective knowledge. For most of these respondents the "real" Robert Frost is less important than the imagined poet who ameliorates pedagogical difficulties while encouraging a sense of personal integration into the culture. 196

Bleich then turns to a more involved response to a particular poem to show how the tradition in which the work is perceived entails a complex of received cultural and societal values which are often defenses against the possibility of a conflicting historical perspective.

More abstract and schematic historical and generic categories are also proposals of knowledge to specific communities. Their creation is an expression of collective self-interests which remain unconscious under objectivism, but becomes an overt, shared self-definition of a group under the subjective paradigm. Here Bleich's distinction between "real objects" and "symbolic objects" becomes a crucial qualification of historical criticism. Objectivist historicisms purport to explain historical phenomena in the same movement with which they classify them, i.e. they posit an overall explanatory structure to rationalize the process.<sup>197</sup> The archetype for this is Darwin's classification of living things in an order which



identifies the characteristics of the species with their origins in the evolutionary system: a species is its place in natural history. Bleich maintains that literary objects are not "species" of this sort, and cannot be explained by referring their topical features to a literary order.<sup>198</sup> This is because symbolic objects are precisely not self-explanatory except when a paradigm posits them as real objects:

Symbolic objects are related to one aspect of one species: to treat such objects as having an independent history would be something like trying to systematize the development of dog food from carrion to Alpo without reference to the dogs' general living habits... To say that three works 500 years apart from one another all manifest the same myth is the kind of knowledge that can be understood only in the light of the present community's motives for declaring this knowledge. As a piece of objective knowledge, it is about as consequential as knowing that classic Greek plays, Elizabethan plays, and modern plays all have about the same performance time. <sup>199</sup>

What is consequential, then, is the paradigm. The explanatory potential for a literary-historical theory of classification must be subjective: the class that is formed articulates and accounts for the most salient motives of the reading community at that time.

Bleich's discussion of historical and generic classification insinuates that they are at first largely abstracted from, and can then be largely qualified by, biographical information. His discussion of "scatological" verses by Jonathan Swift compares prevailing critical assessments of the writer's "neoclassicism" (Bonamy Dobree and

Norman O. Brown) to a response by one of his students.<sup>200</sup> The established critics are concerned with their positions in respective paradigmatic communities, and they demonstrate a tendency to have ready-made preconceptions which are unsuitable for negotiation of a symbolic object. Such a paradigm is decisively limiting:

Although Dobree's and Brown's views of Swift are opposite, each emphasizes parts of the same descriptive paradigm for the eighteenth century the issue of order and disorder. Mr. G raises altogether different matters: disillusionment with women and sexuality and the problems of presenting these thoughts in poetry. Also, the origin of Mr. G's thoughts is different; he reports his reading experience while Dobree and Brown abstracted theirs before reporting.<sup>201</sup>

Bleich's subsequent biographical documentation corroborates Mr. G almost to move out of the realm of historical analysis altogether, into psychobiography. Thus, the "aim to understand literary experience in terms of pre-literary language habits that are governed by each person's history of interpersonal development. This aim, in turn, is part of a growing orientation in contemporary thought around subjectivity and the nature of intellection."<sup>202</sup> Bleich may be ultimately more concerned to demonstrate that subjectivism can account for literary history than he is to profitably use the notion. He vindicates this attitude with a vicissitude of history itself: the advent of the subjective paradigm.

## THE CRITIC

A critic's "subjective response" is the foundation of Bleich's critical method, where knowledge is produced within a particular group's context for resymbolizing its members' perceptions. It is an important methodological premise that "perception" is considered pragmatically as equivalent to the subject's initial process of symbolizing the object--again, either as "real", as "symbolic", or as another subject. Perception in the form of symbolic activity is the defining structure of consciousness, and moreover this structure is inherently linguistic.<sup>203</sup> Consciousness is the active predication of a percept's "name", constituted within the subject-object form of a primary sentence. Grammar itself both facilitates and demands consciousness of ourselves as subjects in a "subjective dialectic":<sup>204</sup>

The totality of experience is double, or dialectical. We do not think of a thing without a name or a name without a thing; that is the nature of human self-awareness. The name tells what something is: that is, the name objectifies the thing. The mere fact that things have names reifies our sense of the objectivity of things. Our sense of reality depends on our separation between the concept and the experience, a separation which appears to us as an identity of concept and appearance...

The ability to form and use a symbol is the same as the capacity for predication ...Language is built up when previous predications are reciprocally assimilated to a present experience, rendering that experience into a new concept. <sup>205</sup>

Objectivism claims not only to define symbolic objects in epistemological terms, but to explain them ontologically as

"real" objects: within a universal religious or empirical-deductive framework, or a combination of the two. The subjective paradigm reduces such objectivity along with all other symbolic forms to a dialectic of motivating needs, desires and demands of people for each other.<sup>206</sup> The felt adequacy of such subjective explanation is the motivating factor in the increasing contemporary use of linguistic and psychoanalytic models for understanding human behavior.

Before moving to the empirical basis of Bleich's conception of the critic and response, we can demonstrate the difference between subjectivist and objectivist criteria of science through Bleich's critique of Noam Chomsky.<sup>207</sup> Bleich cites a lecture by Chomsky as a particular intersubjective occasion for the distribution of knowledge, in which the linguist objected to Jean Piaget's mere "description" and lack of "explanation" of human cognitive development. Chomsky went on to posit an "innate" mathematical code for the process, locating it in human genetic structure.

Assuming Chomsky is correct in correlating the genetic and linguistic codes, Bleich points out that rather than explaining the nature of language "this information only explains the origin of linguistic rules". Chomsky's paradigm can only assume that there must be language, and can explain only the form it will take. Bleich's critique changes the paradigm of inquiry from the objective question "What is language?" to asking

self-reflexively "What is the nature of our investigation, or understanding, of language?"<sup>208</sup> Seeking a motivational explanation for knowledge itself, Bleich subjectivizes both the need for linguistic rules and Chomsky's scientific objectification of them, and he finds Chomsky himself describing a system rather than explaining it. Chomsky's proposal is understood, in part, as an attempt to protect the paradigm of formal linguistics and its power of explanation from the more subjective one of motivational psychology: a theory of mental functioning which is not reducible to it. When Chomsky finds a biophysical "explanation" for language he begs an assumption that the mind can be specified and explained to its own satisfaction (i.e. our subjective satisfaction) as an objective structure.

How can we satisfactorily objectify our own minds? Or, how can "the mind" exist as anything but an objectification, a concept? Bleich proposes and authorizes the subjective paradigm as a basis for producing scientific knowledge about the acquisition and use of language, but without violating the subjectivist premise, i.e. without claiming that his concept of the thinking subject is objective or eternal. Because both the subject and knowledge about the subject are constituted as motivated linguistic forms, language is the medium which makes the object available to us, and language is the phenomenon of subjectivity as articulate self-expression (response). Showing

that Chomsky's lecture is in part a "response", Bleich's resymbolization of it includes and reconciles both the causal-mathematical and "hermeneutical" (Kuhnian) models of scientific knowledge. By resymbolizing Chomsky's knowledge within the subjective paradigm, Bleich increases its explanatory power and explains Chomsky's place in a scientific community.

Consciousness is a process of symbolization structured like language, and it is motivated by affect. Bleich's conception of THE CRITIC integrates structuralist theories of cognition with a psychoanalytic theory of motivation.<sup>209</sup> Before turning to this, we can note that Ernst Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms is a common source for Bleich's ideas and those of Murray Krieger's formalist tradition.<sup>210</sup> Both critics adhere to a philosophical idealism and characterize literary "fictions" and scientific "facts" as equally "symbolic" forms. Further, both argue that symbolic activity is an inhibition or sublimation of an impulse to direct action. We have seen that Krieger avoids psychological speculation about the substitute status of the medium, considering it a tragic and inescapable human condition. For Krieger the motive for symbol formation is moot: what is important is the "purposeful purposelessness" of the aesthetic object and the convincing and saving illusion of aesthetic response. While Bleich rejects this normative conception of response, it is important that for him as well as Krieger the privileged symbolic function is that of the synthetic

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metaphor.<sup>211</sup> De-emphasizing the normative structures of symbolic forms as such, Bleich has followed Cassirer along lines developed by Suzanne Langer, toward explaining the evolution of forms as they correspond to human needs. Even Langer does not go far enough in particularizing the "need" for symbolic objectification, and ultimately this requires a move from her phylogenetic and anthropological research into ontogenetic paradigms of motivational and cognitive psychology.<sup>212</sup>

Bleich has become a recognized authority on the development of affect and intelligence in infants and children, orienting his work toward a synthesis of cognitive and motivational theories. Historically, cognitive theory has developed within linguistic paradigms and emphasizes stages of the acquisition of syntactical structures. Psychoanalytic theories of motivation are concerned with stages of the emotional relationship with parent-figures. Bleich's paradigm coordinates these apparently exclusive frameworks by interpolating empirical findings from them, toward a motivational explanation for each advance in intellectual capacity.<sup>213</sup>

The onset of representational thinking in infants occurs at the same time the infant objectifies itself in relation to mother. Eighteen months is a pan-cultural average age for the advent of symbolic activity, and this converges with the child's acquisition of other intellectual categories (e.g. object constancy, causality, space and time, imitation, and play).

Bleich's discussion of cognitive and motivational research findings grounds the formal descriptions of levels of syntactical sophistication in the content of infant needs and concerns. Symbols are representations by which a child begins to cope with puzzling or frustrating disappearances of the object (mother). Child psychology can be seen to inform what was discussed in Krieger as a structuralist metaphysics of "absence" and fictional "presence".<sup>214</sup>

The motive for the mental representation of absent objects and people is the frustration of their absence to the child... When an infant learns to think and say that a person is "gone" or "away", the act of attaching "goneness" to the conjured and presumably desired object is an act of control or management by the child that substitutes a cognitive initiative for an affective frustration.<sup>215</sup>

Bleich makes an important distinction between the pre-syntactical "naming" stage and the eventual construction of sentences within a subject-object dialectic.<sup>216</sup> He interprets infant utterances to almost hermeneutically recover the personal meanings beneath a rudimentary sentence. Findings are that transition objects (e.g. Teddy bears) are given names, powers, etc. according to feelings of dependence or independence; the "gone" construction (compare Freud's fort/da) is a cultural universal; the libidinal object is identified with the permanent object; the activity of naming is a sharing or social union with reference to an objectified "third person" (the name). This and other evidence links "gaming" to a specific conjunction of



interpersonal relationships, although objectification has not yet taken place.

The next cognitive stage, predication, is a definitive advance over the pre-syntactic identification of a name with a thing. It consists of what Piaget describes as "reciprocal assimilation": the dialectical synthesis of a topic (verbal name, "text") with a comment (class concept, "context").<sup>217</sup> Predication is the advent of true symbolic thought, and entails the problematics of mediation since both terms of the act are independent of the "real" or immediate presence of the referent of the topic. A symbolic response, at even its most rudimentary level, affirms the absence and contingency of the "object", and becomes a creative symbolic initiative:

Without the capacity to comment on the topic the naming of it is dependent on either immediate experience or the child's expectation of its immanent appearance. Learning to comment on the topic is dependent on just the opposite set of factors, namely, the lack of perceptual experience and the understanding that the object may not appear except by instrumental conscious demand for it. When the child links up "Mommy" and "gone", he creates a dependent relationship between the two ideas which substitutes for each idea's dependency on real experience ... There is a kind of internal mental economy in this act of inventing new means, the same economy which is manifest in jokes and all forms of metaphors. Metaphors combine two perceptual schemata in an especially satisfying way. Metaphor-makers are poets, and in Greek poet means maker to begin with. The poet is a maker in this ontogenetically archetypal sense, since he is doing what the infant does when he combines for the first time two hitherto experience-dependent classes of ideas. <sup>218</sup>

We have noted that the active initiative of symbol formation is

premised on the inhibition of action, in the infant, for sensorimotor gratification. The advent of representation coincides and is "metaphorically" linked with the problematics of infant anality; an initial positive interest and a subsequent frustration in having to give up the product. Tantrums and refusals are sensorimotor manifestations of a sense of loss when the self is objectified, and anality is part of the attempt to maintain ego-integrity.<sup>219</sup> The ultimate ability to think of the object as apart-from a self is both a compensation and an initiative: the symbolic sentence transforms a loss into the possibility of representing and repeating the object's appearance (fort/da).

Relative to linguistic "formalist" models of symbolic process, motivational research demonstrates the elaborate buildup of sensorimotor and affective "intelligence" (Piaget) which accompanies every level of cognition.<sup>220</sup> Moreover, the formation of a symbolic object is an act which, by definition, requires consciousness of the self as subject. Thus syntactical structures themselves encode the "subjective dialectic". The paradigm case for Bleich's association of symbolic process with emotional development is Helen Keller's "discovery" of predicative meaning. Under circumstances which a genetic theory like Chomsky's would not entirely explain, Helen's and her teacher's mutual frustration, a tantrum, "transitional objects", and a joyful reunion motivate the "naming" of water and the

revelation that "everything has a name".<sup>221</sup>

Another dimension of Helen Keller's or any child's realization of the subject-object dialectic is that the "teacher's" occupation involves an element of "taming" the presyntactical savage, teaching obedience to a linguistic norm. Bleich has been forthright on the question of personal authority in pedagogical relationships, and he assumes these have some of the complex dynamics of parent-child relationships.<sup>222</sup> A child does not alone decide to learn language, it is in part a "booby prize" or compensation for a frustration schema which is imposed from without. Similarly the teacher's authority-as institutional figure, as a personality, or as invested with the power to interpret an "author"--provides the primary interpersonal context for a student's objectification of literary experience. The student-subject predicates the literary "comment" dialectically on the teacher's "topic": this is the subjective dialectic of the classroom experience.

Murray Krieger's concept of the critical persona recognized this subjective "socializing" function of the symbolic in theory, and he proposed the practical necessity for normative control of the literary text, its creation, and its experience to be able to arrive at a transcendental order of vision. For Bleich, self-reflection on the critical "persona" is not an entirely theoretical principle, but is made practicable if we consciously resymbolize our responses in terms of motives for

them. Consciousness of our own motivations takes us out of the "authoritarian" model of education and into a dialectical, intersubjective context in which these motives can be negotiated--not as qualifiers but as the privileged, authorizing criteria of knowledge. Values are the enabling condition of "facts", and values are in principle negotiable as long as we remain aware of their functional relation to subjective and intersubjective motives:

Consciousness, which includes language, intelligence thought and affect, may be thought of as an organ motivated to define objects and cognizant of itself in terms of motives. In this way the concept of motivation keeps rational thought processes consistent with Heisenberg's formulation that the object of scientific research is now "man's investigation of nature" and with Freud's view that the mind "is itself a constituent part of the world which we set out to investigate". Objects come into existence by a subjective act of discrimination, and they gain authority and credibility through intersubjective ratification. Motives come into existence in just the same way, and they gain explanatory authority in the same way. The ideas of motivation, of consciousness as an organ, and of the subjective paradigm permit the study of language-dependent experiences to proceed by including local instances of formal logical explanation, but by disallowing such explanation its absolute constraining authority. Once we admit that language is susceptible to objectification in only a limited way, a more general and satisfying explanation of language experience becomes available.

The idea of resymbolization is both an explanation of language and an explanation of explanation. 223

It was impossible for Bleich to use Chomsky's theory of cognition without referring to Chomsky's motives for proposing it, and this accountability is institutionalized under the subjective paradigm. What is important about our new scientific

knowledge of the subjective and dialectical formation of symbols is that our very self-awareness of it--as a historical or phylogenetic adaptation of the "organ", consciousness -- creates a symbolic reality that can be considered as such. The psychologistic and linguistic paradigms are useful not for mediating some "real" knowledge of the "mind", but for the insight they afford us into the nature of mediation itself: its purposes, its limits, and its problems.

Finally, the interpretive community resymbolizing scientific work is, as a matter of self-definition, more closely tied to certain nominal definitions, rationalist methodologies, and empirical referents than a community of literary critics negotiating the meaning or value of the symbolic object. This is because an emotionally satisfying resymbolization of response to literature is less likely to be achieved by such rigorous objectification. Bleich proposes a subjective alternative in his own literary theory.

#### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC

"A change in paradigm is not progress toward anything but development from something".<sup>224</sup> The hermeneutical circularity of Bleich's concept of history is completed in understanding history as a motivated resymbolization of the subjective paradigm itself (i.e. as a retrospective projection). The epistemological premise is also a historical and ethical

premise, and it applies to literary studies or any other context for producing knowledge. Bleich links his work to a Darwinian-relativist paradigm of the history of science and the first chapter of Subjective Criticism is a transdisciplinary survey of the scientific, sociological and philosophical correlatives of the new subjectivism.<sup>225</sup> Thus, our new ability to perceive the production of knowledge as subjectively motivated symbol formation, by individuals in linguistic communities, is a contemporary "phylogenetic" correction of or adaptation of our "organ", consciousness. It compensates for the hypertrophy of "objectification" since the Enlightenment.<sup>226</sup> For Bleich, this intellectual Darwinism accentuates a sense of contradiction between science and religion, and offers the subjective paradigm as the resolution: it explains both in terms of the logic of resymbolization.<sup>227</sup>

We are now aware that the empirical-deductive sciences have never interrogated "reality" in more than a nominal sense. Rather, they constitute a systematic "hermeneutics" which is analogous to the interpretation of scripture or art. Science is methodologically different from these because it provides different kinds of subjective and intersubjective gratification, e.g. Kuhn's observation of the "puzzle-solving" mentality of physicists.<sup>228</sup> The truth value of important knowledge about the world is not its relation to things as they are or must be, but is founded in a particular community's negotiated validation of

the authority of the truth claim. The contradiction between facts and values has been superseded in that a phenomenon becomes both credible and important when it is constituted by communal validation.<sup>229</sup>

When the auspices for doing intellectual work are identified forthrightly as a feeling of satisfaction, derived from community participation, the "object" of investigation becomes a symbolic medium. We can no longer use objectivity as an excuse for ethical neutrality, or consider the personal or social as "external" criteria of value. In this way the subjective paradigm incorporates Kuhn's evaluation of smoothly-working "normal science", and provides a self-aware or meta-perspective within the interpretive community itself. Knowledge is validated according to the success or difficulty of intersubjectively negotiating it, i.e. how well it develops the paradigm. This further implies a continuing readjustment of the paradigm to the needs, priorities, and subsequent contributions of its individual members, and to other groups with whom they are related. Subjectivist paradigms must be established as frames of reference which are motivated by the desire to formulate knowledge, not about the object in question, but about the object's potential as a symbolic medium of collective activity. For example, in these terms modern nuclear physics would be no more or less a development of useful objects for group response and resymbolization than English literature: what

is emphasized is the kind of satisfaction to be gotten from that kind of work.

The intersubjectively defined, paradigmatic "space" for individual cognition is explicitly an ethical and political space, as described by Roger Poole in Toward Deep Subjectivity.<sup>230</sup> Bleich notes that in Poole's work a sense of empirical, socioeconomic, and ecological space is identified with the "metaphoric" sense "...that every human act, even private ones, has some consequence for some other human beings; such acts must touch on other people's personal 'space'".<sup>231</sup> This has a transdisciplinary implication of "reciprocal assimilation" motivated by the survival instinct:

The idea of ethical space is especially compelling because its function is conceived exactly as the function of celestial space in general relativity, namely, that the number and needs of human bodies "curves" the space according to themselves. If space is improperly allocated, either through hoarding of wealth, ecological contamination, or the use of nuclear weapons, the human race will become maladaptive, and life will end. Poole claims that the need for subjectivity is dictated by the imminence of all these threats to human life. The new form of thought can help produce the large-scale perceptions needed to understand the interconnectedness of the threats and increase the sense of urgency in reducing them. This argument suggests the Darwinian basis of the ethical and political reach of the subjective paradigm: it is a matter of survival of the human species.<sup>232</sup>

Radically subjectivizing the objects of academic study and the pursuit of knowledge has important consequences for the long-standing contradiction of religious faith and science. Both are functions of the objective paradigm, and posit superordinate



modes of being and truth which are paradoxically necessary and inaccessible to human cognition. Bleich categorizes Karl Popper's quasi-mystical metaphors of the "richness" and "depth" of scientific truths along with the frustrating obligations of orthodox religious "approaches":

The essay Stephen Dedalus wrote contained the heresy that the soul in relation to the Creator was "without possibility of ever approaching nearer". When this heresy was called to his attention (by, of all people, his English teacher), he corrected it with the phrase "without possibility of ever reaching". This is precisely Popper's attitude with regard to the world's "ultimate essence": without the possibility of ever reaching. I think that the origin of this attitude is in the religious dogma of human helplessness and inner corruption. The notion of objective truth has the same epistemological status as God: it is an invented frame of reference aimed at maintaining prevailing social practices.<sup>233</sup>

Literary pedagogy within the objective paradigm has been constituted as a priestly hierarchy, assuming that the "approach" of those at the top will come nearest the essence. In the subjective paradigm the essence is seen as a construct motivated to protect the hierarchical paradigm of its inception. Rather than striving for an exteriorized and unreachable limit, subjectivism defines a human order of possibility as the only one that matters. The new paradigm conceives of interpretation not as an approach to but as development from a collectively defined strategy or problematic, and it incorporates motivational explanations and self-understanding at both the social and individual levels of analysis.<sup>234</sup>

With respect to traditional, formal literary categories we have seen that the subjective framework can accommodate genre-concepts, historical research, etc. It is not limited to encouraging spontaneous associations and it is not anarchical. However, the "objectivity" of formal categories or analytic projects depends on the conditions of their definition by the community. Moreover, the explanatory authority of each category must be located subjectively in the motives of group members and the possibility of negotiating their needs in those terms. Subjective criticism posits evaluation as a prior condition of interpretive validity, and Bleich understands critical theory as serving the crucial contemporary need to establish practical priorities:

...I will outline what I think are five main areas in which teaching and research in subjective criticism can proceed. I will try to show how in each area, both pedagogy and development of new knowledge are one and the same practice, so that, on a day to day basis, all those in the classroom may explore their feelings in and about the study process. Most of the areas that I will discuss will bear an obvious relation to topics that are presently accepted in most curriculums. My argument here is that all of these areas go together, that new, more productive connections can be made among them, and that those connections can help create a new conception of the discipline of English. This conception depends on our recognition of the primary role played by considerations of individual and group subjectivity in our thinking about language, literature, psychology, and knowledge in general.<sup>235</sup>

Bleich's first main area is "Critical Epistemology", a further development of the metatheoretical paradigms which have been outlined here.<sup>236</sup> This also implies continual renegotiation

of these paradigms, especially in the way they are implemented in the educational process. Individuals who make up a class or other intellectual community must remain aware of how and why they want to acquire the knowledge on which the group has been predicated. The negotiation of their differing responses is recognized to define the epistemological authority of knowledge itself. Clearly the nature of response and its authorization will vary with the kind of knowledge sought, and this constitutes the epistemological problem.

The second area in developing the explanation of symbolic processes in concepts of "Language Acquisition and Symbol Formation: Talking and Writing".<sup>237</sup> The motivational basis of these faculties must be understood and practically involved in the method of instruction. Understanding a reader's "...underlying attitudes, inhibitions, and pleasures with language" will associate linguistic skills to a feeling of communicative involvement with real, corresponding people. The moralistic, coercive demand for "literacy" can be re-conceived in this context.

Bleich's third area is the theory and practice of "Subjective Response in the Study of Literature", and it will be the focus of extended discussion below.<sup>238</sup> It is important to note that within the educational paradigm Bleich does not use student responses for either statistical (c.f. Allen Purves) or global psychoanalytic (Norman Holland) reduction, but to produce

knowledge which is responsible to and affirmative of the particular group of its inception.

The fourth area is "Biographical Criticism" as outlined above in THE WRITER<sup>239</sup>. Again, Bleich first emphasizes the retrospective understanding of a writer's intense motives for symbolic expression. Then, knowledge about the writer has a liberating effect on the reader's own tendencies to find a parent-surrogate in the author.

Bleich's last proposed initiative is in "Children's Literature". It is a logical extension of his hypothesis about infantile language acquisition and the function of symbolism in mediating developmental conflicts. Thus, the interest is not in typology or explication, but in investigating and coordinating children's life situations with their interests in particular books at particular times. Most crucially, it involves adults coming subjectively to terms with their own motives for promulgating books (or censoring them, in some cases) and the dynamics of their own interaction with books and children in the pedagogical context.<sup>240</sup>

These five practical initiatives will be reconsidered in "Criticism in Practice", below.

THEORY: Literary Response and the Subjective Paradigm

The theory of subjective criticism seems to depend on a two-stage model of the production of knowledge about literature. First there is the subjective dialectic, predicating the literary "text" on the reader's "context". As this articulated response, textual experience is then negotiated within the critical community, as it defines itself, and is resymbolized, or interpreted toward literary meaning in terms of collective interests. The subjective paradigm is intended to be a step beyond traditional positivist belief structures. It puts its own product, the knowledge it formulates, within the critical purview of a psychoanalytic understanding of the motivation for knowledge itself. "The most important epistemological contribution of psychoanalysis is precisely the spectacular demonstration that rationality is itself a subjective phenomenon".<sup>241</sup> This has led Bleich to propose a very particular and important function for literary as compared with scientific paradigms. First, literary objects are important and satisfying only in their existence as "symbolic objects", and academic questions about their real references and literal meanings are trivial except when they pertain and are given authority on questions of symbolic importance. In this way we can understand the very tenacity of "Problems" of literary interpretation as a motivated need for symbolizations which cannot be reduced to the nominal or real level of agreement. Understanding that meaning

is motivated, rather than a characteristic of objects themselves, locates it in the various communities which construe and solve, or otherwise deal with, problems of interpretation. Literature thus seems to consist of a group of texts whose constitutive characteristics are a "symbolic" irreducibility and the intense emotional investment of authors and readers in them. Critical method should attempt the most comprehensive possible level of experience and explanation of literature's subjective impact.

The first theoretical question concerns the preferred form of the statement of "subjective" response, i.e. how one can best communicate feelings about literature. This raises an epistemological and psychological issue of how verbal response relates to the intuitive dialectic of subject and object. Further, there is the "sociological" question of how kinds of responses are evaluated to determine which are most useful (i.e. negotiable) in subjectivist literary criticism. The resymbolization of a response depends, of course, on the particular knowledge-producing context into which it is being contributed. In a response-oriented paradigm, a respondent's perception of self not only helps define the terms of subjective dialectic but sets community criteria of credibility and importance.

Bleich's suggestions and programs for teaching literary response and criticism are offered in his handbook Readings and

Feelings.<sup>242</sup> Bleich's premise is that every conscious perception of a literary text is accompanied by an identifiable affect or emotional response, which can be related by association to a previous intersubjective situation.<sup>243</sup> In brief, people read for or toward other people, and the emotions they feel while reading are associative analogues of their feelings about other people. The written response is a record of the important affects and associations experienced while reading.

The key sign that any given association retains a significant leverage for someone is the extent to which it involves an important relationship in his life. If the association is important yet does not manifestly bespeak such a relationship, it is likely that its real importance derives from its intimate association with a relationship which is as yet unspoken. Psychology has shown that a person responds first and most to the sensations and demands of his own body, then of his own person, and then of the people about him. Experience not connected with any of these areas enters consciousness as a subordinate function of these three areas and develops value only in this subordinate function.<sup>244</sup>

The criterion of critical validity, i.e. of the authority of the response statement, is the degree of intensity of the personal relationship which is associated to the reader's affect. Bleich tends to privilege the citation of childhood relationships with parents and siblings. We will see how this value is the same as the response's "negotiability" in the subjective critical community, but first Bleich must account for the epistemological question of whether and how a written response can in principle "record" an inarticulate and possibly ineffable experience.

His answer is pragmatic. Bleich compares the critical response to a Freudian dream-text in which, he argues, the "original" experience of the dream is lost and irrecoverable. In analysis, the remembered symbolic experience and its interpretation have present status and value in the negotiative circumstance (therapy or classroom):<sup>245</sup>

The record of such a memory is inevitably a symbolization of it, and there is no choice but to allow that the bringing of a reading experience under conscious scrutiny requires its translation into verbal language. Therefore it is possible to argue that the recorded perception of the story does not correspond to the experiential perception. But at this pass, the defining authority of the pedagogical relationship will declare that the recorded perception will be communally objectified as "the story this reader read", with the proviso that the reader may subsequently reverse or otherwise alter "his story". There is no other practical way to share a perception with others except to tell what the perception is. Furthermore, language has its maximum authority in its presentation of the mind of the user. Therefore, if ordinary language is to be used at all in the study of itself and literature, the starting point has to be the speaker's (reader's) presentation of his experiences, the most rudimentary form of which is the perception. <sup>246</sup>

Bleich's position here can be traced back through Cassirer to the larger Aristotelian tradition of the representational "presence" of the referent in language. Moreover, he explicitly valorizes narrative ("presentation of the mind of the user") as the most authoritative use of language under subjectivism.<sup>247</sup>

Thus Bleich proposes that language can express and record perception and affect, and that a paradigm predicated on this potential is necessary if we are to understand and use the



adaptive evolutionary capacity of language in human communication and education. To realize that interpersonal relations govern our construction and knowledge of reality implies that the value or negotiability of a proposal of knowledge does not depend on its objective "neutrality" or on the "personal" conviction with which it is proposed, but on the completeness of its self-reference within the subjective paradigm: i.e. the direct representation of its authorizing motives, affects and associations. The question of tautology arises here: paradigms are conceptual circles by definition. This is not objectionable so long as the feeling of its truth and adequacy remains satisfying. In the subjective paradigm our overt awareness of tautology, as our contingent and negotiable frame of reference, defines both its emotional satisfaction and a metacritical perspective on its claims to "truth".

The paradigm defines types of both adequate and inadequate response. In his chapter on "Relative Negotiability of Response Statements" Bleich describes the "reader oriented" response, the "reality oriented" response, and the "experience oriented" response in terms of their possibilities and limits in facilitating group discussion and proposing subjective knowledge in the classroom.<sup>248</sup> The first two are essentially arrested developments of the subjective dialectic: the reader-oriented respondent never leaves her own "context" or self-concept long enough to objectify and confront the literature, while the

reality-oriented reader invests the text with authority and identifies his voice with that of its "real" meaning. Both of these defend against the crucial associations with important life experiences, which could be collectively recognized as the basis of reading interest and then negotiated.

The properly experience-oriented response requires a developed ability to relax defences and conventional restraints on reading and to face the emotionally discordant possibilities of the text in relation to self-perception. This is a mature and uninhibited dialectic of subject and object. The difference between this kind of knowledge and that presented as personal opinion or objective truth is that the process of collective inquiry and experience-oriented response names and defines its basis in personal motivation. In the other response this level of authorization must be either inferred (by unwarranted psychoanalytic guesswork) or else further information must be elicited from the respondent (Bleich attributes hedged responses, in part, to a secret desire to be a center of attention in class). Under the subjective paradigm information which is presented as if it is unmotivated, or as if the reasons for presenting it are self-evident, is simply incomplete information.

Subjective response is a natural and spontaneous function of reading, but its coming to consciousness is artificially constrained by current methods of teaching which demand "close

reading" and objective assessment. The subjective paradigm, recognizing the motivational basis of this coercive context, reevaluates its priorities in favor of a context emphasizing students' self-understanding. This requires pedagogical techniques which can convince students of the way motives and values insist in all kinds of facts. Literature's particular value is in allowing them to explore many levels of reading and experience without being bound up in the nominal conventions of responsibility to objective meaning. Students must be led to see that meaning is a result of negotiation and not an a priori definition or limit of it. Readings and Feelings proposes a sample curriculum and a coherent sequential approach to the larger premises and practical skills involved in subjective criticism. This takes place within existing institutional structures and accommodates the conventions of literary pedagogy where possible or necessary. Bleich is attempting to "normalize" subjectivism in the Kuhnian sense, to implement it as the students' working perception of literature.

Thus, in spite of the radical reformulation of what literary knowledge is and what validates it, subjective criticism transpires in relatively ordinary and established situations: professionally in journals or locally distributed papers, or pedagogically in colloquia or classrooms. A typical course consists of the usual number of students, with periodically assigned written work of three to five page

lengths, uses traditional academic perspectives as a starting point for subjective response and evaluation, redefines but acknowledges and implements the authority of the instructor, and rewards verbal skill (as an expression of unusual desire to articulate and negotiate one's response).<sup>249</sup> Bleich also accommodates the institutional demand for letter grades:

My response courses have required a predetermined number of response essays of announced lengths. Those students who turn in all essays--on time and in a cooperative spirit--receive a B in my course. If one or two essays are not turned in at all, or are turned in inconveniently late, the students grade is reduced by a letter. Further delinquency results in further reductions of the grade. A grade of A can be achieved through outstanding work in a number of contexts. There might be, for example, a special fluency and eagerness in the production of associative response ... on the other hand, a student may not be especially fluent in the production of responses, but may be able to handle analytically the interpretation of responses--his own and others... There is often a connection between a good analytical capacity and a relatively ordinary response-production ability ... (This) offers considerable insight into the mood in which such judgments are offered.<sup>250</sup>

Bleich's program is to guide students from a general awareness of the omnipresence of emotion and evaluation in all kinds of "real" or empirical situations (such as seeing a teacher in class for the first time), into the more particularized and forthrightly "symbolic" perception of literary texts. In the first unit on "Thoughts and Feelings" he encourages students' ability and willingness to react in a gut way, by outraging or amusing them to subtly involve their own emotional investments, e.g. those of adolescents in male-female

relations, physical appearance, etc.<sup>251</sup> Class assignments are designed to make them conscious of their own propensity to react emotionally at every moment, and conscious that this reaction shares components of affect and associations with their own life experiences and those of other people. Responses are elicited in the form of anecdotes which relate particular perceptions. They are not psychoanalyzed but discussed to show how different individuals perceive in terms of individual possibilities, and how they translate these perceptions into intellectual judgments. The teachers' function is to ascertain the collective and individual preoccupations of students, including their reactions to his or her presence as "teacher". These subjective interests are the key to classroom direction, with the goal of eliciting authentic emotional response.

The second part of Bleich's program involves more specific "Feelings about Literature".<sup>252</sup> Here the important principle is the "symbolic" recreation of the text by a reader in the conjuncture of empirical perceptions, affects, and associations. Bleich actually differentiates these three components of response in a series of progressive emphases: from a rehearsal of the text, through a description of the personal feelings in the abstract, and toward an anecdotal description of the interpersonal context originally associated with the feelings. This last, "associative" response is the "experience-oriented" or fully negotiable presentation of subjective information.<sup>253</sup>

Bleich interprets the tendency of respondents to objectify, or project their responses onto an ideal Reader, as a motivated strategy to rescue the response from extreme or threatening personal consequences (however the subject experiences these). What is important for Bleich is that objectification be understood as a subjective function and not the truth of the text.

Bleich next develops the concept of literary judgment and evaluation that is implicit in the kind and degree of emotional reaction to literature--"Deciding on Literary Importance."<sup>25</sup> This is an area the objective paradigm belabored with disputes about whether critics ought to be evaluative at all: and if so on what theoretical basis evaluative judgments ought to be made, and if not what the status of the undeniable fact of literary "taste" might be. Judgment is taken for granted under the subjective paradigm, and I will base the discussion in "Criticism in Practice" on Bleich's response to the question of the "most important word in D.H. Lawrence's 'The Rocking-Horse Winner'", in which the critic's personal conclusion is based on subjective criteria, and then resymbolized. The important theoretical point is that the premise of the question is not "importance" to the story itself, or an abstract cultural or ethical norm, but that these are subservient to the needs of a particular reader at a particular reading, according to ascertainable subjective intents and purposes.

The final step is the collective negotiation of responses, judgments and motives toward a public knowledge of literature.<sup>255</sup> In class this involves the principle that all members' responses must be seriously considered, and that commonalities can be ascertained and critically understood as a kind of "collective subjectivity".<sup>256</sup> Bleich's discussion of responses to Vanity Fair is almost entirely thematic, observing a common preoccupation with the absence of explicit sexuality and with the intrusive commentary of the narrator-author. For Bleich these interests are not induced by the text, but are traced to the dialectic of Victorian "text" with the contemporary "context" of a group of relatively unprofessional readers. The commonality is arrived at by comparative study of a group of responses, with the idea that prevailing themes come to the surface as the most commonly referred to affects and interests. The purpose of study, again, is not to come to conclusions about the nature of "the Victorian" so much as to explore and articulate the students' experience of sexuality and authority as the salient characteristics of that text.

#### CRITICISM IN PRACTICE: The Rocking-Horse Standoff

My critique of Bleich's work began with a term paper, submitted at the finish of his graduate seminar at Simon Fraser University in the spring of 1976. While that paper could be considered a clarification of the subjective approach in

relation to a formalist paradigm like Murray Krieger's, within the subjective paradigm it is preferable to treat it as "resymbolizing" my response to Bleich's text and teaching. The paper was not given as a "response" in the format suggested by Bleich for his classrooms, but it is a strategic assumption of the method that any critical formulation can be explained in subjective terms.

Bleich's seminar was a turning point in my studies, and led directly to my research in contemporary theory and this thesis. The only previous work I had done in theory was with Murray Krieger, five years before at the University of California, Irvine. Krieger's senior-year course in criticism, a graduation requirement, had corroborated my personal experience of an ineffable mode of aesthetic perception, but left me sceptical that criticism (as opposed to more "creative writing") was either personally or socially useful or important. After some years of travelling and odd jobs, I entered graduate school with pragmatic, professional motives. After one course in which traditional close reading and a historical approach had been emphasized, I enrolled in Bleich's seminar to follow an emergent interest in critical epistemology more than from any rebelliousness or even curiosity about subjective methods.

Bleich's seminar was in most respects traditional and formal in design, with a large syllabus of mainly abstract works, weekly presentations by students, and the usual



twenty-page term paper. Even so, his mephistophelian orchestration of the discussion and his pointed observations on the styles and motives of students continually and radically subjectivized every meeting. Contradictions emerged in the seminar format between speculative concepts and people's intense commitments to them, between the abstract content and the effective dynamics of the group, and between the instructor's role as expert, colleague, surrogate parent, sibling, rival, and libidinal object. Our group certainly never worked in any paradigm as a harmonious community, and never agreed that it shared intention, meaning, or knowledge except in various uncertain alliances among students, which were usually predicated against Bleich. The course was effective for me in that, since then, I have not had to take the form or dynamics of any seminar, or the composition of any paper, for granted.

I found subjective criticism a convincing and effective approach to literary experience, especially in its concern for attitudes and preoccupations I had recognized in the writing of my undergraduate students. As for me, neither subjectivism nor Bleich himself changed my usual ways of reading literature, which had always been oriented more toward producing my own text than appreciating or being devoted to an author or set of ideas. My strongest feelings about the course had to do with other graduate students in it, their personal and theoretical difficulties with the approach and teacher, and their inability

to work with Bleich or to have a satisfying discussion of differences with him. My concern for the lack of a shared basis for such discussion led to the idealistic synthesis in my term paper, in which I thought formal objectivity and aestheticism could be sustained as exceptions to the subjective process of "negotiation": as a priori components of the paradigm itself. Writing that paper convinced me that theoretical concepts are directly related to the immediate, concrete situation in which knowledge is produced, and of the urgent need for an effective critical approach to the theoretical situation. Thus the composition of my paper was an attempt at intellectual pacification and, even as a training exercise, a self-assertion against Bleich's pedagogical authority. I wrote it intently and titled it whimsically to incorporate the interests I had at stake: "An Outline of the Principles and Practice of a Cassiro-Freudian Paradigm for Literary Criticism". I will resymbolize my early paper in terms that engage and reflect, inevitably, on "me", and will try to show that the Bleich-Berg negotiation, which in a sense continues here, remains problematical for reasons prior to and beyond our subjective initiatives. I no longer consider the basis of these problems primarily personal or theoretical, but social and institutional.

However, before recouping my arguments in these terms I think it is necessary to affirm the concept of subjective criticism, and Bleich's method as the most cogent development of

it. In spite of any limits, it is one of the most encouraging and useful programs to emerge from the theoretical ferment of the seventies. My criticisms aside, I think that for most students and for many established scholars there is a sense of liberation, or at least a hint of what that would be like, in writing in first-person about their feelings and associations, and in being answerable to others for them in a public place. I agree with Bleich that a formal obligation to literary "objects" themselves if epistemologically unwarranted and is difficult to justify in contemporary culture. Bleich is convincing in showing how much of the attention and authority we give to literature and to literary criticism depend on our sense of a personality in the writer or critic, and to an act of identification with the narrative "voice". Realizing subjective motives in our reading, it is possible to understand that much of the esoteric and sophisticated in literary criticism is motivated by desires to be read with awe or admiration, to appropriate the power of an author through establishing privileged relationships with his text, to affiliate with the "priesthood" Bleich attacks in Subjective Criticism. The notion of an immediate symbolic response to literature, and its determining significance for the criticism which follows, is still radically uncomfortable for many readers: most so for the self-styled intellectuals who quickly dismiss it. As long as this is true the egocentric "subject" has not passed from historical relevance, and the

criterion of personal motivation remains a radical critique of knowledge-producing groups. Bleich's theory is, in this sense, refreshingly "metacritical" of what we have been given in traditional criticism. We can read affect and association into the conceptual fabrication of the most eminent commentators: this does not embarrass a responsible critic who is "resymbolizing" literary experience in an effective paradigm of criticism, and it does not protect us from the consequences of serious thought. But a critic who is personally embarrassed, or writes to deny the motivation for writing, should be understood in that way. Such embarrassment is an important limit to the validity of criticism. After working with Bleich I have come to see emotional confrontation as a decisive factor in every kind of scholarly exchange, noticed my own needs and strategies with respect to this, and begun to consider how subjective self-awareness itself can influence this situation. Subjectivism is a form of intellectual power in its own right. Thus I have become increasingly interested in subjectivism as a method rather than a goal or theoretical premise: as with any method the salient question is not whether it is "true" but whether it is useful, and how, and for whom. What this entails for me is a radical disjunction of "faith" and "works" in the notion of the subject: toward a critique of the phenomenon we are being asked to know, i.e. "ourselves".

In composing the early paper I was aware that, for the lack of background, I was reinventing the wheel in the "Principles" I developed: Norman Holland, or Krieger in his phenomenological "vision", expounded similar metaphysics without my homemade scheme and geisteswissenschaftliches style of writing. Still, I think I did an impressive job of relating Cassirer's gradient of Symbolic Forms to a Freudian axis of primal motives, and was within the humanist tradition in proposing such a framework as common denominator of subjectivism and objectivism. The paper also effectively raised the problem of how symbolic orders relate to presymbolic or not-symbolic modes of experience; especially what I called the Aesthetic, in ways I could now relate to structuralist theories of absence, metonymy and metaphor, and écriture. Finally, the paper, in its theory but mainly in its "practice" as a response to Bleich, described and enacted some of the problems of a subjectivism which attempts to normalize (i.e. following Kuhn) work in contemporary universities. Thus, even my first criticism of Bleich had mostly to do with his "practical" implementation of response criticism. His anecdotal narrative format, and its provisional status as immediately expressed subjectivity, are the theoretical postulates which enable this. The problem was focussed for me in his response to D.H. Lawrence's short story, given in the context of Readings and Feelings. Resymbolizing my first response to "The Rocking-Horse Winner", and rethinking its

dialectical relations to Bleich's work, I hope to find terms within which we might begin to use subjective criticism in a more effectively critical manner.

I had read "The Rocking-Horse Winner" a couple of times before encountering Mr. Bleich's reading and it had personal significance for me involving, mainly, a beautiful white-wooden rocking-horse of my own. It had been left in the basement of the house where I grew up in Los Angeles, it had a noble, wide head and black saddle made from innertube, strong, square shoulders and shanks, and it was larger than the kind found in stores. It was homemade, in fact, and for a seven- or eight-year-old size boy. I have a series of memories of my younger self anticipating the horse with passion--I was for years too small to get on it myself, and only rode when my father lifted me on and stood by--I wanted to be alone and free on that horse, and dreamed of my own world with it. Paradoxically, when I got big enough to ride it I wasn't able to enjoy it the way I had expected. I rarely got on it, and then always with dissatisfaction. I was too old.

When I picked up the Lawrence anthology at the local Bookmobile last summer, the title caught my attention. As I read I have to say I reacted to the beautiful and distraught mother much as Bleich does, but it is when the horse enters the story that my interest was clinched. The reading of Lawrence's story satisfies me in the consummation that boy reaches with his rocking-horse --it was the supreme realization of my own disappointing experience, and in large part it is my interest in how Paul succeeds where I failed that drives me through the story when I reread it.

For me, then, the dominating aspect of the story is the impossibility of it (or the overcoming of impossibility), the fact that in "real life" no boy could do this thing, and as I go deeper into the story in an analytic way, this time equipped with the researches of Sigmund Freud, I can come to an explanation of the nature of this impossible achievement, and of why it means Paul's death...

Paul's father...is both an exemplar ("Excellent!") and a failure, and this failure has caused the mother to

withdraw into herself and also to will fiercely that another (characterized by "luck" and "money") fill the gap. For Paul this creates the need and the possibility to reestablish a communion with mother, and he stoutly ...wills on his own part to step into his father's shoes to do it. The crux of the dilemma is the conversation between Mother and Paul:

"Well, anyhow", he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."

"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he said it.

"God told me," he asserted, brazening it out.

"I hope he did, dear!" she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

"He did, mother!"

"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

Where Paul had never before questioned or doubted his secure maintenance between the...will of his Father and the...affection of his Mother, he suddenly is forced into the realization that because of the failure of the first he is about to lose the second. Because he is both a loving, passionate son and a boy with a strong sense of personal efficacy he asserts that he is lucky and vows to assume the active role in service to his mother. Here is the origin of the finally fatal paradox--he takes an adult role in order to maintain a fundamentally childish relationship. The fact of his mother's maternity forces his heroic inclination into the only avenue open to it--a childish obsession with the "transition-object" rocking-horse.

The supernatural luck comes from an unnaturally assumed manhood which paradoxically derives from and implements an unnaturally prolonged attachment to the mother. Active assertion is paradoxically infused with the submission, and the supernatural power is derived from an achievement of what is in "real life" impossible: the inspiration of the mother's yearning into the will of her son, the reestablishment of that primordial connecting link (or do I take another look at real life and see just this possibility in, say, the act of artistic expression). That is why the mother must not know what Paul is doing--luck is dependent on her unconscious complicity--she is the source of Paul's power.

Ultimately the source of all supernatural power, and for me the most "important" word in the story, is "God". God is manifest in the unification of humanity

with its Origin, the Unattainable for us, primordially symbolized by the Mother. The awful cost of the achievement is Paul's death subsequent to the moment of consciousness when his mother walks in on him. Paul looks God in the face, he has achieved everything that is possible to achieve, completely fulfilled his humanity in the only way it is possible for anyone to do it--as subject, as instrument of God's Will, and as a child. He has ridden the rocking-horse long past the age when it would be natural to stop. He could not leave the house, could not go to Eton in the Fall, he could never have "grown up" because his entire...manhood has been swallowed up in...inspiration. Lawrence's story holds in it a frightening and inspiring implication for all endeavor in the service of the Sublime: "He is best out of a world where he had to ride a rocking-horse to get a winner." (sic)

For me the impact of the story is the "what if"---what if I had actually achieved my goal on my rocking-horse. I took the step that Paul never did, objectified my horse (and my mother), I grew up. I was too old for that horse when I was the right size for it, and although it seems still a shame, in my reality Paul's feat would not be a miracle but a justification for psychiatric treatment. Miracles do not happen, Paul would channel his mother's inspiration, less successfully, into some other endeavor, and death would come after a number of years of what we call "adulthood". And, really, though adulthood is reached at the cost of childhood fantasy, and even though Life is only the failure to achieve Death, still, at the end of the story who wouldn't rather be talking to Uncle Oscar than lying in Paul's bed?

And what (the Reader will now ask) of my Aesthetic Experience of the story? Well, it lies in the "realization" for me of an experience not available in my life as an...analytic person. In identification with Paul and surrender to the "logic" of the story I am vouchsafed the resolution of the paradox of my birth. If it is an illusion, I don't know it while it's happening. It is not "willing suspension of disbelief" because where Will enters the process disbelief must inevitably follow. Rather it is a power in my faculty of subjective response which overcomes Will, which co-opts for a time the Active into the service of the Passionate just as Paul does. I am not me, for a moment or two, and penultimately me. I am taken over.

[Brief allusions to other discussions in the paper have been omitted].



This response to the Lawrence story was drafted in the context of Bleich's own, and can be considered not only for its thematic differences and my implicit competition with him, but for my rejection of the value of "subjective" spontaneity that is his premise. Questioning the relationship between primary perception and response is important at the levels of metatheory, theory and practice.

In proposing a rational alternative to Paul's transcendence and insisting on the death-orientation that is intrinsic to this fantasy, I made a connection between Bleich's self-consciously "distorted" reading and his theoretical orientation. Of course I did not object to his choosing "Malabar" as the most important word in the story, or to his optimistic identification with Paul and rejection of the boy's martyrdom. These are facets of "response" which can be taken, at least provisionally, as limits to what Bleich is able to communicate about his affects and associations to the story. My subsequent criticism focussed on the second part of his reading, his "Interpretation" of his own response:

It is the Interpretation, I expect, which will straighten things out, but it does so only half-way to my satisfaction. It is not only that I would insist on the addition of a contrapositive analysis to "the wages of Salvation is death": but the neglect of this paradox is the first clue. To me the Interpretation stops short when it insists that it is subjectively important that

the Response is unconcerned with Paul's death (which I have just agreed to) but does not go on to say that it is also objectively important. What I mean is that the Response has been put forward in discursive language, the written Response is not the "real" subjective...feeling but another feeling altogether, a story of it, an objectification. As Cassirer insists, symbol formation is the synthesis, the resolution of subjective and objective realities. Certainly, then, to say "Paul has fulfilled a forbidden wish and so dies" hides the subjective and selective nature of a reading, but at the same time, to neglect to say it hides the fact that the Response is an objectification of the Self, and that in so doing a context for objective analysis, using all the tools available to such, has been established...

At that time my point was to insist on an ineffable mode of aesthetic response, a pre-subjectivity prior to the composition of the symbolically objectified response, to which that response could not be adequate. I was arguing for a self-centered "world" of art like Krieger's, based on a similar notion of the primal alienation of existential experience from the symbolic orders. If language is the primordial hobby-horse, poetic language, in the sense of Coleridgean metaphor, could be the vehicle for the kind of symbolic transcendence Paul accomplishes. Even for Freud, poetry becomes a fantasy with "real" repercussions in the "real" world. The "fictionality" of such transcendence, its inevitable removal from social life and ordinary conscious processes, becomes a contradiction that is symbolized and resolved in Paul's death in the story. Paul's death is precisely what Bleich's response evaded, and this "subjective" aspect of his response is entirely consistent with his theoretical tenet

of subjective criticism: that the "symbolic" modes of existence can be granted the status of an adequate, social representation of ineffable emotions and private associations. Bleich evades that aspect of "The Rocking-Horse Winner" which Krieger would seize on as its "tragic vision".

Thus, Bleich protected his Interpretation (or resymbolization) with his commitment to the order of language, i.e. to its adequacy as representation of subjective reality.

Now we can see that in the same movement it protects his ability to be a forceful proponent of a new kind of thought and criticism, even by relating "subjective" authority to the social and professional status of the critic. When Paul's faith in the rocking-horse was climaxed by the appearance of his mother (i.e. the real object of his symbolic action) at the bedroom door, his success was complete but it was over. I think Bleich's response/interpretation underplayed this part of the story because it disturbs the comfortable extroversion of his own drive to personal fulfillment and professional success on his own rocking-horse, literary response. Theoretically, he understands how a response, a symbolization, cannot be a recovery of "real" perceptual experience. Like Paul's rocking-horse it is an imaginary transition-object. The response develops our sense of ourselves as subjects, but at the same time founds that subjectivity in a theory of symbolic substitution and a "fictionalized" objectivity defined in the

narrative-based paradigm. In the last chapter I criticized the paramount necessity of critical "fiction" in Krieger's practice because it was not answerable to his own theoretical qualifications, and because it served to perpetuate the "existential" contradictions it was defined against. In a different way, Bleich's response and interpretation of the Lawrence story have this problem.

An emphasis that Bleich's criticism shares with Krieger's is the pursuit of "maturity" as a more or less unhappy necessity of coming to terms with symbolic substitution. For Paul, my paper pointed out, rocking-horse winning is a repressive and hallucinatory (i.e. supernatural) crutch which prevents him from "growing up". Following his premature death there are only Uncle Oscar's resigned words, no exemplar of a "matured" perspective from which, for example, Paul might have objectified his parents' problems and their demands on him. Therefore Paul's achievement (like Lord Jim's) must remain a fictional apotheosis of personal or aesthetic or religious fulfillment. Bleich's subjective identification with that "success", without a critical understanding that it is all a "story" of Lawrence's, is analogous to his wish to believe that he can mandate the healing power of the response-narrative. The subjective paradigm will reestablish a sense of community through its symbolic processes, as a fiction within the standard context of institutional education. Of course Bleich is theoretically

capable of understanding that this is wish-fulfillment; nonetheless he has developed a practice to reinforce rather than critique the efficacy of this fantasy. My early reading pointed out that the Interpretation in Readings and Feelings is diplomatically guarded about the psychological and epistemological can of worms potential in the response, and I infer that this was a fatherly measure to spare the community of readers of the book. The proposal of knowledge is modulated to what Bleich thinks the community can accept and handle, and this requires reinforcing the very belief structure (the educational system) he would like to reform. Thus, like Krieger, Bleich offers an ethic of the "willfulness of an indulged illusion" as the authority for a practical critical fiction. Like Krieger he has accounted for the contradiction in his theory, but insists on the need to ignore it in practice in order to maintain the structure of the community of initiates. Unlike Krieger, with his tortured and paradoxical ethic, Bleich is not apologetic about this.

Bleich's written response is "mandated by pedagogical authority" to be a recovery of the original affect and personal associations. As a reader I am to feel that, with this act of identification, I might accomplish some communally or socially mandated form of success, like Paul does, or like Bleich does in the publication of his book or the electification of his seminars. Bleich's subjective paradigm has gone a long way

toward demystifying the priestly hierarchy of critical approaches, but has replaced the object text with the object personality: the objectified response of the reader as a kind of protestant reformation of the text. Specifically he has located the literary text within the grammatically structured consciousness of the CRITIC, identifying the mediating response text with the initial perception. While this tautological linguicentricity may be a common feature of any paradigm of knowledge, the subjective motive for knowledge, which is central to the subjective paradigm, gets articulated in a prescribed rhetorical mode. The problem with Bleich's form of self-fulfilling exegesis is that, rather than being undemocratically esoteric, or mechanically predictive, it risks simply misleading or misrepresenting its "subject". I do not mean this in a naive or "realistic" sense, rather I want to suggest that Bleich's own "standard of completeness" limits his assessment of the symbolic form and function of our "responses". I think it must open to include the enabling environmental (i.e. institutional) conditions for the existence of the knowledge producing group.

For me, the narrator of Bleich's "story" of his response was too comfortable for belief. I can authorize this with my personal difficulties as a writer in finding a story to tell which is not at once subverted by the claims of a half-dozen other, nominally as pertinent stories, but also with a

sociohistorical literary phenomenon: the difficulty with first-person narration in the twentieth century. My problem, with that of modern literature, is in locating or creating a readership among the many possible, to whom telling a story feels even remotely like telling the truth. Bleich is efficiently creating such a readership in the subjective paradigm: he is forming, or helping to form, a group of people who are both writing and reading the particular narrative genre identified as response. I have no doubts this rocking-horse solution can pay off in the real world: this is Bleich's premise, "Malabar" is his favorite word, and anyone can be a winner who gets in on the action. My questions are whether there are costs which Bleich (like Paul) does not reckon--do the terms of winning make us want to think again? --and whether there is an alternative to the transcendental commitment Paul has to his rocking-horse and Bleich to the essentiality of written response. That is, Paul cannot win on the rocking-horse without believing. Is it the same for the subject of response?

My own "response" excerpt presented associations which seemed both personally and intellectually important enough to repeat here. Yet my present resymbolization of it is determined by the particular circumstances of this critique, which is framed in a "subjective paradigm" of ulterior motives. It is subjectively important that I have chosen this context for resymbolizing the paper, rather than a more "personal" one. A

great deal is implied about "me" when we consider that, on one hand, I accepted subjectivism and worked very hard in class and on the paper, with Bleich's approval and patronage, but also rebelled by assuming the prerogative of my own paradigm ("Cassiro-Freudian") to outdo the teacher's. A great deal can also be inferred about my situation in an English department, professional possibilities and responsibilities, authority and limits, and their contingency within a larger social framework.

It is important that Bleich's course came early in my M.A. program. My undergraduate education had been mainly creative writing, twentieth-century novels and Idealist philosophy. I knew almost nothing about literary theory. I had been out of school for four years with the continually postponed intention to write fiction or Wolfe-Mailer new journalism. I knew how reassuring or enjoyable my recollected stories could be to people, but also that the stories, and others' responses to them, were not satisfactorily authentic. Vague unhappiness about this found an explicit theoretical context in Bleich's work, in both his optimistic monograph and the contradictory phenomena of the seminar. I became intellectually aware of my sense that particular readers, or the absence of them, determined whether I would write and what kind of writing it would be.

Thus, subjectively, my paper articulated emotions like a new sense of challenge and confidence, a smugly sympathetic detachment from "academics", and a defensive realization that I



was not well-read. It had personal associations with my parents, but also with a newborn daughter and her mother, a dog and cat in our cottage outside Vancouver, and finally with my ambivalent relationships to faculty and fellow students at SPU. (Leaving these mentioned but uninterpreted in this context is both subjectively and theoretically important here). At the same time there is a larger, "intersubjective" or intertextual, context in which that paper articulates intentions and shows characteristics that are shared by the system-oriented criticisms this thesis is concerned with: an orientation which might be said to have dominated critical reflection and innovation in the mid 1970s. Interests in philosophical, psychological, linguistic, and other metatheories, structure, and in extra-literary relevance are obvious common themes. It is thus possible to compare my paper's "theoretical" style and its implicit motives with those of other theoreticians.

For example, my paper was "synthetic" in its form and its content; in a sense both combinatory of the concepts and narrative styles of objectivism and subjectivism, and artificial in being self-consciously fabricated in a dubious relation to genuine personal feelings or community knowledge. It was idiosyncratically concocted to be both within and without the negotiable, collective frame of reference that would make it a training exercise for academic criticism. As my own theoretical hobby-horse, it implied that I was too big for my response

anecdotes at the very moment I felt competent and willing to give them: my intention was to question the self-evidence of my responses in a single theoretical construct which could contain and coordinate the complex skein of interpretive possibilities they provided. I could synthesize the contradictions I had sensed in my own faculty of first-person narration by way of the self-consciously artificial, modernist, writing of that paper.

To note that subjective response is a form of narrative implies that it is presented as the voice of the respondent. In a familiar, almost "natural" process, telling the important sequence of personal associations will eventually produce an orderly and effective self-image of the subject: i.e. the diffuse contexts of one's past life become a predicate of the literary text, in a subjective dialectic open to other readers and future readings. Here we can remember that Bleich evaluates responses by their narrative fluency and the degree of importance of the associations which become, thereby, accessible to the subject. The premium is on the ability to tell a convincing and significant story about oneself. Because I have never been convinced by my own stories, my response to the Lawrence story (couched in Bleich's clear anecdotal style) became a calculated artifice brought to bear on Bleich's self-evident, "natural" narration and the theory behind it. My more inclusive reading of Lawrence actively and frankly worked against Bleich's story of his reading: how can he keep

reading/telling and affirming a half-truth? The important point is that Bleich's response and interpretation were themselves a form of writing, and depend on his being absent and unavailable for authorization. Such writing is utterly strategic in its location in Readings and Feelings. It encourages his readers that subjectivism is both intellectually stimulating and safe.

The security blanket around a response and its interpretation is provided by and is a function of middle class institutional structures. Bleich has pragmatically chosen to ignore this in order to promote the method. The response seminar is a specialized place for a special kind of experience: an institutionally contained paradigm. Crucially, Bleich limits his own exploration of the motivational basis of the seminar's existence: his theory of group formation emphasizes that participating in the group is the ultimate reward, in and of itself. The knowledge produced or action taken by group members is understood to be authorized personally and evaluated in terms of group criteria for it, and not necessarily against anybody else. This theoretically abstracts the practice of the group from its situation in socioeconomic conflicts and resultant social formations, in order to accentuate the positive. Following this, many of the theoretical tenets of subjective criticism can be seen as concessions to reassure the readership Bleich is building within middle-class universities. The theory accommodates or even values the routinely scheduled, specialized

classroom context, the criterion of "fluency" in a particular bourgeois expressive mode, the norm of the nuclear family, and the cathartic value of identification with a literary persona. As a metatheoretical framework for these, the subjective paradigm mandates criticism of the individual in terms of group priorities, but does not question these group motives except insofar as they "satisfy" or accommodate the subject. In fact, we have seen that Bleich's "subject" is a linguistic tautology created by the group and its historical paradigm, i.e. it is a social structure with respect to which personal adjustment is to take place. Thus, the subjective paradigm does not establish its own critique as a social priority. The potential integrity, sincerity, and freedom of individuals is an unquestionable assumption of the paradigm, without which it cannot be successful.

I contrived the following true story in the course of redrafting this critique:

When I was eighteen I answered an ad for a summer job, to do a "consumer survey" which turned out to be a pretense for selling encyclopedias to people. Four of us trained for the work for a week. We memorized the spiel, learned eye-contact, placed each other in a mock living room and spread out brochures, but we never heard the word "sell" or any qualification of the "opportunity" the encyclopedias meant for the people who cooperated with the survey. Our supervisor, with the jelly-roll haircut and the electric suit, the dead handshake, the first name at the end of the sentence, told us how it was possible to become Regional Directors with our own territories.

On the last day of the unpaid training, the spiel remembered and recited, the supervisor led me into our

own Regional Director's green office. During the frank and genial conversation I said I wasn't sure I could really sell encyclopedias and could they use me somewhere else. Calm, wall-eyed, smoking, the Regional Director candidly said if I thought I was there to sell encyclopedias he didn't think they could use me. I took him at his word. The other three trainees hadn't even showed up that day, but I had been anxious for a job.

Narrative is already a mandated social form, and following the work of modern artists and theorists its premise of oral, authentic communication is open to a social critique. Bleich has recognized, epistemologically, that the narrative must be a symbolic formal initiative rather than unmediated representation of experience, yet in practice he "pedagogically mandates" it as the latter, and this limits the authenticity of interpretation just as his reading of the Lawrence story was carefully limited. Especially under the auspices of a socially given (rather than communally made) system of exchange (e.g. a classroom), ordained by powers greater than itself (a god, a father, a university, a paradigm), and in the absence of a convincing perspective on the interests shared by teller and listener, the subject is writing. This is to say the subject is part of a strategic campaign rather than a person sharing experiential plenitude in a self-producing community. From this alienated perspective we can observe that in our culture fluency and facility with language are inevitably taken as the sign of a sales pitch.

I have always liked to consider myself profoundly culturally typical, and my early writing always tended to the

first-person but also toward being self-consciously metaphorical. Now I am inclined to think of such narrative as a survival tactic: a way of retrospectively consolidating the hodge-podge of people, groups, and contexts I negotiate every day, precisely to maintain the fiction of a personal integrity that this culture denies its well-intentioned members. There are athletic teams, marriages, political action committees, PTAs, basement churches, Carnegie courses, communes, and primal screaming seminars which are all able to provide profound and rewarding personal and interpersonal satisfaction by virtue of mandatory, protective "practical fictions". The feelings and satisfactions people get and give in such groups are only as genuine as the ideological forms which keep them exclusive. The fact that students direct their responses toward presentation within a two-hour segment of a fragmented day of a routine week of an incomprehensible year should make the composition of a fluent narrative identity a problem, rather than a goal. In theory subjectivism should be a way to confront and acknowledge just this feature of any group we are in: through it we should gain the confidence that we can really sell encyclopedias and that the group knows whether that is the most rewarding thing we can do.

It has become impossible for me not to think of every classroom and every paper as a response situation, and I am trying to learn now to work within this paradigm. But I think

Bleich's formulation of critical method is severely qualified by the elision of the strategic context within which responses must be exchanged. Teaching students that their associative anecdotes are about themselves must run the risk of perpetuating a culture rich in glib stories about itself. We should not pedagogically mandate the unthinking ability to provide stories for the occasion without considering the limits to even their potential veracity or without understanding their purpose. All of us writing today risk mandating fiction in spite of ourselves.

As proposed by David Bleich, the subjective paradigm derives its critical force from its mere, oppositional existence. It undermines currently dominant, inadequate formulations of literary knowledge. The production and exchange of subjective responses (i.e. response statements) is an extreme practical implication of the methodology, and depends on a substantial reevaluation of the goals of academic criticism, classroom instruction, and the nature of pedagogical authority. Yet, as I have tried to show, the limits of the method are already apparent, and may work against the manifest intentions of the paradigm. Thus I think it is necessary to begin to use the concept of subjectivity more critically, as consciously exploring the conditions of possibility for feeling and articulating feeling in the mode of the "subject".

Subjective criticism can be important and useful in ways that sophisticated forms of critical discourse, no matter how "radical", cannot. First of all, it can help reestablish an important place for literary study in students' university experience. In doing so, it can be a way for students to begin to connect their personal and institutional, symbolic and "real" lives, and to begin to fathom why these lives are largely unsatisfying. More specifically, I think subjective criticism is a perspective on the production of knowledge and the group relations within that productive process, which can be worked through to genuinely radical implications. For example, this work might take the following directions in the areas Bleich has already proposed:

1. The problem of a "Critical Epistemology" can be redefined to answer the critique of a historical materialism. We would begin to understand the subject as a "producer", and knowledge as having both use and commodity values determined by historically alienated relations of production. Thus a response and its "negotiability" among members of a student-class can be resymbolized as an object whose existence is social, and whose form is mandated according to certain "class-oriented" prerogatives. As an emotional release, in a safely controlled and protected environment, it seems both to fulfill a need and to remain an exclusive luxury. Subjectivism is a change for the better, offering a Utopian experience and hope, but in a



dialectical view must be an ideology of fulfillment under capital. Why is it suddenly possible for us? Whose material interests does it serve outside the walls of the classroom? The answers to these questions are not entirely discrediting, and Bleich himself has gone some way in answering them. Yet such analysis of the "mode of production" of subjective knowledge cannot go much further without an overtly political paradigm, involving problems we will reconsider in the next chapter in a different theoretical context.

2. By extension, "Language Acquisition and Symbol Formation: Talking and Writing" and their motivational bases can be understood as subjectively reproducing contemporary social forms and class relationships. Without denying the importance of connecting language skills and intersubjective rewards and constraints, these associations can be understood to continue and reinforce existing family relations, social hierarchies, sexual, racial and ethnic stereotypes, etc. To some extent all our rewarding interpersonal relationships are defined within contradictory and divisive social structures, including the family itself, and this awareness should be part of the process of learning about them.

3. A radical use of "Subjective Response in the Study of Literature" might have several aspects. Without discouraging the attempt to recognize and share feelings and associations, at some point the social status of the form of presentation, the

social orientation of the self-image produced, its rewards and its crucial limits, should be taken up by the group. It can be understood that any response, in any group, must be socio-economically alienated and tend to be strategic with respect to other members or other groups. I think this must give the dynamics of a response-seminar, and the work it does, a status different from the search for subjective truth, and a value different from the authenticity that Bleich mandates. The subjective "self" presented becomes more like a "persona" and the response more a "gesture" which cannot be mistaken for unmediated expression. I am suggesting a theoretical confrontation of what I observed and felt in Bleich's seminar and in other institutional contexts where "personalities" seemed to be at stake: the institution defines a kind of arena or theater. As a "performance", subjective response may be usefully considered from a Brechtian, analytical perspective (with the practical/emotional community of the performers posited apart from their "lines") as well as the Stanislavski-method of dramatic identification.

4. "Biographical Criticism" may be an area where historical materialism has more to learn from than offer the subjective paradigm. Yet the subject's typical identification with a paternal author is an ideological phenomenon which Bleich tends to take for granted and even affirm. Thus the role of the "author" becomes a symbolic self-confirmation within structures

that feminist, Marxist, and post-structuralist criticisms can resymbolize in terms of patriarchy, ideological reproduction of class relations, and the complex psycholinguistic critique of logocentrism. This leads into the Freud-Marx nexus to be further examined in the next chapter.

5. In many ways "Children's Literature" is an important and inevitable direction of inquiry for subjective criticism, depending as it does on a motivational psychology of language development, on vivid experience and "natural" responses, and on a felt need to revalue the traditional curriculum in favor of books that are important to readers. We may, moreover, be currently enjoying the "Second Golden Age" of children's literature since its emergence from the pedantic moralism of its inception and the sado-masochism of the Victorians.<sup>257</sup> Even so, the boom in children's literature is not an unmitigated good thing: for example, we might wonder what kind of social institution or mode of consciousness we support if we choose to study duly authenticated editions of Milne in the context of Little Golden Books at the toystore and rolls of Pooh wallpaper at the interior design boutique. In addition to contemporary ideological investments, the profit motive permeates production, distribution, and the desire to teach and learn about children's literature. Fiscal interests of the university--in student enrollment, in the acquisition and promotion of staff, and in which departments or faculties will handle the course--largely

determine the appeal of the genre in some material relation to our subjective interests. This is not a cold or cynical judgment, but the critical purview we will need to work effectively with it.<sup>258</sup>

#### IV. Fredric Jameson: A THEORY OF HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

##### THE TEXT

The preeminent concern of Fredric Jameson's criticism is the possibility of an increasingly accurate social self-perception, and the role of art in it. The criticism's complexity is a function of contradictions generated by life and work in late capitalist culture, contradictions which insist in the systems of mediation and communication themselves. Thus, the experience of a literary text may be analyzed with abstract "Marxist" concepts like "alienation" and "commodification", but the text must be perceived, concretely, within these concepts for the theory to have practical validity or claim to express a revolutionary consciousness. For Jameson, criticism is a dialectical method, synthesizing a phenomenology of the text and a historical theory. The alternative to intensely dialectical interpretation is to be caught in the internal dilemmas of reification, self-validation, and theoretical reduction which characterize uncritical paradigms. 259

The crucial moment of the dialectic of reading is a totalization of the TEXT, an experience of its objective historical context along with its use for the reading subject,

now, as an ideological instrument in a contemporary class struggle. Jean Paul Sartre's existential-critical Marxism remains the basis of Jameson's metatheory of reading, a method meant to provide the possibility (but not the guarantee) of a comprehensive perspective which includes the very instruments we are using to comprehend our object. According to Sartre any abstract theory is misleading and ideological, and can be useful only when we consciously grasp its concrete, historical essence.<sup>260</sup>

Reading is a perception of the text located within a contemporaneous, sociohistorically inscribed order of possibilities. The effectiveness of dialectical method is its reversal of this ideological gestalt.<sup>261</sup> The illusory field of the "literary" text and world, for example, can be opposed with the ground of social-economic infrastructure, throwing concrete "reality" (i.e. the history of the material modes of production) into a sudden visual relief. History can be "materialized" for us as a consciousness of the forms of social experience, and dialectical criticism reveals this "logic of the content" objectively in a text, as the prior condition of its categorical or generic "form". This theoretical "inner form" of the text is based on an explicitly "idealist" notion of historical process, as a succession of forms motivated by eventually self-fulfilling content. For Jameson, Marx's theoretical "inversion" of Hegelian idealism remains objectively abstract until "lived".<sup>262</sup>

...we must first come to terms with the message itself, which may be very loosely described as a type of Erlebnis or experience vecue, a lived experience of some sort, no matter how minimal or specialized. The essential characteristic of such raw material or latent content is that it is never, like the unshaped substances of the other arts, initially contingent, but rather is itself already meaningful from the outset, being nothing more nor less than the very components of our concrete social life: words, thoughts, objects, desires, people, places, activities. The work does not confer meaning on these elements, but rather transforms their initial meanings into new and heightened constructions of meaning: and that can hardly be an arbitrary process. I do not mean it must be realistic, but only that all stylization, all abstraction in the form, ultimately expresses some profound inner logic in its content, and is ultimately dependent for its existence on the structures of the raw materials themselves.<sup>263</sup>

The reader's conceptual apparatus can be revealed in its gestalt, that of a present-day class conflict. In Sartre's scheme this implies the "totalization" of the reading subject in a dialectic with the object (the text, the Other, "everybody else", the class enemy, as will be seen). The result of totalization is a renewed practical effort in a dialectic of a higher order.

In order to follow Jameson's critical work it is necessary to differentiate the dialectical moments of the text: it has, first, an objective, theoretical-historical mode of existence, and second, a subjective, phenomenological-hermeneutical mode.<sup>264</sup> As ways of experiencing the text both are ideological, self-contradicting, and "circular". As moments of a dialectical method, each entails a separate, immanent dialectics, and

together they comprise Jameson's adaptation of Sartre's "progressive-regressive" method.<sup>265</sup> The goal, again, is a materialist conception of history which includes a prerogative for useful work in our own time.

1. In THE TEXT's objective mode of existence the dialectic is between the forms of literary production and the latent dynamics of class praxis, i.e. historical content. Jameson has acknowledged the contributions of Aristotelian formalisms, even New Criticism, in clarifying the first of these. However, as a contrary to this aestheticism he invokes the Heideggerian priority of existence zuhanden: the sense in which an object or text exists as a tool, to be used, specifically by social classes in ideological conflict.<sup>266</sup> These alternatives constitute an epistemological basis for the historical dialectic, although they appear to us as contradictory alternative modes of criticism. Within current systems of intellectual consumption, in the academy as in the shopping plaza, exchange values and abstract, reified concepts have obscured and confused the use value of the text. We can only understand this contradiction as a dialectic by working through a necessarily ideological theory, in a provisionally "idealist" moment of method:

In such a situation, within the United States itself, there is no tactical or political question which is not first and foremost theoretical, no form of action which is not inextricably entangled in the sticky cobwebs of the false and unreal culture itself, with its



mystification on every level.<sup>267</sup>

2. To "materialize" this theoretical idealism Jameson implements a dialectical reversal of it. This is to recuperate the historical content of theory at the level of our own concrete perception. This reversal is like Sartre's "regressive" moment, a kind of phenomenological "hermeneutics" of the historical context, which becomes properly critical in considering the TEXT in and for HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, as contemporary ideological practice.

The TEXT, totalized in and as the dialectic of theory and lived experience, returns us to a concrete situation in our own time. In what follows we will see that Jameson's interpretations consistently depend on the generalized theoretical consideration of a WRITER and that writer's HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, but that the validation of analysis is at every moment contingent on the CRITIC's renewed historical perception. We will see, for example, that Jameson is fascinated by structuralist ideas and models: Saussure's axes of the diachronic and synchronic, Lacan's orders of approximation and distortion of the Real, or Sartre's epicyclic theory of groups and series. All of these might be given some status as Kantian universals in a "structuralist" paradigm: Jameson has attempted to ground them in the historically determined phenomenology of a reading. That is, he uses formal theory against our habitual "ideological" reading, to force the Hegelian "superceding" which is our

potential for real knowledge in an otherwise mystified present. Thus, Jameson's practical consideration of literary texts has been analytical and then hermeneutical. His use of Sartrean method purports to be, thus, dialectical and ultimately Marxist--insofar as Marxism must achieve its validity in analysis, and not as a facile premise of it.

#### THE WRITER

For Jameson, the writing subject is the contradiction and the ultimate link between psychoanalytic and socioeconomic explanatory frameworks.<sup>268</sup> The problem for critical Marxism has been a "synthesis" of Freud and Marx, which will account for individual, felt experience and practice, not as a timeless Oedipal contradiction, but in developing historical circumstances. A mediation of the two paradigms is already a felt historical event that precedes theoretical elaboration in, for example, work of the Frankfurt School, Sartre, and recent post-structuralist theoreticians.<sup>269</sup> This priority of lived, historical experience over theory can be compared to David Bleich's hypothesis that the "subjective paradigm" is a communally negotiated imperative which depends on "evolutionary" conditions of possibility. The crucial difference is that for Bleich "the subject" is just now coming into his own, so that "motives" for writing are analyzed almost exclusively in psychological terms, toward an empathetic "reciprocal

assimilation" of the narrative identity. In short, for Bleich the social context is pragmatically "given", and the emphasis is on personal accommodation within it. Jameson also values a moment of identification with the narrative order, but his explicit theoretical models objectify a writer's personality and conflicts as a structure that mediates the class affiliations, interests, and contradictions of a sociological "subject". For Jameson, "Psychoanalysis and Marxism are both materialisms, so that their theoretical coordination is less a question of basic philosophical presuppositions than of finding the appropriate mediations between them".<sup>270</sup> The analysis of subjectivity needs to be developed into a materialist critique of ideological modes of wish-fulfillment, repression, displacement, etc.

A special power of literature, for Jameson, is to imaginatively mediate the subject's experiences of self and world, in what can be thought of as a phenomenology of problematical cultural forms. This follows Sartre's definition of literature in his art and interpretive philosophy, as a personal and social "praxis".<sup>271</sup> Husserl's concept of intentionality, fundamental to Sartre, also figured for Krieger and Bleich: the subject intends the world in such a way as to act on it. For Krieger the exigencies of "existence" limited personal practice to to an inadequate rational or aesthetic fiction, while under subjectivism the collective "negotiation" of symbolized intentions effectively constitutes the world. For

Sartre, intentionality implies an original state of subjective freedom which must be predicated against the "coefficient of resistance" of the existent world. This freedom is only a choice of practice with respect to that world, and it remains limited by material, historical circumstances.<sup>272</sup> Dialectical "totalization" is the process in which freedom can be consciously grasped as our self-definition in practice.<sup>273</sup> We can arrive at a moment of free, conscious choice only through a rigorous exercise of dialectical method.

As the WRITER's practice, a literary text is an example of such a totalization and an object of our own critical practice. The writing project has use value as an intensely worked mediation, so that while the representation of life in it is a functioning ideological distortion,

[The work] thereby obeys a double impulse: on the one hand it preserves the subject's fitful contact with genuine life and serves as the repository for that mutilated fragment of experience which is his treasure. And on the other, its mechanisms function as a censorship whose task is to forestall any conscious realization on the part of the subject of his own impoverishment; and to prevent him from drawing any practical conclusion as to the causes and as to their origin in the social system itself.<sup>274</sup>

Jameson's early book, Sartre: The Origins of a Style reconstructed the experiential basis of Sartre's prose technique.<sup>275</sup> He has subsequently observed Sartre's own "novelistic" sense that a writer can be retrospectively "totalized" as a historical agent: "the actual production of the

act by a determinate personality remains inaccessible to analytic thought... nevertheless it is possible to recreate such action imaginatively".<sup>276</sup> For Jameson this imaginative intentionality is crucial to our reading and understanding of literature as social practice, and to the ideological function of contemporary criticism. In a determinate historical situation the imaginary alternative projects a future, making a place for freedom and action. According to Jameson, this factor in critical philosophy has had three methodological implications for Sartre's literary criticism, which are also evident in his own work:

...first, in objecting to the simple intellectual equation between an existence and an abstract idea, it tries to substitute for that intellectual link a lived one. That is, for Sartre, the problem of mediation is also the problem of character formation, of social influence, of genuine lived experience of class and society. Second, it attempts to plunge the problem back into history by showing that there is nothing timeless about it, and that in social and individual life we are constantly faced with overlap and time lag, with the coexistence of hosts of different time schemes at the same moment. And finally it replaces the relationship between idea and human existence (which in pseudo-Marxism had been a purely logical one: the idea is the universal, the man the particular of it), with a dynamic one, namely that of existence as a project, and of class relationship and affiliation as the free invention of a role projected toward the future, rather than determined by the past.<sup>277</sup>

We can remember Krieger's "mythic act of creation" in which the text was a reformed and renewed mediation of visionary intention in a conventional discourse, ethic, mode of perception, etc. Its metaphoric structure both represented and transcended an

existential, paradoxical status quo. Because Krieger theorized this as the CRITIC's necessary myth or fiction, he was able to subordinate both the WRITER and HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES to the problem of textual mediation. For Bleich and Jameson the TEXT is also a mediation--meeting place or battleground--for conventionality and private vision, but the writer's possibilities and actual choices are explained as a way of affirming or rebelling against parental prerogatives. For both Krieger and Bleich the family's Oedipal contradiction is resolved "symbolically" in writing, and this substitute resolution is either a tragic fiction or subjectively efficacious and sufficient.<sup>278</sup> When Jameson locates the contradiction in historical circumstances, the family's psychological dynamics correspond to particular contradictions in its socioeconomic status: this is what Sartre calls the "situation" of the writer, and it cannot be "resolved" except in praxis, at the level of the means and relations of production.<sup>279</sup> For Jameson the material basis of the family, and the fact of historical change, call into question the inevitability of "substitute" orders of resolution and allows us to understand their forms as ideological.<sup>280</sup> Especially when the social is explored as the necessary extension of biographical, psychological analysis, the Father takes on a full political significance as lawgiver, oppressor and censor.

The individual writer's work of intentional mediation, and the Freudo-Marxist project to explain it, have led Jameson to an adaptation of Jacques Lacan's textualized version of psychoanalysis and the unconscious.<sup>281</sup> Lacan's model of family structure in relation to personal experience and knowledge promises a new explanatory power and diacritical sensitivity for the Marxist analysis outlined in earlier work.

The family as the state, kinship rivalry as the mediation between the wordless Imaginary of the individual unconscious and the collective Symbolic order of that adult and public "real world" we seem to share with each other: the history of such "family material" and of its literary and ideological evolution remains to be written.<sup>282</sup>

Maintaining Marxism's sense of positive, revolutionary possibility, Jameson has broken with "orthodox" structuralist readings of Lacan, attempting to revalidate the Imaginary order against the Symbolic. For Lacan the structure of la langue encompasses both conscious and unconscious intentionality. In an infantile "mirror stage" we construct an image of the Self in the process of objectifying the world as Other. We see "ourselves" through the eyes of the reflection, and the image is elaborated in subsequent experiences of others. When this differentiation and alienation informs the process of acquisition of language, the other and self are known to us in words that are not what they seem, and the "unconscious" that borders our self-image is nothing else than "the discourse of the Other".<sup>283</sup>

Lacan's Imaginary and Symbolic Orders emerge from the more complex Oedipalizing of this primary differentiation. The primal Other was, of course, the mother. Acknowledging the separation and difference of the Father, and struggling to appropriate his role, sets off the process of symbolic displacement characterized by substitution and the codification of subjectivity into structure and law. The Imaginary remains predicated on an infantile regression to identity, plenitude, and totality. Our systems of signification are, in their very inception, different from what we "imagine" them to refer to. For Lacan, a libidinal imaginary investment in the system itself is the definitive structure of neurosis.<sup>284</sup>

For Jameson, this resignation to an alienated and alienating system has been a historical limit of the structuralist methodology itself.<sup>285</sup> He understands the imaginary identity of sign systems with "perception" as the mode of operation of "ideology", but is concerned that the structuralist critique of the Imaginary vitiates or precludes a forward-looking Utopian vision, which can be the progressive potential within an "ideology" itself.

Insofar as the Lacanian version generates a rhetoric of its own which celebrates submission to the Law, and indeed, the subordination of the subject to the Symbolic Order, conservative overtones and indeed the possibility of a conservative misappropriation of this clearly anti-Utopian scheme are unavoidable.<sup>286</sup>

Thus, in The Prison-House of Language Jameson criticized the



ahistorical, spatialized theory of discourse as an a priori limit of structural analysis. In his own use of structuralist theory this has implied the need for a dialectical, phenomenological reduction of them by the active, historicizing critic: in retaining structuralist structures, Jameson has attempted to reverse, or rather invert, the priority of the system of signification over the Imaginary. Jameson has developed this critique in his work on Lacan, for example, toward a notion of the Imaginary more commensurable with Sartre's dialectic. In his literary criticism this becomes, I find, a revalidation of Sartre's thesis in What is Literature?.<sup>207</sup>

Only by grasping images--and also the surviving fragments of authentic myth and delusion--in this way, as that trace of the Imaginary, of sheer private or physiological experience, which has undergone the sea-change of the Symbolic, can criticism of this kind recover a vital and hermeneutic relationship to the literary text.<sup>208</sup>

As an example, Jameson used the Symbolic and Imaginary to characterize historical development of the novel's mediation-function in Balzac's La Rabouilleuse. The Lacanian orders become a theoretical figure comprehending what readers perceive as a radical shift in narrative "registers": from a detached, ironical narration of the soldier brother's story to an enthusiastic self-investment in the story of the artist-brother.<sup>209</sup> This shift enacts, for Balzac and the bourgeoisie, the "construction of the subject" who becomes the

unifying center of nineteenth-century writing. More broadly, too, the difference between Phillippe's unhappy end and the "far more nakedly wish-fulfilling 'imaginary' story of Joseph" corresponds to a basic retrenchment in bourgeois ideology,<sup>290</sup> from the progressive to the conservative and nostalgic:

...it can be demonstrated that all of these abstract political principles spring from something like the narrative demands and structural necessities of a very specific ideological daydream in Balzac: the attempt to imagine himself as a Tory landlord of the type of Sir Walter Scott, with local authority but also national glory, the head of a dynasty, but also a peer and member of a revitalized upper chamber, and ideological spokesman for the aristocratic elite and perhaps even, like Rastignac or De Marsay, a minister. The abstract political credo of Balzac then articulates the conditions of possibility for dreaming such a daydream: its political principles (e.g. restoration of primogeniture) are then that without which the subject cannot even begin to fulfill his imaginary wish, something like the "reality-principle" of fantasy itself. 291

This supersedes the structuralist premise that an autonomous differential system, "the discourse of the Other", must determine the conditions for imaginary wishes or visions. It renders the process as a dialectic. The symbolic code articulates a "logic" of imaginary, ideological content, functioning as "Third" or mediation of the relationship of the individual and the other (the Real parent, society, class, etc.).

If Balzac's shift in narrative registers can be understood as a movement from an eighteenth to a definitively nineteenth century symbolic form, we must account for a correspondingly

changing imagination which projected its fulfillment by way of these forms into the future. This was precisely the Utopian affirmation of What is Literature? and Sartre's theoretical work on imagination. Jameson credits Louis Althusser with elaborating this positive, "critical" function of ideological imagination in Lacan's own terms:

Althusser is... using the word imaginary in the technical Lacanian sense outlined above, as a process which involves the subject's self or specular image, a narrative structure, which thus, like that of a daydream, makes a place for the insertion of the self: this is why ideology is for him a mode of representation, in which the subject ratifies his experience of the world (of his "real conditions of existence") by reimagining it in such a way as to see himself present in it. 292

#### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT

For Jameson, even a dialectical "theory of history" remains reductionist and determinist unless it is continuously corrected against lived historical experience. This "hermeneutical" principle holds for any attempt to place literary data in a prefabricated global schema: whether a literary-mythic superstructure (Eliot, Frye<sup>293</sup>), or discourse (Foucault<sup>294</sup>), or a Marxist economism.<sup>295</sup> Such theories assume the completeness and self-sufficiency of their analyses, safely beyond the events of which they speak. Implicit in any uncritical historical positivism is the very form of the bourgeoisie's self-justification as the terminus of human

development. Even in a dialectical materialist theory, the abstract concepts which comprise both terms limit them to the form of a "Hegelian" idealism.<sup>296</sup> As in Sartre, both the historical object and the theory of historical process which contains it (i.e. the dialectic) remain "a collection of abstract considerations which immediately refer to principles."<sup>297</sup> On the other hand, a dialectical theory of history in its highest form provides a useful, diachronic frame of reference for our given "categories" of literary interpretation.<sup>298</sup> Such "objective" theoretical work corresponds to the "progressive" moment in Sartre's double method.<sup>299</sup> For analysis to stop here is "dangerous" (Sartre) and it is necessary to implement a "subjective" qualification of theory in the larger dialectical critique. Jameson gives just such a heuristic status to literary history:

...the inseparable link between what we have called the isolation of the category (the definition of the object of study, whether it be image, style, point of view, character, or those more transitory and unnamed phenomena which are the very substance of modern literature itself) and that articulation into a succession of alternative structural realizations which we have called the diachronic sequence or construct, and which, always implied in the very intuition of the category itself, constitutes the concrete working out of the latter by the critic. Thus these two moments stand together as the inaugural gesture of a genuinely dialectical literary criticism, of what we will call its Hegelian mode, to be distinguished later on from the specifically Marxist.<sup>300</sup>

Thus historical idealisms (again, including "economism") cannot either be or project a definitive "theory of history". Moreover, the sociopolitical context of theoretical elaboration can itself mask the historical and ideological conditions of theory-production, even to become

...an attempt to outsmart the present, first of all, to think your way behind history to the point where even the present itself can be seen as a completed historical instant (as the birth of some new sensibility, the mark of some ultimate and decisive cultural mutation, at first visible only to initiates; or as the first signs of an eschatological cataclysm, if not merely the straws in the wind of a new fashion or the first indices of a new depression); to name and label the moment you are standing in even before it realizes its ultimate consecration sub species aeternitatis in the history books themselves.<sup>301</sup>

Even so, a moment of explicit theoretical idealism remains the first condition of Jameson's method, as a necessary preliminary thesis. It is not possible to describe the moment of antithetical correction, along with Sartre's "regressive" materialization of history, without considering a CRITIC in contemporary circumstances.<sup>302</sup> Given this, there are idealist theories and idealist theories, and for Jameson it is important to use one that is consciously provisional and heuristic:

The Hegelian theoretical model which we have proposed to substitute for ["theories of history"] distinguishes itself by that structural transparency of its diachronic sequences, which are thus clearly identified not as empirical realities but as ideal constructs only...the Hegelian sequence, while permitting work in time, is distinguished by that ultimate and inevitable, structurally inherent movement toward its own dissolution, in which it projects the Marxist model out of itself as its own concrete realization and

fulfillment.<sup>303</sup>

Jameson has consistently favored theories which foreground their status as such, using graphic or formulaic abstractions, jargon, and a historically specific frame of reference, almost as if he intended to jar a reader out of any easy assent to them.<sup>304</sup> Instead of proposing an overarching scheme for literary history, like Frye or Krieger, he observes that in Marxism ideology has no autonomous history.<sup>305</sup> He suggests more intensive study of "limited sequences" of writers and texts as an entry into the microcosmic work of the dialectic. Historical knowledge in these terms is not objectified as a writer's contribution to a total tradition or form, but as various detailed, comparative and antagonistic relations of persons, events, and ideas, literary and non-literary, immediately prior to and after the writer's appearance. Dialectical criticism interprets the formal "categories" of literary analysis as historical objects within historical sequences. The analysis of the object does not reveal pre-existent generic universals (as in Frye), "but the final articulation of the deeper logic of the content itself".<sup>306</sup>

From this provisional Hegelian perspective the logic of aesthetic content is considered objective and impersonal, as a history "... for which the artist is himself merely an instrument, and which works itself out through him, using the accidents of his personal life as the very element of its own

formal research, developing through him, as through his predecessors and successors, according to its own intrinsic laws".<sup>307</sup> We can understand this to be an alienated vision of history, which corresponds to the structure and possibilities of contemporary cultural reification and idealism, because it implies that the "inner form" (Lukacs) of a text, etc. transforms historical relations into ideological distortions. These literary-formal "figures" (Jameson) must be interpreted in themselves as an articulate logic of content.<sup>308</sup> In fact, Jameson seems to share the common Marxist position that adequate mediation or "realism" will exist only when the contradictions of text and meaning have been resolved, in a socialist society, at the material level of their relations of production.

Jameson's historical critique of literary form is meant to supersede the antagonism of formalist and historicist approaches, especially over the value of "intrinsic" versus "extrinsic" information.<sup>309</sup> His theory considers them together in the context of a dynamic social content, which can only be understood as both revealed and obfuscated in ideological forms. Thus the criticism and evaluation of any individual work (e.g. in New Criticism) logically entails evaluation of the milieu in which it appears as a product. Just as for Hegel, "the insufficiency of the form derives from the insufficiency of the content".<sup>310</sup> For example, every novel can be taken as a "historical novel" in this formal sense: to the extent that the

novel's attempt to encompass real living conditions of a past moment was foredoomed, a novel of the present is similarly stymied by the complexity of its object.<sup>311</sup> The kind of "intrinsic" totality of a work of art that Krieger, for example, proposes could only authentically exist in the totality of an experience of contemporary reality. Failing that, novels are left with Hegel's limit of the "prose of the world", in which, for the individual work and the individual subject "the individual being is caught in a contradiction in which he sees himself as a sealed unity, while all the while wholly dependent on other people, and the struggle to resolve this contradiction lasts as long as the attempt and as long as the battle lasts".<sup>312</sup> In the objective theoretical paradigm of Marxist historical analysis, this struggle with the medium must be identified within class struggle. The "world" of the novel can be regarded as a distortion or repression of consciousness (in the Freudian sense) such that the illusion of aesthetic self-sufficiency masks both the novel's role as a market commodity and as a weapon in the class arsenal.<sup>313</sup> This latter status of the work as class praxis, implying the subjective freedom Sartre invoked against "pseudo-Marxist" economism, reveals an important duality within Marxist historical analysis:

...Marxism, owing to the peculiar reality of its object of study, has at its disposal two alternate languages (or codes, to use the structuralist term) in which any given phenomenon can be described. Thus history can be rewritten either subjectively, as the history of class



★

struggle, or objectively, as the development of the economic modes of production and their evolution from their own internal contradictions: these two formulae are the same, and any statement in one can without loss of meaning be translated into the other. The notion of class is problematical precisely because it is the mediation between these two different notational systems; for class is population articulated according to economic function, but it is also that which permits us to translate the data about machinery and the operations of production back into human and interpersonal terms.<sup>314</sup>

This distinction returns us to the two modes of existence of the TEXT as Jameson defined them: first, from Heidegger, sociologically, as an ideological "tool"; second, from Aristotle, economically, as a technically wrought "product". Each of these requires a positive, historical analysis, the beginnings of which can be found in the extant theories of historicist and formalist criticisms and the "categories" they generate:

1. Marxist historical and sociological criticism has usually been based on a "reflection theory": the work's mimetic function is considered in relation to the culture and especially the class of origin, or its "homology" with the class mode of existence.<sup>315</sup> As noted above, this ignores the way art is used by a social group to project for itself a place in culture and history, against that of others. The use of the work has been obscured by its commodity-status, within its corresponding aesthetics. Jameson demystifies this with Sartre's concept of the practical mediation of the artist's "situation":

...the work of art or the cultural artefact certainly reflects something, but what it reflects is not so much the class in itself as some autonomous cultural configuration, as rather the situation of that class, of, in short, class conflict. To put it this way, however, is to become aware that the model proposed allows for a fairly wide range of possibilities in the mode of reflection itself.<sup>316</sup>

Thus a literary text can be analyzed as an epiphenomenon of a culture's modes of production, or "as we move closer and closer to such phenomena...the individual actors begin to emerge...classes are no longer even visible and...it is the individual writer who makes himself over into an instrument for such reflection".<sup>317</sup>

In the discussion of the WRITER we saw that the literary text has the form of an imaginary resolution of social contradictions and conflicts. This may be the self-mythification of a fulfilled wish, but Jameson also wants to "make a place for the art which might be prophetic rather than fantasy oriented, one which might portend genuine solutions underway rather than projecting formal substitutes for impossible ones."<sup>318</sup> At some point, appraising this functional efficacy of the work requires a reversal of critical perspective, from the writer's activity to the more or less passive reception of the work by a public. Moreover, this functionalism requires a diachronic dimension in order to follow the potential movement of the reading class through a rise to halcyon days and into its decline. These possibilities informed the Saussurian diagram in Marxism and

Form, which designates four "ideological" functions for works, depending on our interpretation of a writer's situation and on the text's salient formal characteristics. The following is a rough summary:

- Reactionary ideology, as a passive reflection of social content; e.g. Racines's Jansenism
- Reactionary ideology, actively rearticulated in a resolving formal context; e.g. Flaubert's formalism
- Progressive Consciousness, as a passive reflection of social content; e.g. Balzac's realism
- Progressive consciousness, actively articulated in a "prophetic" form; e.g. David's revolutionary idealism

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Such evaluations are relative to the CRITIC's own "focal distance" and historical self-appraisal, and accounting for these is a problem in its own right. Given changes in interpretive perspective,

...under the right circumstances, the same cultural fact may be seen as occupying any of these positions, or, indeed, accomplishing a rotation through all of the available positions in succession... and I believe that to see different judgments or evaluations in this fashion is not to speak out for some theoretical objectivity or neutrality, but rather to replace us at the very source of value itself and of such structural perpetuation, and to translate apparently literary disagreements back into the ultimate reality of conflicting groups in the historical world.<sup>320</sup>

2. Aristotle's discussions of the forms of literary production were founded on criteria of use-value and the paradigm of artisanal execution. Literary formalism now "requires a complete overhaul and readjustment if it is to do justice to the structural mystification of the advertising universe".<sup>321</sup> Thus, "material", "efficient", "final", and

"formal" causes must be treated in terms of the market practices of a consumer society in which "what we consume is always an idea rather than a material thing".<sup>322</sup> First, the fact that literature even has a meaningful substratum of raw socioeconomic "material" is obscured if we reify its aesthetic quality: Marxist analysis calls for investigation of basic production, distribution, and consumption of the commodity. Next, as "efficient cause" the writer is found refracted into, if subjectively struggling against, the increasingly dehumanized corporate affiliations of the professional writer. Third, as consumption becomes the ultimate social function, and the commodity an end in itself, aesthetic pleasure is no longer therapeutically cathartic, but "not to be a commodity, not to be consumed, to be unpleasurable in the commodity sense" is the "final cause" of the authentic artwork.<sup>323</sup> Last, the main assault of Marxist criticism in this theoretical paradigm is on the exigencies of ideological form itself. This entails "a kind of Marxist philology or systematic investigation of the inner, social forms of art in general".<sup>324</sup> It opens Marxist possibilities for theories of such normally "aesthetic" categories as the image, style, plot, character, etc. in ways already begun by Lukacs, Sartre, and others.

Again, Jameson is careful not to implement or reify such categories in an "Aristotelian" systematic totality, i.e. as some universal, undialectical "form" of Marxism :

Such systematizing is ruled out by the priority of history itself, which alone dictates the dominant categories and configurations out of the works that, ever new, rise from out of its own perpetual renewal.<sup>325</sup>

The concluding moment of Jameson's "theory of history" is to remember that historical priority is the living CRITIC's, in a contemporary "situation", as it is ideologically conceived and as it really is.

#### THE CRITIC

A critic's conceptual and imaginative self-definition is crucial in Jameson's method, because it is the dialectical perspective from which to locate and correct problems in the application of Marxist theory. This compares with Bleich's concern that personal motives be accounted for in the production of knowledge, but for Jameson these motives are inextricable from class interests, and must ultimately be understood in these terms. Jameson's sense of the individual in collective identity largely derives from Sartre's dialectical theory of identity formation, even while his practice often owes more to the Frankfurt School or to French post-structuralism.

In Being and Nothingness Sartre theorized that alienation from the immediacy of material being is the defining precondition of consciousness. To be conscious of self is to experience its nothingness, its non-being. In Sartre's early work the eternal and inescapable paradox of self-consciousness

lay in its struggle to establish the self as or in some form of materiality. In his later theory consciousness successfully objectifies itself in group practice, in an existentialism which was modified to accommodate radical freedom to Marxist theories of history, class, labor, and alienation under capital. The fusion of a group into a working "we-subject" initially requires the opposition and mediation of an external entity, a third-party or "Other" against whom "we" can define and organize ourselves. ~~The neo-Freudian conceptions of family structure can be incorporated into this abstract scheme: ego-identification with a maternal or paternal order against the threat of the "third" constitutes the classic family triangle. Moreover, childhood experiences in this situation define a life "project" for the subject within the constraints of ideologically possible resolutions of the primal contradiction, in Lacan's terms either "Imaginary" or "Symbolic". In Sartre, the basic motivating circumstance of group-identity formation is the economy, considered as both political and libidinal. The meta-psychological determinants, primal lack and desire, are correlated with the meta-sociological fact of scarcity in human economic and social life, and concomitant need.<sup>326</sup>~~

The primary role of a critic is that of a producer. Criticism thus enacts a process of self-objectification through social production, in which the labor of interpretation (e.g. articulating the class values encoded in the literary text, in a

Marxist theory) must reveal its own status as social praxis, in its class situation, in struggle. We have seen that for Jameson the epistemological basis of any theoretical analysis must be subjective and intentional. Dialectically, if critical practice is to concretely pertain to the critic's situation it must account for the existential and historical conditions of its present possibility. From a Marxist perspective this means to identify oneself with the project of the liberation of the working class. But we have also seen that it is not easy to do this in a culture mystified by its own processes of production, in which real things have become ideas and ideas commodities for trade on the market. Since this applies to "Marxist" ideas as much as to any others, a "method" is needed to break the confines of the tautology. Specifically, the paradox is that the very theory of the alienation of subject and object in bourgeois culture creates uncertainty about the status of any theoretical work. We can posit that alienated forms of culture develop in relation to concrete modes of production, yet these real conditions of social and economic life are mystified by the alienation-function itself. We are continually in danger of reifying theories and ideal orders. For Jameson, if the "objective" Marxist analysis is an idealization, it can only be validated by realizing Marxism's historical imperative in the life of a working CRITIC.

Such validation is at first a phenomenon of dialectical method, an ascertained and shared experience, the feeling of doing dialectical thinking.<sup>327</sup> Here we can recall Sartre's reference to the difference between knowing the dialectical supercession and living it, in Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel.<sup>328</sup> For example, the application of a literary theory requires a simultaneous "hermeneutic" approach:

it does not imply truth of a positivistic kind somehow timelessly associated with its object, like the laws of the natural sciences; rather it emphasises the operation of interpretation itself, as it moves in time from outer to inner form or from one moment to another in a dialectical process. Thus the critic is recalled to his own procedures, as a form unfolding in time but also reflecting his own concrete social and historical situation.<sup>329</sup>

We are dealing now with the "regressive" movement of Sartre's method, with the almost visionary clarity of intellectual and imaginative "totalization". This is a sudden and synchronic comprehension of ourselves as producing things in themselves, in conjuncture. It is the pivotal moment in the critical dialectic, but it is a fleeting one that Jameson refers to with phrases like "a glimpse" and "an instant", which run like a leitmotiv through his writing. Self-understanding of our own historical practice amounts to a truly Marxist inversion of theoretical idealism. Thus Jameson tries to go beyond idealist descriptions of factitious forms and conditions of cultural possibility (as he lumps together Hegel, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, the early Sartre, and almost all structuralists)<sup>330</sup>, and toward their



explanation in historical materialism.

In the context of our present description which limited itself to an account of the dialectic as a mental operation, dialectical thinking thus proves to be a moment in which the mind, suddenly drawing back and including itself in its new and widened apprehension, doubly restores and regrounds its earlier notions in a new glimpse of reality: first, through a coming to consciousness of the way in which our conceptual instruments themselves determine the shape and limits of the results arrived at (the Hegelian dialectic); and thereafter, in that second and more concrete movement of reflection which is the specifically Marxist form, in a consciousness of ourselves as at once the product and the producer of history, and of the profoundly historical character of our socio-economic situation as it informs both solutions and the problems which gave rise to them.<sup>331</sup>

Materialist consciousness, in demystifying and revealing the Other as Capital itself, is not a contemplative understanding but an ability to project action. Marxism is not a positivistic application of Marxian "figures" and terminology (although these retain a privileged place), but a critical totalization implying the project which must follow: a method.

As a subjective experience and as a group "mission", Jameson has acknowledged and attempted to resolve the affinity of Marxism with religion. He rejects the claim, either for or against, Marxism as "some unique and specialized, intrinsically other type of psychological or spiritual experience to the believer"<sup>332</sup>, and returns to a recognition of Christianity's own problematics of God's absence from the world, and of faith defined as a "longing" for faith. The secular and experiential common denominator for believers and unbelievers alike helps to

reverse the claim that Marxism is a religion refusing the name: the proposition reveals an effective secularization of the concept of religion itself, as a force in the world.

The affirmation of the religious aspect has both a positive and a critical potential for Marxism. Specifically, for a Marxist hermeneutics we can recognize both its "doctrinal" function as intellectual meeting ground for believers, and its proselytizing function. These, in turn, reaffirm the special status of economic analysis in Marxist reading, and establish important differences from "aesthetic" modes of reading. Just as textual production is a practical mediation of the writer's personal and historical life forms, for a contemporary Marxist critic the "place of the concrete" must be the production of critical knowledge itself. The approach to an "other" mode of experience must not involve special powers of insight or ritual obeisance, but a common basis of contemporary social life. The aesthetic mode of criticism would fall under Jameson's critical definition of religion as "that set of imaginary propositions which must be believed to be true if the theoretical consequences of Marxism are to be avoided".<sup>333</sup> In short, aestheticism presumes a hypostatized, autotelic commodity which can, under analysis, be shown to serve in a determinate ideological capacity. Both the artist and the critic have an interest to "obliterate the signs of work on the product in order to make it easier for us to forget the class structure

which is its organizational framework."<sup>334</sup> Subjectively and objectively, then, applying economic theory conjointly with Marxist hermeneutics becomes a demystifying, dialectical praxis.

#### HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRITIC

In the 1970s, with the advent of structuralism, a "theory of signification" became a central, almost obligatory consideration of literary theorists. Thus, a discussion of the structure and function of language has been important for each of the critics in this thesis. Yet linguistic theory (whether or not structuralist) is not a common denominator for the three approaches, and this is reflected in different uses and evaluations given it, and especially in the different "coordinates" the linguistic theory constitutes in practice. For Krieger, as well as more radical post-structuralist critics, the problematic of mediation is considered a function of the TEXT, while in Bleich the central problem is the motivational basis of language in an individual CRITIC. Structural linguistics and semiotics have been important to Jameson, too, but he defines them as a phenomenon of HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Without denying that our life forms are prescribed by them, Jameson asserts that we can comprehend and thus free ourselves in the historical analysis of these forms.

The structuralist premise is that we are entirely taken up by such systems to the extent that we communicate in society,

and we are theoretically unable to reach any perspective outside language from which to see the limits (i.e. historical) of language itself. Thus our descriptive paradigms impose in advance the structure and experiential quality of any object of consciousness: to realize the systematic nature of even our private perceptions leads to structuralism's famous "dissolution of Man", as the organizing center of perception and narrative. The social production of discourse precedes more or less mechanically, impervious to and even subsuming any "humanistic" protestations. For post-structuralist critics, then, any attempt to posit an independently thinking and choosing subject, as consciously determinate to itself, will only comply with the peculiar but defining form of contemporary social oppression. This is because the "subject of discourse", as a constellation of "human" traits and norms, is an imaginary structure caught up in the psycho-social complex of Oedipal censorship and repression. This has led into the lines of radically affirmative textual practice developed by Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida (to eroticize or anarchize the Logos) and Michel Foucault (to violently use the exteriority and superordination of the system to reveal historical orders and absences).

For Jameson these methods cannot be successful in themselves, although they may be heuristically useful. First, the concept of the dissolution of the subject is not a clearcut victory or demonstrably prototypical of a higher, collective

frame of mind:

...our possession by language, which writes us even as we imagine ourselves to be writing it, is not an ultimate release from bourgeois subjectivism, but rather a limiting situation against which we must struggle at every instant. Thus the Symbolic order can only be said to represent a psychic conquest from the vantage point of that imaginary stage which it supersedes: for the death of the subject, if it might be supposed to characterize the collective structure of some future socialist world, is fully as characteristic of the intellectual, cultural, and psychic decay of post-industrial monopoly capitalism as well.<sup>335</sup>

The Prison-House of Language was both a historical justification and an explanation of structuralist method, and an attempt to undermine its intellectual hegemony. As in the discussion of Lacan (which followed it), Jameson pointed out structuralism's limitations as those of the Kantian a priori and dialectically proposed the continuing subjective potential of a phenomenological "signified", even as an imaginary or visionary future. By rehabilitating the subject's intentionality Jameson means to specify a relationship of the system of signification to its signifieds which is not "arbitrary" but historical. That is, he attempts to forge the historical perspective on structuralism which its own practitioners elide on theoretical principles. Thus Jameson implements the dialectic he described in Marxism and Form between the method of abstraction and formalization and that of a hermeneutic return through the word to a feeling of immediate perception. In this synthesis structuralist theory is deprived of its initial premise of

"exteriority" and is regarded in terms of an existential (albeit temporary or provisional) commitment which facilitates its practice. (For example, Jameson has claimed that Roland Barthes could not have written without some belief in the priority of his Saussurean model).<sup>336</sup> Jameson thus considers the application of structuralist concepts in terms of, more or less "subjective", experience of textual duplicity, and has even phenomenologically construed it as a type of two-stage reading process.<sup>337</sup>

For Jameson structuralist models become historically particular "figures" of understanding.<sup>338</sup> The loss of the signified in the superabundance of the Signifier should be understood as an analogue for an economic base which has been lost in the obscured distinction between primary and secondary industry, and in the mass mediation and distortion of human potentials in a megasystem of exchanging (useless) goods and services. When the relationship of S/s is that of superstructure to base, reinverting its contradictions into structuralism's idealist paradigm cannot resolve it. Yet we can see the terms in which structuralist insights might be useful to Marxists:

To say, as the most consequent theoreticians of Structuralism have, that there can be no problem of the referent, inasmuch as the latter finds itself constantly reabsorbed into language in the form of new sign-systems, is merely to displace the problem, which remains intact. For one would be only too willing to admit that the infrastructure is itself a sign system, in a complex of such systems, in its own right: what remains to be determined, however, is the nature of the

relationship of such systems to those more overtly verbal ones which Marxism sees as forming the superstructure. Both synchrony and diachrony are involved: for it is not only a question of the coordination of two or more systems "at the same time", but also of the coordination between the changes taking place in each both separately and simultaneously.<sup>339</sup>

The theory of signs is not an external perspective but an event, to be questioned dialectically and grasped in its historicity. We cannot account for or abandon "the signified" by merely positing theoretical concepts. Whether or not these are structuralist, the critic must actively reinvest such formulae with his or her personal and class situation, by redefining them in a conscious act of class affiliation and practice. The goal of Jameson's practical method is to live out theory as an experience of imaginative textual production, in the dialectic of received forms and real historical content. His Marxism is not a particular paradigm or set of operations, but a process of methodical work through such paradigms, toward a "figurable" self-perception in collective HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Contemporary literary criticism must therefore be considered in its situation: isolation within universities, the declining "literacy" of "the reading public", and a general devaluing of the canon of "official literature". Criticism becomes increasingly alienated and manneristic the longer it clings to idealistic notions of its civilizing mission (or even the decivilizing mission of esoteric deconstruction).<sup>340</sup> To affirm it we need to ground it in the larger social/cultural

matrix, and relate its crises to the general dissolution and reorganization of the North American socioeconomic structure. By positing such a "totalization" Jameson has enlarged the context of "literary" criticism in both subject matter and approach. An initial gesture is to question the viability of the classification of high culture and "great works". This begins as a statement about the possibility of producing a contemporary high culture:

For one thing, I doubt if there are many people left who feel that there is much either in our art or in our society itself--at least in the extreme that it has reached in the United States today--which is worth salvaging...For another, the continuity between the present and the historical and prehistoric past on which such a demonstration depended seems to have been definitively sundered by the new modes of production and organization of post-industrial capitalism.<sup>341</sup>

While the truly prophetic or progressive art of the past can demonstrate the regenerative potential of literary vision, and provide some understanding of the healthier cultures which produce such works, our contemporary kitsch and anti-aesthetics are not effective in this way. This negative verdict actually facilitates Jameson's impressive readings of popular literature, film, etc., which are not carried out with distaste or with patronizing enthusiasm, but with a commitment to the radical critical project.

Enlarging the "canon" to include a broad cultural critique has also led Jameson to explore "unliterary" disciplines and categories of analysis, especially from the social sciences and



psychology. This can be compared with David Bleich's work in psychology, psycholinguistics, and the physical sciences, but is based on different methodological premises. Bleich values and explains literary symbolization as an extreme and self-revealing case of the motivated cognitive process which is shared by all branches of knowledge. For him, all the "human sciences" are evolving toward a transdisciplinary, subjectivist paradigm for the production of knowledge. For Jameson, the "subject" is ultimately a "subject of history", whose practice is overdetermined by contemporary modes of production and ideological possibilities. Jameson is more inclined to objectify his own practice, its satisfactions and its limits, as an established academic form in its sociohistorical situation.

A new and decisive event in this situation is the "surplus" of theoretical possibilities themselves. In particular, the urgent need to understand ourselves in some provisionally totalized view of history has been complicated by a panoply of critical-historical approaches and their contradictions. Jameson's recent essay "Marxism and Historicism" surveys competing historical and antihistorical methodologies, and proposes a dialectical and materialist reading of them. Again, this entails a "progressive-regressive" reconciliation of structuralist and existential historicisms: using positive Marxist economic categories in a dialectical practice. For Jameson the "logic" expressed in historical and cultural forms

must be based on the series of economic modes of production. In analysis, these modes can be treated synchronically, as a set of structural variations on each other, or diachronically, as a sequence in which later modes both include the previous and project their own future. In the superstructure, changes in the dominant mode of production entail "cultural revolutions", of which China's is only the latest.<sup>3+2</sup> Moving to reconsider our own status as historical subjects, and makers of history, we are faced with alternative relations to the past of "identity" and "difference". We can identify with and legitimize current practices on the basis of a perceived correspondence with the past, or we can radically sever ourselves and our situation from it, in a position of analytic objectivity and privilege. For Jameson, these are also respectively "imaginary" and "symbolic" relationships to history, and each has advantages and limitations, and generates ideological contradictions in the knowledge we derive from it. Identity provides a sense of existential immediacy and the value of historical understanding, but blinds us to what we are not; difference demystifies the present, but does not give us any useful grasp of it except as what we are not. Jameson suggests we can "restructure" the problem of the present, and our place in it, in three ways:

First, we must try to rid ourselves of the habit of thinking about our (aesthetic) relationship to culturally or temporally distant artefacts as being a relationship between individual subjects... grasping this obvious and concrete individual relationship as being in

itself a mediation for a nonindividual and more collective process: the confrontation of two distinct social forms of or modes of production... Our individual reading thus becomes an allegorical figure.<sup>343</sup>

This revaluation of individual experience leads us to the second reformulation, a reversal of our ethnocentric prerogative to "judge" the past: rather, it judges us.

This is the sense in which the past speaks to us about our own virtual and unrealized "human potentialities", but it is not an edifying lesson or any leisure matter of personal or cultural "enrichment". Rather, it is a lesson of privation, which radically calls into question the commodified daily life, the reified spectacles, and the simulated experience of our own plastic-and-cellophane society; and this not merely on the level of content... but in the very experience of form and linguistic production itself, where the primacy of collective ritual, or the splendor of uncommodified value, or even the transparency of immediate personal relations of domination, at once stigmatize the monadization, the privatized and instrumentalized speech, the commodity reification of our own way of life.

...the past... judges us remorselessly, without any sympathy or complicity with the scraps of subjectivity we try to think of as our own fragmentary and authentic life experience.<sup>344</sup>

The final rectification of our historical perception depends on the structural projection of our history of the modes of production, toward completeness. This (Hegelian) sense of future is an extension of the formal logic of the dialectic, as an ultimately "imaginary", Utopian complement to it.

This is the final reason why Marxism is not, in the current sense, a "place of truth", why its subjects are not centered in some possession of dogma, but are rather very precisely historically decentered: only the Utopian future is a place of truth in this sense, and the privilege of contemporary life and of the present lies not in its possession, but at best in the rigorous

judgement it may be felt to pass on us.<sup>345</sup>

THEORY: Seriality and Groups

It is a characteristic quality of Jameson's article "Seriality in Modern Literature" that his operative theory is in the foreground and overtly in question.<sup>346</sup> This is an important methodological difference from Krieger and Bleich, who although eminently concerned with the theoretical status of their working concepts, employ a practice in which these concepts are tacit. Following T.S. Kuhn, what we might call their "normal" criticism does not posit and define its theoretical model starkly against our "normal" ideological experience of the literature. For Jameson, however, this dialectical method is intended as much to question and historically place theory as to explain the object of interpretation. His article develops Sartre's theory of the "situation" from the way he outlined it in Marxism and Form, and I will refer the specific model of "seriality" back to this informing paradigm in order to establish a frame of reference for the critique that follows.<sup>347</sup> I think that Jameson's limited totalization in the journal article prefigures some important problems in his subsequent, and larger, "metacritical" project.

"Seriality in Modern Literature" predates Jameson's use of structuralism and other theoretical programs of the seventies, so that my choice of it may require some explanation. First,

throughout this discussion I have emphasized Jameson's reliance on Sartre's method. This is because I have found it to pertain even when Jameson uses categories or theories derived from Frye, Greimas, or Lacan. Thus it is convenient to consider Jameson's practice in an article explicitly predicated on the Critique of Dialectical Reason, using a sociological theory Jameson has continued to refer to.<sup>348</sup> My critique will note how this important essay opens into Jameson's current concerns with psychoanalysis, and how post-narrative concepts of discourse might imply a methodological crisis for Jameson after all. But here the "theory of seriality" has the same paradigmatic status in analyzing modernism that "Imaginary" and "Symbolic" had for Balzac's realism: it is an explanatory "figure" which must be grounded and validated in an historical reading of the text, and it should mediate our conceptualization of that reading as a form of contemporary praxis. Finally, the discussion of Joyce and Robbe-Grillet lends itself to the focus on narrative that I have tried to maintain as a unifying problem in my studies here.

The theory of seriality is a conceptual handle on the familiar but recalcitrant experience of contemporary anomic individuality. Interpersonal (i.e. "group") relationships are apparently lost to relationships with material objects:

By seriality, Sartre means to define a type of relationship with other people that is neither of an individual face-to-face nature, nor that which we

experience in genuine group action: indeed, the serial relationship looks at first glance very much like solitude, and our solitude is itself criss-crossed and mined, corroded, by hosts of serial relationships without our knowing it. In seriality, what I happen to be doing, reading a newspaper, waiting for a bus, opening a can, pausing for a red light, is characterized primarily by its identity with the acts of other people in those situations; thus, in such activities, the uniqueness of my own experience is undermined by secret secret anonymity, a statistical quality. Somehow I feel that I am no longer central, that I am merely doing just what everybody else is doing, that the center of my act is elsewhere, outside me, in other people. But, and this is the crucial point, everybody else feels exactly the same way about it. 349

Seriality then describes those social relations in which we are forced to consider ourselves quanta with respect to some external, material aspect of ourselves or a commodity. The perception of people in series is not only the "phenomenological" prerequisite for the science of statistics, then, but is the experience of those problems of society (e.g. panics, inflation) in which the self-interest of individuals seems to require them to aggravate the situation in order to maintain themselves with respect to "everybody else". It is a perspective which constitutes the individual as a statistical probability that others are doing the same. Seriality implies a vague lack of the concrete sense of others:

"Each is the same as the Others to the degree that he is Other from himself", Sartre says, and in this sense seriality is a vast optical illusion, a kind of collective hallucination projected out of individual solitude onto an imaginary being thought of "public opinion" or simply "they". 350

"Seriality" is really a disguised and alienated form of

intersubjectivity, an extreme negation of the structure of "groups". It is the terminal state of Sartre's cycle of group "fusion", formalization and decay. In these terms, Jameson suggests history can be theorized as either a diachronic process of groups' emergence from and return to seriality, or synchronically, "as a complicated co-existence of groups at various stages of their development and masses of serial individuals surrounding them".<sup>351</sup> The concept of "situation" mediates the psychoanalytic subject of ego-formation with the sociological subject of group formation. A situation is a structural exigency of the "Look" of an Other: the identity of subjects who objectify themselves in a group depends on their shared recognition of a "third", initially an outsider or enemy. "Fusion" is the privileged moment of group life, an exhilarating commitment to a clear and present project. The shared perception of the Other is internalized among members of the group in a system of "revolving thirds", in which any member can articulate the group's raison d'etre, speaking for the group itself.<sup>352</sup> This triangular structure gives the group an autonomous, self-referential, and initially democratic dynamics, with thirds defining the totalizing process which provides members intersubjective links. As the group evolves and succeeds, formulaic oaths of affiliation preserve its integrity and continuity, and prevent its dissolution back into series, even after its initial purpose is forgotten. The group is a reward

structure in itself:<sup>353</sup>

...where in seriality no one was a center and the center was always and for everyone elsewhere, here in the group, everyone is the center, the center is everywhere, present whenever any members of the group are present...men are somehow self-caused, have become the foundation of their own being, have through mutual solidarity overcome both the abstract isolation of individual existence and the alienation of serial man in objects and otherness.<sup>354</sup>

Yet the group eventually becomes a hollow and oppressive form. The positive and free act of identification seems contradicted by Sartre's deterministic and finally pessimistic cycle of rise and decline. It is crucial for Jameson that the cycle is a process and perpetually renewable. Inevitable "failure" to achieve what we might imagine as a transcendental and final group identity is like the failure of individual consciousness (nothingness) to "be" in the form of inert materiality. Such an ultimate "fusion" (which even has overtones of fascist mystique) is implicitly a denial of history itself:

For to say that consciousness or human life is a lack of being, an emptiness striving toward stasis and plenitude, toward being itself itself, is only in effect to give a definition of time...On the level of groups, therefore, the doctrine of ontological failure lays emphasis on the passage of time, on constant change, both in groups and in situation, and on the succession of generations. As in Being and Nothingness it has what is essentially an ethical function. It aims at dispelling the illusions of an ethic of being, and at reconciling us to our life in time.<sup>355</sup>

As the terminal structure and negation of groups, seriality is also an intersubjective structure mediated by a "third" or Other. But in seriality this third is the abstract sense of



"everybody else", in a situation defined by material scarcity and object relations rather than other people or groups. It is a particularly intense structure of alienation: appearing as a quantum of mutually exclusive and yet identical relationships with the "practico-inert" itself. Instead of the class enemy, or the spokesperson for the group, the subject is defined in terms of a relationship with a fetishized material object. Instead of group solidarity and purpose, individuals in seriality feel "expendable" and helpless, because their relationships with objects are predicated against "everybody else's". The public's identical relation to the object is competitive and threatening rather than shared. Almost paradoxically, this determination of human beings by their material environment can become stronger even as knowledge and technology increase. This is the sense in which the dominion of capital over human relations has meant increasing seriality along with "prosperity" and progress. Capital becomes the oppressive materiality which organizes series. 356

"Everybody else" has become the Other or enemy to my own relationship with the commodity, and I become an other to myself when I am forced to act and think as they do in the situation, in order to maintain my own status. There is no authentic "we" in seriality, and this implies the difficulty of coming to a practical understanding or political program:

Thus, in seriality, the Other is secretly present at the

heart of my acts: when I hear a politically offensive newscast, for instance, my indignation is scarcely a personal one. I know what I think, it is not my own ideas, my own convictions, which are in danger. No, I am busy thinking for other people, worrying for the others, forestalling their misconceptions, their gullibility. Yet those others, of course, remain an idea in my head; they are anonymous statistics, with no concrete reality for me: they are sheer Otherness, in the abstract.<sup>357</sup>

Jameson's article "Seriality in Modern Literature" begins with the problem posed for criticism by the concept "Modernism". It is first of all a theoretical problem: Sartre's theory of the situation is found to resolve a contradiction in modern criticism between "realist" and "nominalist" readings, which are incommensurable in their own terms. For Jameson, the methodological crux of the problem is the opposition of diachronic, Marxist/historicist approaches against the dominant, synchronic approach of literary formalisms. "Situation" can be a dialectical and dynamic structure which requires and encompasses both analyses (see HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND TEXT). Thus Jameson examines the new forms of narrative alienation which appeared in Joyce and Robbe-grillet, and correlates them to the social situation which emerged in Ireland and France under comparable socio-economic configurations. In principle such a situation both constitutes and is characterized by cultural forms:

A period style, which is to say a sharing of

characteristics among contemporary artefacts, would then make its appearance whenever a determinate life situation is widely diffused throughout a culture. By the same token, where we now in a kind of shorthand refer to the recurrence of a period style (as in some "new romanticism", or in the "manneristic" moment of cubism, and so forth), we would be more accurate in directing attention to the recurrence of the socio-economic situation to which that peculiar style is a reaction.<sup>358</sup>

Thus Joyce and Robbe-Grillet wrote at times when similar changes were occurring in their respective countries: new markets, mass merchandising, and a blurring of political lines intensified seriality in the culture. To the extent that consumerism contradicted nationalist and other intergroup dialectics, group structures gave way to seriality. The language which had formerly objectified and internalized reference to a collective and its enemy (e.g. England, Germany) was commodified in itself. This would indicate why, as Jameson notes at the beginning of his article, the name "Modernism" refers to artworks themselves without the specific social or class configuration of their origin, unlike other period names. Thus Jameson takes up Hugh Kenner's hypothesis of the "bookishness" of Joyce's text, to locate it in a particular historical paradigm of the existence and experience of books. Words are not used to represent, but are themselves the objects of reference, in a Kantian contemplative rather than an instrumental mode of existence, in an untotalized and anxiety-producing system:

With Mr. Kenner, I also admire Joyce's evocation of the cat's mew, for instance. but is it not clear that the

elegance of this transcription--"Mknngnao! Mrknao!"--is of a wholly different structure from that of the not juste? is precisely not a perfect rendering of the cat's mew, at least not as I can hear it or read it. It is a perfect rendering for other people, and as a reader, I see this new alphabetical object, not as a transparency (through which Joyce's intention, the banal sound he wishes me to recall, is clear and even banal on account of its very clarity), but rather as an opaque object, as it were, intercepted by "the other" readers, and by Joyce himself as an Other. I take the letters as a sign that for someone else a cat's mew has been adequately set down on paper.<sup>359</sup>

Yet just as seriality is a misleading "group" phenomenon, language is not really in itself an Other or "everybody", whose look determines our perception. For Jameson books really are and remain tools rather than commodities. In positing a larger, post-narrative analysis of modern texts he is attempting to reclaim Joyce and Robbe-Grillet for a newly "situated" reflection theory: for the hypothetical perspective of the "subject of history" for want of which Lukacs condemned Joyce.<sup>360</sup> Thus, for Jameson the modernists both manifest seriality and propose, in the fact of the text, a totalization which transcends the particular symptoms of serial culture in their content and formal technique. Crucially, this achievement implied an end of narrative and of the ego-centered subject. For Joyce to attempt to comprehend the experiences of a normal day (and all days tend to the normal in seriality) requires the "technical expansion" of the novel out of point-of-view, toward textual "automatisms", inexplicable recurrent motifs, the allusion to some larger systematic order which is never

correctly perceived, etc.<sup>361</sup> Historically situating such literary phenomena can salvage this avant-garde "nominalism" for a "realist" reading, so that Modernism can be understood in a historical context which it seems to reject or refuse. Jameson's conclusion is that even if, following Nietzsche and Foucault, God and Man are not viable points-of-view, there is still a totalizing potential in the twentieth-century literary text:

For what Ulysses shows us is that when the old objects of mimesis disappear, the stable characters, the individual destinies, new ones, perhaps wholly unforeseen and unsuspected, always take their place from out of the womb of Time. Not, clearly, as the result of any intellectualization on the writer's part: rather Joyce made himself the spontaneous, instinctive organ of perception of these new kinds of collective objects stirring in his society. Thus it was that he was able to compose a novel which on the ruins of an individualistic middle class society told the adventures of the new society in its very style and formal structure.<sup>362</sup>

In the context of seriality, his sympathy notwithstanding, Jameson's treatment of Joyce and Robbe-Grillet serves to describe the literary phenomena which accompany what Marxism has analyzed as commodity fetishism. This, in extremity, implies a fetishism of the text as textuality itself by modern writers. In brief, the language system of the text has been given inordinate, almost mystical value because under seriality it is that text, rather than a speaking person, which is the source of comfort and imaginative fulfillment as the mediating "third" in social relations. In Marxism and Form Jameson observed that the third, whether in group or serial situations, functions as a

medium of exchange<sup>363</sup>, thus regulating, and sometimes seeming to determine, the groups values and practice. "Normally, of course, language itself is this third party"<sup>364</sup>, within a functioning narrative order. In the article on Modernism, however, Jameson finds that within serialized culture an inaccessible text, words for "someone else", defines an ideological experience of the phenomenological world, and in particular ways modifies the attempt to write in and about it. As the disembodied and distorted "voice" of a set of public expectations under seriality, the third appears as an external, inhuman code or bureaucracy, or system of advertising and consumption. The recurrence of this situation in Ireland and France structures the attempts to work with it in the meta-texts produced by Joyce and Robbe-Grillet.

With this assertion Jameson returns us to the implication of theory as contemporary practice, as entailing "method". Seriality is a concept which allows critics to understand and clarify the collective hallucination of the opaque medium, is itself a mediation or "figure of understanding", in a contemporary dialectic of literary formalism and sociological reduction. To this extent Jameson's article could be a tautology, reducing the novels into Sartre's (also "modernist") system, and it is no accident that he finds its image in the literature. We should remember here that social and cultural analysis are the important and prior values for Jameson, and

that rather than reducing literature he means to enrich and develop theory. This understood, in order to posit its value in a group praxis, the user of the theory must be continually answerable to his or her own experience in contemporary history. This is the "regressive" moment of dialectical method,<sup>365</sup> in which Jameson purports to wager his heuristic by giving us opportunities to share his perceptions, to compare them with our own, and to prove the validity of theory by this "subjective" standard along with its discursive cogency and power. To recall Bleich, Jameson's analogues should be "negotiable", as in the hypothesis of the cat's meow.

I think "Seriality in Modern Literature" is exemplary of Jameson's work, and that it projects the directions of his subsequent studies. It was written before the heyday of the "materiality" of discourse and the methodology of écriture in America, so that the appeal of these "post-modernist" theories is historically situated and sociologically explained almost before the fact, foreshadowing Jameson's efforts in The Prison-House of Language. Jameson's Marxist claim over the precursors Joyce and Robbe-Grillet is that they required a systematically accessible social reality beyond the kind of system structuralism has been willing to address. He believes that "seriality" can be superseded when it is glimpsed, simultaneously and not coincidentally, in the literary text and in the dialectical interpretation of it.

CRITICISM IN PRACTICE: Beyond Dialectical Reason

The dialectical question to pose for Jameson's essay "Seriality in Modern Literature" is the "situation" ascribed to literary criticism itself. As a critic interpreting the modernists' meticulous, obsessive paraphrases of modern life, in which novelists both address and abandon their responsibilities as community storytellers, Jameson uses a particular form of representational discourse which is problematical in its own terms. What is the status of critical discourse with respect to its community, groups and series? What other determines its practical, ideological frame of reference? Jameson's conclusion is that "seriality" describes a "logic of the content" of a kind of modern novel, and that it is useful for critics to understand it. Our dialectical concern is for the authority of the theoretical instruments by which we attempt such criticism, and the radical methodological question of what the constraints of that criticism must be. Employing an overt, theoretical model against his reading of the novels, can Jameson resolve the contradictions they pose in a materialist-historical conception of their situation? Finally, does this imply that we and our interpretations are historically and theoretically privileged, beyond those contradictions?



The theory of the situation in seriality defines and in a sense prescribes the status of writers in a dialectic. It mediates the problem of what Jameson has called "focal distance": from the action of a particular writer in what appears to be free choice of matter and form, a biographical focus, to the distanced perspective from which modern society and "modernism" itself seemed to require Ulysses and The Erasers. In "Seriality in Modern Literature", Joyce and Robbe-Grillet are considered negativistic, almost misanthropic exponents of modernism which also had, at its positive pole, "an attempt to repurify language, to recreate a more genuinely tribal society with a more direct, unalienated language, as in Stefan George, for instance, or in the newer American poetry, the inference being that, in the long run, good language will drive out the bad".<sup>366</sup> Jameson's observation is not a judgment of Joyce and Robbe-Grillet so much as a critical hypothesis about the contradiction in modernism which constitutes its "materialization" of language. The social "base" of this phenomenon remains the formation of mass markets, commodity surplus, the proliferation of advertising, and the hypostasis of national/political consciousness which are comparable in turn-of-the-century Dublin and Gaullist Paris.

This hypothesis of a "situation" in economic and social history, in its contradictions, redefines the question of whether the writers "represented" serial culture correctly in

the way prescribed by George Lukacs, for example. It transposes the mimetic criterion from a question of realism and totality of perspective to one of problematical form and the viability of any "point-of-view". Projecting narrative perspective onto the system of language itself, Jameson can be understood as saving modernism for Lukacs with this non-anthropomorphic, disturbed notion of totality. Thus, in Ulysses Jameson notes and accounts for an experience in which the veracity of the narrator, and even our conviction that there is one, is at once emphasized, made impossible, and replaced by a mechanization of language. There is no point-of-view with whom to identify or from which to receive a truth about the characters or events, or even any "insight" into the logic of a speaker's psyche:

The point is that these linguistic mechanisms are not personal at all; far from implying some human narrative presence, they seem, on the contrary, through their very automatic quality, to mark its absence, or at least its senile decay. They seem, I am tempted to say, like language mimicking itself with all the human warmth and expressiveness of a nervous tic...<sup>367</sup>

True to Lukacs, Jameson still finds that Joyce and Robbe-Grillet can "recuperate" the loss of intersubjectivity and concrete reality. This is by positing the linguistic system itself as a unifying experiential and intellectual field. Moreover, although the system remained beyond the discursive horizon of the modernist writers, their books have become a phenomenal ground for our own, present-day theoretical recuperation. It begins with Sartre and develops, historically and in Jameson's

personal practice, into the linguistic psychoanalysis of Lacan, Lyotard; etc. As a historical phenomenon this textuality authorizes Jameson's use and his critique of structuralism, and we can see these later concerns implicit in the "Seriality" paper, especially in his treatment of Robbe-Grillet.

Jameson argues that Robbe-Grillet is following in what is almost a post-revolutionary French "tradition" which strives for pure or value-free writing.<sup>368</sup> Thus Robbe-Grillet grounds his cultural message on what might seem to be the bedrock of pure "physical sensation". But this effect of real perception in his precise, hysterical descriptions is finally also an effect of language itself, paradoxically undercut by the irremediable abstraction of words. For Jameson:

No matter how lavishly we pile concrete detail on detail, no matter how painstakingly we enumerate the properties of the unique object before us, we will never find ourselves doing anything but combining abstractions: the word desk, the word brown, the word scratch, the word mahogany. No amount of effort can bend them to anything but their function, which is to name classes of similar things.<sup>369</sup>

Thus the movement of a Robbe-Grillet novel, "that infinite rearrangement and reshuffling" of descriptive sequences is to universalize and depersonalize sensation into the text's own constitutive structures.<sup>370</sup> Jameson characterizes the result as language "stealing" subjective experience from the subject. It is worth observing how this theft metaphor foreshadows work with Lacan's problematics of imaginary castration by the Father, when

the subject internalizes the system of signification, i.e. Jameson's synthesis of Sartre's social theory and structuralist psychoanalysis. In discussing Ulysses we will see how the triangularity of group structures--the Oedipal contradiction and its resultant structure of mediation--defines both form and problems for Jameson's dialectical method. Jameson's difficult conclusion is that a recuperation of the problem of mediation can be gotten through the writer's internalization of a system. This self-conscious affirmation of a text, developing a kind of post-narrative superego, can be inferred from Jameson's hypothesis of a cultural cure through a "homeopathic therapy":

...by reproducing the old alienation again on their own, as though it were this time not their external fatality but rather the result of their own free choice.<sup>371</sup>

When the novel is considered a form of effective social praxis, Sartre's group "fusion" can be reconstituted out of the mutual perception of modern seriality. Readers can share Robbe-Grillet's post-narrative "perspective" on this alienation, as a situation in a depersonalized, deperspectivized system the totality of which is in some important way inaccessible. The novelistic "representation" of seriality can effectively mediate a new collective experience, even after traditional narrative and its human subject have been reduced to a barely ascertainable motive behind the manic empiricism of the text:

I am tempted to say that the immediate object of our reading, of the narrative sentences, is precisely somebody else's look, an alien look which we try vainly

to follow, to approximate as it gazes from thing to  
thing... 372

The dialectical use of theory depends on us "subjectively" appreciating a quality of reading Robbe-Grillet, and we have seen that Jameson wants to account for the historicity of this subjectivity: i.e. our practical perception as it relates to theory in a present situation. In the theory of groups and series we can understand how the disconcerting alien purview of the System is an Other. When we, now, internalize this consciousness as a theory of seriality it becomes a "third", a mediation of our collective relationship to the reified statistical "public" of our pre-theoretical experience. Where in seriality we were monad-like subjects competing for identical "private" properties, we now share a totalization of this situation in a reading of the text and in a cognitive, theoretical practice on it. As critics in the seventies we could analogize the Other of a Joyce or Robbe-Grillet text to the iconographic maze of advertisement and aggrandizement we negotiate daily. This is the most salient dimension of Jameson's work, because it answers to the growing concern about our relation of literary experience to life outside the academy, and it projects the application of critical insights to the analysis of our own working conditions. But the strength of this is

contingent on an assumption: Jameson's theoretical method demands that criticism conducted in the context of North American academic study (Marxist or not) can be "totalized" as a group activity in praxis. Thus our "hermeneutical" readings of Joyce and Robbe-Grillet reveal them to be precursors of ourselves, and Jameson himself is a "third" to the theoretical community in articulating and totalizing our situation in capital. If the theory of seriality is a medium of exchange in the structure of an authentic critical dialectics, we must be careful that it is not reified to become an orthodoxy or intellectual commodity in itself. As orthodoxy, Sartre's theory would serve as a static ideological position. As a commodity it would be a mere aesthetic. In either case it would begin to resemble the kind of mechanized perspective we observed as alien in the novelists: where the system becomes its own object instead of a functional way of working in history. In this sense it is Jameson's criticism that attempts to "recuperate" modernist textuality, to transform it into a practical phenomenon. Jameson's very experience of the novels is in situation in literary criticism and subject to its laws, in a relationship that is problematical for any naive or materialist "perception" of the alien text. What overcomes this "structuralist" or Hegelian moment of theory can only be some collective experience of getting the job right: that we effectively comprehend the object of analysis in a logic which

is productively situated in our historical circumstances. If everybody else is really "us", and the Other is the enemy, paternal capitalism, and if we can finally see what we have been doing and the interests we have been serving in seriality, we are in a praxis. We have to understand the "recuperation" imputed to the novelists as a function of theoretical practice itself, at the same time it is "experienced" as an effect of reading.

Granting this, it is still possible, and I think necessary, to question the textual phenomenon Jameson places before us in the same way as for Krieger and Bleich: by questioning the context into which the critical text was contributed. Jameson explains that this context is the conflict between "nominalist" and "realist" theories. In dialectical method our historical resolution should retain the terms of this contradiction, negate it, and transform and supersede it in a more inclusive rational order. In effect Jameson has used Sartre's Marxism as a "realist" component to be synthesized with a phenomenology of literary form (and thematics) not unlike Murray Krieger's. Positing a relatively outrageous theoretical model was, in the context of critical methodologies in 1970, a political act and a critique of the New Critical nominalism dominant then. Yet the discussion of Joyce, at least, treats only half a novel (the post-narrative half of Ulysses) in terms of half a theory (seriality, not groups). Jameson passed quickly over Joyce's

prior, and possibly decisive, difficulties with the narrative he began with. Yet the theoretical connection of this with the group theory is implicit: the traditional narrator is a "third", a speaker to a fictional community which has become increasingly problematical in the history of novels. For Joyce and Robbe-Grillet readers have become a disembodied public, yet Jameson is proposing that we can be a group, sharing a vital and productive textual practice.

My criterion for questioning Jameson's practice is not simply Krieger's fictional norm of the authoritative and holistic text: rather it is a dialectical confrontation with this norm, as a consideration which has to be retained, negated, and reconstituted in a Marxist purview. Until that is accomplished the "whole text" remains an operative and inescapable standard, as I will try to show by referring to other Joyce criticism and the aspect of Ulysses glossed over by Jameson. In this respect Jameson's article was undialectically reductive by virtue of what it ignored: it assumed the theoretical prerogative of a partial or broken text, despite literary nominalism's reified sense of its object. By merely denying or ignoring (rather than negating) the value of the New Critical ideology, the dialectical movement of Jameson's practice becomes questionable. In the following I will invoke the narrative structure of the "whole text" of Ulysses as an argument which must be engaged in dialectical criticism, in its



own terms.

It is well established in criticism of Ulysses that there is a stylistic difference between the first and second halves of the book, and that this has important interpretive consequences. On the other hand it is not self-evident that the schism occurs between "Wandering Rocks" and "Sirens", as Jameson has it. A number of critics think of the "Wandering Rocks" as a modulating structure between the theoretical, phenomenological and historical difficulties of traditional narrative--as explored in "Scylla and Charybdis"--and the introduction of the serial, postnarrative mechanisms in "Sirens".<sup>373</sup> Michael Groden has noted that "Wandering Rocks" was the last chapter conceived for Ulysses and that Joyce decided to add it after having written "Scylla and Charybdis"--at a point in the composition when all the other chapters of the novel had been outlined for content and order as they finally did appear. Until that time Joyce's plan had been to write the entire book in the difficult but more or less straightforward narrative style of the first half. The library chapter seems to have changed his mind:

Joyce finished "Scylla and Charybdis"--hence the book's original style--at the end of 1918, and he indicated this clearly on the fair copy of that episode. On the last page of "Scylla and Charybdis" he wrote "End of First Part of 'Ulysses'" and the date, "New Year's Eve, 1918", as if to indicate that one phase of Ulysses was ending and something new was about to begin.<sup>374</sup>

Stanley Sultan's The Argument of Ulysses concurs with this

structural assessment, ending the first half with "Scylla and Charybdis" and positing the "Wandering Rocks" as pivotal and puzzling.<sup>375</sup> Sultan quotes Joyce's manuscript notations, and also a letter to Frank Budgeon written by Joyce at work on "Nighttown":

P.S. Last night I thought of an entr'acte for Ulysses in middle of book after 9th episode Scylla and Charybdis. Short with absolutely no relation to what precedes or follows like a pause in the action of a play.<sup>376</sup>

The critics agree that the structural break can be correlated with the end of the viability of narrative, and Richard Ellman notes that it also marks Joyce's disaffection with Stephen Dedalus after the library episode. This emerged in response to Ezra Pound's disapproval of "Sirens" (which Jameson alludes to), and the poet's hope that "Stephen Telemachus" could be "brought forward" in the rest of the novel. Joyce answered that "Stephen no longer interests me. He has a shape that can't be changed."<sup>377</sup> Joyce's decisions to revalue Stephen, abandon representational narrative, and to compose "Wandering Rocks" emerged together from a dead-end or problematics he seems to have reached in "Scylla and Charybdis". One implication of this is that the "prodigious technical expansion" which Jameson locates in "Sirens" ought to include, or to begin with, the expansion of the plan for the novel itself in "Wandering Rocks".

This has important consequences for Jameson's reading and

his theory. For him, language itself became Joyce's way out of the labyrinthine and disjoint interrelations of the Rocks. That episode marked the "ultimate additive complexity of which the point-of-view technique is capable; and after that, Joyce has no alternative but to abandon it for something else."<sup>378</sup> This stylistic observation enables the rest of Jameson's analysis of the second part of the novel, and it is interesting and useful as far as it goes: the "narrators" of the subsequent chapters are not really personal points-of-view in the sense of conveying a coherent, or even humanly troubled, perception of people and events. All of them, in a complex way even Molly Bloom, are rather extreme and self-parodying variations on what Wayne Booth called "unreliable narrative". This is true for their hyperstylized, mechanical-textual mannerisms and removal from the communally accessible sense expected of storytellers, in ways Jameson's theory can illuminate. Yet it is also true by virtue of the "additive complexity" of the novel in its entirety, as these disparate techniques combine and conflict with each other. Moreover, if we extrapolate from the fragmentary formation of "Wandering Rocks" we can note that its nineteen "sub-chapters" are led into and out of without a break in the series of unmarked "chapters" of Ulysses. If we note the special circumstances of the Rocks' insertion, it could be reinterpreted as the problematical structural center and even microcosm of the novel (as Stewart Gilbert had it <sup>379</sup>). As such,

they read as a maliciously contrived maze of false directions and connections, and tricky currents which deceive anyone who goes through them. An effect of this, in retrospect, might be a transformation of the "whole text" into what we now could imagine as a melange of wandering referents which smash by allusion or motif or apparent identity or sequence into each other, now and then, but which in sheer number and arrangement are finally (and is this the Horror at the heart of the Greek sailor's myth?) not to be definitively charted. (Hugh Kenner: "it is impossible to draw a reliable map" 380).

To take this confusion at the center as a limit of Ulysses would deny Jameson's own totalization and especially his quasi-nominalistic sense of its self-redemption as a text. For him the act of production, its intentionality, can recuperate the alienation it "represents":

This is to say that Ulysses is a book about a book: not in the banal sense of poetry the content of which is poetry, but rather in the most thoroughgoing formal way. Madame Bovary exists in heaven, Flaubert said; but for him the process of writing was supposed to suppress this duality, to bring the imaginary object down to concrete earthly existence. By the time of Joyce the dualism of imaginary plenitude and finite imperfect realization is here to stay: only it is interiorized, built as a double vision into the very structure of the work itself. Indeed it is this that better than anything else marks the profound originality of Ulysses--what might otherwise have seemed a source of weakness, this deep rift in the work, is here seized upon as the source of its effects on a line-by-line basis. Ulysses is somehow self-created because its sentences function as allusions to, or parodies of, not something outside, but rather an imaginary Ulysses that it carries within itself as its own ontological foundation.<sup>381</sup>

Even so, the complication of the structural break in the novel, and our reappraisal of "Wandering Rocks", have two important consequences for Jameson's discussion of Joyce:

First, the content of "Wandering Rocks" is an entirely exteriorized survey of Dublin, in which the "subjects" Stephen, Bloom and Molly figure as incidentals among others, and which was characterized by Joyce himself (in the Linati Scheme) as "the hostile environment".<sup>382</sup> Rather than maximizing subjective point-of-view, we can consider whether the chapter doesn't give an impression of pure analytic "description" comparable to Robbe-Grillet's strange "empiricism": i.e. unqualified by a "human" consciousness, belief structures, or personal priorities concerning subject matter. As a topographical, and indeed "sociological", surface of Dublin, criss-crossed by non-intersecting events, (i.e. people, occurrences, objects), it is undialectical, objective, and "post-narrative" text. Moreover, although accurate, the description is not "trustworthy" (although we cannot know why it has been subverted). The difficulties of reading it are not only in its "additive complexity" as a complicated social phenomenon, but in that the presentation has been arbitrarily skewed to make the old familiar assumptions of reading a mistake. Thus Jameson's disorienting sense of "everybody else" already dominates the reader's perception in the chapter before "Sirens".

The second consequence follows: we are driven back to "Scylla and Charybdis" for the last chapter with a sympathetic narrative. This is a crucial premise for the following discussion, for I intend to show that the content and technical method of "Scylla and Charybdis" anticipate Jameson's theoretical recuperation of the second half of the novel, working through a "dialectical criticism" of its own. I will explore this through treatments of the chapter by Stanley Sultan and Shari Benstock, critics writing in the dominant formalist tradition Jameson wishes to engage. Sultan's analysis links the chapter's complex polemic to a thematic "argument of Ulysses" as a whole. Benstock's paper "Ulysses as Ghoststory" describes a triangular structure and methodology of allusion which give it a "metacritical" relation to the rest of the novel.<sup>383</sup> This can be compared, with interesting similarities, to Jameson's. Using these criticisms should accomplish several ends: first, they reveal a contemporary critical dialectic involving theoretical, cultural and psychological consequences of the novel; second, they verify the parallels I will draw between the critical/aesthetic concerns of Stephen Dedalus, Joyce, and Jameson himself; third, Sultan and Benstock make clear that in dealing with only the second half of the novel, Jameson avoided problems that its author had to resolve. The most important of these is the status and efficacy of "dialectical method" itself.

I am suggesting that Jameson's article risks "recuperating" the second half of the novel in terms that Stephen Dedalus (and Joyce) explored in "Scylla and Charybdis". Jameson's interpretation of the postnarrative chapters thus depends on problematics--e.g. narrative identification, dialectical and triangular structure, the relationship of abstract intellection to literary experience, the mediation of family, national and religious ideologies, concepts of situation and totalization, a cyclical historical model--which were treated in the library chapter in a complex and ironical polemic, and possibly falsified (although I will not conclude on this).

We will see that Stephen's own practice in the chapter is a kind of theoretical recuperation which differs from Jameson's in that it is not "Marxist", to be sure, but more importantly in that its "focal distance", a psychological focus, has historically been Marxism's theoretical hyperopia. If we are working back from the emphasis on the postnarrative or "serial" chapters which Jameson found sociologically useful, through the overtly civic and social entr'acte of "Wandering Rocks", we are moving back in from this ironically distanced focus to a chapter which is intensely personal. This is true of its narrative technique, the verisimilar historical situation of the author as a young man, and it is true for readers as well. In "Scylla and Charybdis" all the characters and all of us are literary critics, excepting only Bloom: Stephen's theory of Hamlet, its

self-centered aesthetic rationale, and his reception by the Dublin intelligentsia enact a problematics of the personal and social context of literary scholarship, the relation of theory to practice, and a "phenomenological" critique of the dialectical process.

Specifically we are let into the point-of-view and difficult identity of a young protagonist who is attempting to win authority and acceptance in the Dublin literary circle, while at the same time to retain the critical and antagonistic perspective of alien genius. "Representing" Shakespeare in the midst of a Celtic revival, Stephen embodies the English "Otherness" which constitutes the group, even while his Irish birth and background allow him to speak as a potential member or "third". Moreover, the chapter has a crucial "metacritical" aspect: Stephen's aesthetic-theoretical resolution of the chapter's various dialectics is based on a (French) triangular structure that relates the literary text to its writer's personal and social history. We will see that the theory about Shakespeare is also an immediate relevant attempt to mediate contradictions in Stephen's own situation in Dublin, not only as a young intellectual and artist, but as "Oedipal" subject and subject of the nightmare, History.



Thus the overtly "intellectual" interests of the chapter (its "organ" is the brain, its "technic" the dialectic) must be understood as "situated" in a complex structure that applies to Shakespeare in Stratford, Hamlet in Denmark, Stephen in Dublin and the implicit reference of the novel to memories of its author-in-exile. In each of these situations the subject's practical social action seems impossible because of structural contradictions, which can only be recuperated in an aesthetic. A three-term dialectic, culminating in Stephen's "fictional" synthesis, is the organizing methodology of "Scylla and Charybdis", and it is what he fails to accomplish in the chapter itself. Stephen's personal "failure" illustrates contradictions in the act of mediation that the novel supersedes presumably by abandoning its subject (Stephen) and the oral narrative convention. To adapt a phrase of David Bleich's, the failure of Stephen's "subjective dialectic" is the point of departure for Joyce's post-narrative paradigm, and an ironic comment on the problem of dialectical criticism.

Stanley Sultan identifies the three "major elements" of "Scylla and Charybdis" as the Homeric correspondence, Stephen's Shakespeare theory, and the fleeting appearance of Bloom. We will see that these correspond remarkably to moments of Jameson's dialectical criticism: first, the various ramifications of the "antithetical" monsters remind us of the

dialectical "technic" of the chapter, and Stephen's theoretical attempt to find his way through; second, Stephen's theory has all the psychosocial and ideological interests that any critical theory has at stake, and is a quasi-political "intervention" in the Dublin milieu; third, the "glimpse" of a Utopian future in Bloom is both reassuring and uncertain. Finally, in a tangential discussion, Sultan uses the library chapter as springboard for his theory of Joyce's use of historical detail and verisimilitude.<sup>384</sup> It is important that he chose "Scylla and Charybdis" for this, since it provides a narrative-based perspective on the historical situation, and its resolution, from which to reconsider Jameson's emphasis on the later chapters.

Sultan begins by identifying the philosophical and aesthetic antitheses--Charybdis and Scylla--in A.E. and Mulligan respectively. A.E.'s mythopoeic idealism, with its moral undertone, suggests the religious and national subservience Stephen is trying to escape, while Mulligan counterposes a "soulless" scientific scepticism and hedonist ethic.<sup>385</sup> Both threaten Stephen's desire for the creative autonomy of the artist: for Sultan (as for David Bleich) the central concern is the existence and efficacy of the individual soul in relation to its creator.<sup>386</sup> Stephen's saving metaphysic is Aristotelian, proposing the artist's ability to transform and improve reality in a creative imitation, by way of a "dialectic" of personal

genius and social/familial constraint:

This loose identification of Stephen's point of view and that of A.E.'s group as Aristotelian and Platonic respectively is part of the chapter's portrayal of Stephen-Odysseus as trying to navigate a safe course between the two extremes of that group's "whirlpool" and the "beastliness" of Mulligan and his "medicals". It brings into the general symbolic situation represented in the Homeric correspondence the question which Stephen debates with himself again and again throughout the book; indeed, the existence of the soul, which Mulligan categorically denies and A.E. categorically assumes, is for Stephen on Bloomsday the fundamental point of opposition between the two.<sup>387</sup>

The Aristotelian "middle way" between the cosmological strictures of the mystic and the incisive materialism of the medical has to veer toward the latter as a way of maintaining an independent perspective. To establish the efficacy of the individual subject Stephen's theory calls for details about Shakespeare's career that offend A.E. and Eglinton. To this extent his theory is "extrinsic". On the other hand, an art which enacts the soul's liberation from material circumstances cannot be a clinical history or autobiography: quite the opposite, the effect of Stephen's aesthetic is to make the world into a work of art. It is the sacrifice of verisimilitude in Shakespeare's Hamlet that keeps the genius from Scylla's jaws.

Sultan's analysis of the Homeric correspondence identifies several levels of operation of dialectics which bear on Jameson's interpretation, especially the hypothesis of its post-narrative "recuperation". "Scylla and Charybdis" contains or alludes to the connections and interdependencies of critical

thought and literary experience, individual personality and cultural type, fictional and empirical realities, the past, present, and future and the analyses and mediations of these which Jameson has pursued. In his article, Jameson simply asserted that a traditional narrative could not unify a "point-of-view" adequate to the historical situation, but that Joyce could textually mediate the technically disoriented perspective of a disembodied "public". Yet this notion of Joyce's success depends on a dialectical problematic much like that of "Scylla and Charybdis". The question the library chapter poses for Jameson is whether the dialectic works as it should, or how it can work.

Evaluating the dialectics of "Scylla and Charybdis" seems to depend on a critic's assessment of Stephen Dedalus and his future prospects. The ironic tradition of Kenner and Ellman takes Joyce to abandon the young man after the library scene, implicitly to give the speaking subject up to a post-humanistic text (i.e. Jameson's System). Sultan and Benstock are both sympathetic to Stephen, and believe that the dialectic resolves in his display of creative potential, eventually to become an artist like Joyce. This depends on a quasi-Freudian notion of his reconciliation with the Father, Bloom. Jameson, of course, is not answerable to these assessments because he did not treat this dialectic in its chapter in terms of its designated subject. By focussing on the late chapters he could invoke a

Sartrean "third term" as a vague Utopian glimmer--like a post-humanist Bloom--of a System that has a comic dimension and is potentially recoverable. The future of Jameson's unspecified "subject" of narrative does not have to be Stephen in particular, and can be posited as a "self-created" textual phenomenon in which "sentences function as allusions to, or parodies of...an imaginary Ulysses that it carries within itself".<sup>388</sup> It is worth remembering that Stephen Dedalus own Aristotelian aesthetic eventuates in self-creation:

Well: if the father who has not a son be not a father can the son who has not a father be a son? When Rutlandbaconsouthamptonshakespeare or another poet of the same name in the comedy of errors wrote Hamlet he was not the father of his own son merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson who, by the same token, never was born for nature, as Mr Magee understands her, abhors perfection.<sup>389</sup>

It is an unfortunate lapse, if not a theoretical limit, of Jameson's dialectical criticism that it did not discover itself in a fuller perspective on the novel.

Like Jameson's quasi-political intervention in the nominalist/realist controversy in modern criticism, Stephen's theory involves a practical engagement of personal, professional, and class interests in a contemporary intellectual milieu. Like Jameson's theory of the "situation", Stephen's posits a mediation of art, personal experience, and history that applies as much to him as to Shakespeare. In treating it,

Stanley Sultan does not question the scholarly validity of the Shakespeare thesis, and assumes it is not of objective importance. He also glosses rather than interprets the rather solipsistic aesthetic which informs it, and never establishes a relationship between Stephen's and the radical aesthetic he infers from Joyce's writing. Sultan's critical assessment is that while the Shakespeare theory indicates Stephen's intellectual potential, it is mainly a vehicle for expressing the character's physical and emotional state. "Shakespeare" becomes a projection of Stephen's self-created point-of-view (I. I and I. I.") and this is assumed to be an immaturity. Briefly, Stephen's subjective interests in the Shakespeare talk are alienation from his peers, professional insecurity and ambition, the reciprocal rejection and need of his father, and his guilty rejection of his mother.<sup>390</sup> Shakespeare and his brothers, the identity of Hamlet and son, and Anne Hathaway become analogues for these, irrespective of historical truth claims.

By patronizing Stephen's application of the theory, Sultan obscures how much he, too, shares the general Dedalian notions about a writer's self-creation and transcendence. Like Stephen, Sultan interprets a creative fiction (Hamlet, Stephen's "Son of Shakespeare", or Ulysses itself) as a symbolic form which allusively reconstructs the writer's life. Rather than Jameson's sociological preference, Sultan and Dedalus use a psychobiographical and aesthetic frame of reference. In

Stephen's theory, the interpersonal context of the writer is the determining material of art, but is reworked in an autonomous creative act which seems at once impersonal and the purest mode of "subjectivity". Unlike Jameson, with his developed dialectical model, Sultan does not have a comprehensive psychobiographical logic or theory with which to compare or answer Stephen. This may be because he has even more reservations about positivistic "medical" reduction than Stephen does, but it limits him to a running survey of "elements" rather than a working critical interpretation of the chapter's dialectics.

Finally, for Sultan the theory is only Stephen's last attempt to create in the sterile environment of Dublin: it is a "fictional" theory which accomplishes his transit through Scylla and Charybdis so that he can leave them behind. This elides Sultan's theoretical affinities with Stephen, and also the problematics it posed for literary criticism as a mediation of art and life. There is a quality of dialectical self-consciousness implicit in Stephen's method: he says that Shakespeare knew what he was doing and Stephen's own self-understanding is part of his personal/theoretical problem:

What the hell are you driving at?  
I know. Shut up. Blast you! I have reasons.<sup>391</sup>

Sultan undercuts the thematic significance of Stephen's self-reflection emphasizing his calculated insincerity in

presenting the theory to the Dublin circle:

Do you believe your own theory?  
No, he said promptly.<sup>392</sup>

Yet part of Stephen's appreciation of Shakespeare is for the playwrites practical rhetorical success, and Sultan's own analysis posits the biographical consequences of Joyce's writer/character, father/son syntheses and transcendence. This is the basis of his claim that the production of Ulysses itself portends Stephen's future as a writer. Claiming that Stephen is unconscious of his personal investment in theory only serves the illusion of empirical objectivity and neutrality in Sultan's.

The third "major element" for Sultan is the role of Bloom, who symbolizes both the absent Father and Mother. His importance to Stephen is elusive, impalpable, oppressive, and inevitable. The terms "mother" and "father" are metaphors, not for contrasting things but for "contrasting attitudes toward the same thing",<sup>393</sup> (compare with Jameson's sense of the family contradiction as a choice of affiliations<sup>394</sup>). Moreover, as metaphors they are richly invested with the cultural and personal dimensions of Stephen's situation:

That which formed Stephen, from which he derived, but in which he tried and still tries no longer to believe--whose claim (and mark) on him he so vigorously attempts to deny, "whether it call itself...home...fatherland or...church"--he thinks of it in paternal terms, and the manifestations of his "father". But as she is treated in Ulysses, Stephen's mother represents his family ("home"); identified with Dublin Bay she represents Ireland; supremely devout, she represents the Church. And growing out of this, on a



different level, she represents God's love.  
...While "mother" represents God as love, "father"  
represents God as authority; and Stephen's "I will not  
serve"...is directed at a Deity... whom Stephen accused  
in the second chapter of responsibility for the  
"nightmare" of war and suffering that is history.<sup>395</sup>

This nutshell can be compared with Jameson's of the family as  
mediator of social and psychological realities. Thus both the  
symbolic "mother" and "father" are dynamic matrices of the  
relationships between home, church and country--ultimately a  
contradictory Trinity comprised of mother-church, father-land,  
and the creative principle which is beyond them as a product.  
Sultan's excerpt is almost a compendium of themes whose  
complementarities and contradictions can be articulated in the  
contradiction of mother and father, e.g. the place of the soul  
between mysticism and scepticism, the Oedipal triangle, the  
"French triangle", the Hegelian dialectic, and the Dedalian  
scheme of aesthetic transcendence. If the trinitarian scheme  
defines Stephen's situation, we will see that he has also  
projected it onto Shakespeare in his own literary theory.  
Moreover, trinity can be telescoped out to its coincidence with  
Sartre's model of group structure.

This returns us to Jameson's hypothesis that Joyce's  
writing is a negation and transcending logic of the personal and  
historical contradictions it represents, which is then Jameson's  
glimpse of a theoretical transcendence of seriality in his  
interpretation of Ulysses. It is worth noting that since the

seriality article and Marxism and Form Jameson's interests have moved from the socio-historical overview toward a closer focus on the "subject" of discourse and psychoanalytic theory. For him, the key to this has been a Marxist-Freudian mediation of the concept of "ideology" in terms of (Sartre's, Lacan's, Althusser's) psycholinguistic understanding of the "Imaginary". In articulating a particular "imaginary" (or phenomenological) relation to mass culture, "seriality" is part of a theoretical reduction which defines the historical importance of Joyce, Robbe-Grillet, and the post-structuralist development from them. For Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, or others the inaccessible System of seriality, and the alienated Self as a function of its Look, are historically given, without any privileged analysis from the solid ground of historical materialism. For them, Sartre's triangular "group" would be less a preferable form of Utopian imagination, of which seriality is an aberration, than a neurotically imagined fiction predicated on Oedipal power relations. Jameson's Scylla and Charybdis, then, are still nominalism and realism under their radically self-conscious reformulations in post-structuralism and phenomenology. In recent work, he has attempted to "recuperate" the function of the Imaginary, in a dialectic, toward some glimmer of a materialist perspective: it is no accident that Jameson tried to appropriate Joyce-the-author into his early Sartrian synthesis, as a phenomenological "organ of perception".

Sultan's final observations in his chapter on the library concern Joyce's exhaustive use of historical details, people, and occurrences in his novel.

Ulysses is not merely a roman a clef but a work of seemingly compulsive historical preciseness. The public events of June 16, 1904 that enter into it are all documented in the Dublin newspapers of that day, and the public figures mentioned are apparently real persons. Furthermore almost all the scores of minor characters are named for, or modeled on, or composites of, actual Dubliners...These and similar facts about Ulysses seem to signify no more than an extreme case of a writer exploiting his experience...However the extent of the novel's historicity is too great to be explained on practical grounds.<sup>396</sup>

Sultan is perceptive in recognizing and discussing the problem of historicity in the particular context of the library chapter (c.f. Benstock's discussion of "memory", below), but his eventual explanation of it is similar to Stephen's own rationale for a pseudobiographical Hamlet, and it is based on psychological premises which Joyce undercut by the shift out of subjective narration in the book's second half. Like Stephen (or Murray Krieger), Sultan elides any explanation other than a cathartic or therapeutic function of the aesthetic. He thus transposes historical struggles into the intentional problem of creating a fiction tantamount to faith. Thus Sultan is content to simply observe Joyce's fetish for verisimilitude, his penchant for autobiography, and his superstitious conviction that coincidences and correspondences in life indicate a higher, comprehensive Logos. The genius' idiosyncrasies (as Sultan has

them) are reassuringly contradicted, moreover, by his technical violations of historical fact, especially in his "misrepresentation" of "himself" as the subject of the novel (Stephen is temperamentally very different from the "real" young artist, Sunny Jim Joyce). These alterations are, for Sultan, "quite simply, functional" <sup>397</sup>, since the redemptive Aristotelian form and unity are aesthetic a priori rather than an ideology to be interrogated. Sultan's reduction of Stephen's "argument" within Joyce's does not advance a critical theory of his own. The patronizing attitude toward Stephen should not obscure Sultan sharing most of the Dedalian aesthetic and interpretive method, and his conclusions are also similar to Stephen's: just as the authorial "subject" of Hamlet is the father's ghost, for Sultan the apparition Bloom holds the answers to the self-questioning of Joyce's young hero. Sultan's own unexamined aesthetic explains why a creative fiction can redeem both Joyce's and Stephen's historical situations, and also explains Sultan's rather pat solution to the ideological stalemate in the library: Stephen will leave town in order to remake his own Dublin. <sup>398</sup> Because of the extensive biographical and historical documentation surrounding Joyce, Sultan's interpretation has a credibility that Stephen's does not. Yet where Stephen could amalgamate history, the personal life of the author, and the work of art into his egocentric concoction, Sultan's responsibility to the facts leads him to discuss these

separately, as if their interrelationship were not a theoretical problem. For Sultan it is only an aesthetic problem: in dismissing the young Stephen, and giving Joyce a special dispensation as an "artist", Sultan can comfortably define the status of HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES in the TEXT without considering the TEXT in history, or its WRITER as the implicit mediator of the two. Sultan's interest in a paraphrastic "argument" of Ulysses depends on the unquestioned assumption that James Joyce was the transcendent resolution of his own dialectic.

Thus, Sultan's latent identification with Stephen's aesthetic, his optimistic projection of Stephen's fate, is the limit which keeps him from Jameson's historical insight into Ulysses. For Jameson the "verisimilitude" of text and history has been radically altered in the later chapters. Sultan reads the first half of the novel in a way that would concur with Jameson's analysis of narrative, but he fails to make the transition in interpretive strategy which would follow from the later transformation of the text. Nevertheless, even because Sultan's "argument" so firmly entrenched in the paradigm of aesthetic transcendence, we can usefully compare him toward a critical assessment of Jameson's work.

1. Joyce and Stephen, as protagonist writers, are both the recipients and sources of an ideological mediation of historical and personal contradictions. Sultan's "psychological" approach

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to the narrative monologue in "Scylla and Charybdis" locates this mediation in the soul of the creative writer, while Jameson's "sociology" of the later chapters locates it in alienated, exteriorized discourses, the potential "System" as an ultimate third.

2. The mediator functions as a "parent", articulating either relations of personal and social dominance or control (even self-control, when Stephen aspires to "father" himself), or an alternative imaginary substratum ("mother"). A relatively simple formula in Sultan, to Jameson it implies the "dualism" of the modern text, and in principle his Lacanian problematic of "Imaginary and Symbolic" could be inferred from it.

3. Personal history and social history are comprehensible within one gestalt, and the materialist conception of history does not preclude a potential for creative will. This is the complex self-understanding of the soul in relation to its creator, as it corresponds to the Marxist problem of the "subject of history".

4. By imaginatively recreating the writer's existential "situation", we can overcome the methodological contradictions in determining the real meaning (argument) of Hamlet or Ulysses, e.g. between mystic and medical or realist and nominalist interpretations. Thus alienation can be "recuperated" in the theoretical initiative of practical criticism itself.

Jameson's concept of the writer's "situation" was clearly an attempt to get beyond the centripetal circularity of Sultan's aesthetic formalism. Yet instead of assuming the continuity of the "argument of Ulysses", Jameson seems to assume its abortion, and the substitution of an inhuman, technical Logos which is beyond any individual's intellectual capacities. Even Joyce, rather than a thinking subject, is posited as making "himself the spontaneous instinctive organ of perception of these new kinds of collective objects stirring in his society".<sup>399</sup> In theoretical terms, however, Joyce's mediation and phenomenological "recuperation" of seriality must restore the structure and dynamics of group praxis. Jameson contends that Joyce's method is not "aesthetic" in the sense of reifying a division of art from historical life, but is rather a formal way of reestablishing the collective experience that traditional narrative no longer can. This returns us to Stephen Dedalus' heroic failure in "Scylla and Charybdis": its methodological relationship to Joyce's "success", and to the theory of groups and series.

Again, we can explore this in the critical context of recent Joyce scholarship, through Shari Benstock's article "Ulysses as Ghoststory". She proposes that the library chapter defines a mediating structure to contain the personal and social relationships and contradictions of the novel: through a technique of "gnomonic" completion, by allusion and inference,

of what is only partly given. Like Jameson, Benstock proposes an assertively theoretical reading, structured by a geometrical figure, the triangle. The dynamics of the chapter can thus be schematized in a dialectic we can compare with Sartre's, in this case serving as an intrinsic metacriticism of Joyce's work as a whole. Benstock considers the dialectic as a feature of an artistic, rather than a historical, practice. Her aesthetic is largely reducible to Stephen Dedalus', but unlike Sultan she is explicit about this, and her paper is a conscious effort to rescue the Dedalian method from its self-serving evasiveness and defeat. Benstock continues in a tradition of Joyce criticism which relies on Stephen's theorizing, in Stephen Hero, A Portrait, and Ulysses as a key or heuristic to the impalpable novelist's intentions.

Like Sultan, Benstock is sceptical of the objective truth of the Shakespeare theory, and considers it only for its relevance to Joyce's work. Rather than a compendium of "elements", however, Benstock finds a methodically integrated system of relationships which can be "totalized" as the fabrication of a "ghoststory". Unlike Sultan, then, Benstock does not assess Stephen from a self-assured reliance on historical "facts", but considers his problems germane and difficult. Proposing that any literary criticism "after all, is a form of fiction" \*\*\*, and defending Stephen's in a footnote, she posits the disturbingly uncompleted triangular complex as



the governing structure of the chapter and of Joyce's fictional method in general.

The point of this exercise seems to be Joyce's need to exhibit within his own literary work aspects of the creative method which produced it, while allowing his poet-hero the chance to display his own latent potential for literary creation. As literary criticism, Stephen's theory may be nearly worthless; as fiction it exhibits his aptitude for the peculiarly Joycean mode: drawing together quotation, allusion, innuendo, parody, pastiche, and a keen sense for the dramatic, Stephen spins a ghost-story.<sup>401</sup>

Benstock notes that the elusive and potentially unifying narrative perspective (the point-of-view or System posited by Jameson) is a continuing problem in Joyce's fiction, symbolized by the Euclidean figure of the gnomon in "The Sisters". Appearing incomplete, the gnomon seems to project or allude to its totality in the shape of what is absent from it. Benstock surveys the persistence of this ghostly phenomenon in Joyce's writing, from Dubliners through the formula for the artist in A Portrait: refined out of existence, "paring his fingernails". In "Scylla and Charybdis" Benstock seems to see the gnomon as a symbol which both poses the problem of the subject of aesthetic creation ("Who is King Hamlet?"), and as a methodological function, or form, helps to overcome it. Finally she agrees with Sultan that Stephen's use of it projects his future artistic recovery of his uncompleted and inadequate actions in the novel.

Thus, a "ghost" both causes Stephen's indecision about what to do in a murky and contradictory situation, and, as the

allusion function of the literary method, indicates the way out. In Benstock's interpretation of Stephen's ghost story, Hamlet implies at least eight ghosts: John, William, and Hamnet Shakespeare, Hamlet father and Hamlet son, and by later implications Anne Hathaway, May Dedalus, and Stephen "himself". We can note that Bloom, of course, also figures, and allusions seem to draw in more as the context of the argument widens, until hypothetically every constituent of the chapter has a turn at ghosthood. This phenomenon has a formal resemblance to Sartre's structure of "revolving thirds", except that here the mediation function is abortive or incomplete because of the very quality of "ghostliness", and Stephen leaves the library a part of no group.

Like the System behind seriality, the defining quality of a ghost is that it is impalpable, "through absence, death, or change of manners."<sup>402</sup> It creates an impotizing ambivalence in both being and not-being there to be reckoned with. For example, according to Benstock the primary ghost is May Dedalus, also the Church, who charges Stephen to repent his prodigal ways. Stephen's father-usurping theory exorcises this guilt even while it alludes to the buried source. Stephen's method takes precisely the form of "homeopathic therapy": by identifying with Shakespeare-ghost-father he can establish a countervailing authority, as a creator who is his own "God", but is human and historical as well. The conclusion of the theory--the

artist/theorist as "all in all"<sup>403</sup>--is to satisfy Stephen's personal need for a sense of autonomy and integrity.

For Benstock, this complex thematics of ghosts, exorcism, and personal autonomy is inseparable from the problem of time and its relationship to writing, and this dovetails with Jameson's concern for the historicity of the subject. For Benstock, memory is the key to Stephen's troubles and also to his potential ability to resolve them: a memory, like a ghost, is never completely gone or completely returned to life. Moreover, memory is an essentially verbal phenomenon, for which the setting in the library, a "mummycase" for the past, is emblematic. Stephen's approach to literature must be contrasted with A. E.'s "essential forms" and "eternal wisdom" in that it values historical and biographical information to actualize their fictional transformation: this is true both of what Stephen finds in Hamlet and of what he does with Shakespeare in his theoretical creation. In such a process of historical "recuperation" ghosthood is both the obstacle and the goad to action: writing both "materializes" and exorcizes or buries a haunting memory. In turn, writing entails a transformation of its creative subject: the writer becomes a kind of ghost. If Shakespeare revenged himself on his betrayers--wife and brothers--by immortalizing them in the plays, he also neutralized his own problematical origins into historical conjecture. Stephen's own theory projects this kind of revenge

on A.E. for walking out on him, on Eglinton for refusing to publish him, and on Dublin in general for maltreatment and neglect. "See this. Remember."<sup>404</sup> Yet this objectifying power entails the aesthetic of the detached, "dramatic" text and the exiled storyteller.

Thus, for Benstock the "logic of the content" of literature leads to the "ghostly" rather than to Jameson's "concrete" perspective on a class praxis. The artist supersedes his history only to arrive at his own ghosthood: as in Stephen's theory, the artist is all in all even while he remains the problematical mystery of the text. The contradictory function of writing as eternal record and as forgetting is symbolically enriched by the riddle of "the fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush."<sup>405</sup> In "Scylla and Charybdis" the allusion not only brings in Stephen's personal haunt, May Dedalus, but an esoterics of religious symbolism concerning decay and resurrection, guilt and redemption, the flesh and the word:

Christfox in leather trews, hiding, a runaway in  
blighted treeforks from hue and cry. Knowing no vixen,  
walking lonely in the chase. Women he won to him, tender  
people, a whore of Babylon, ladies and justices, bully  
tapster's wives. Fox and geese. And in New Place a slack  
dishonored body that once was comely, once as sweet, as  
fresh as cinnamon, now her leaves falling, all, bare,  
frightened of the narrow grave and unforgiven.<sup>406</sup>

Benstock notes that the fox's scratching in the earth, Joyce's symbol for the act of writing, not only buries or removes the dead but enacts its resurrection in the Christ-symbol of the

hollybush. In doing this, rather than a committed agent of History, the fox had been portrayed as self-serving, licentious and cunning ("red reek of rapine in his fur, with merciless bright eyes scraped in the earth, listened, scraped up the earth, listened, scraped and scraped"). 407 A guilty strategist is the medium of the miracle.

Finally, Benstock's analysis helps to show that Joyce's fabrication of a difficult textual "situation", of which the hero is partly self-conscious, poses methodological and structural questions for the "narrative" of the chapter. "Scylla and Charybdis" has at least one formal feature--its triangular "geometry"--in common with the non-anthropomorphic techniques Jameson describes in the rest of the book:

The mosaic design of Joyce's allusive method, like the process of Stephen's dialectic in the chapter, is characterized by augmentation rather than attenuation. 408

This process is comparable to Sartre's process of dialectical "totalization". "Literary" cross-references, puns, and allusions, and Joyce's hypostatized coincidences and correspondences, construct the mosaic to form an articulate yet incomplete, gnomonic surface which is like Jameson's mysterious System. Both the figures of gnomon and System tend to reduce the subject of narrative to a reified (or serialized) structural phenomenon rather than a complete organic being. For Benstock, the form and method of "Scylla and Charybdis" already require a

theoretical/aesthetic leap beyond rational narrative discourse:  
a "ghost". Allusion is the method of projecting this, and the  
dialectical paradigm of "Scylla and Charybdis" alludes to the  
rest of the novel as well as to its "situation" in a mosaic of  
empirical and literary references:

In this respect an allusion is a gnomon, in that it is  
but a shadow of the substance it represents. The  
gnomonic method of Joyce's canon evolves by accretion in  
the same way that allusive technique does, taking on  
greater importance as the mosaic pattern completes  
itself. In Ulysses the theory Stephen presents is itself  
gnomonic: the theory may in part be based on the series  
of ten lectures by Joyce on Shakespeare probably in the  
fall and winter of 1912. The lectures themselves,  
however, are missing... Joyce puns on the gnomon figure  
in "Ithaca" when one of Bloom's designations is the  
"Woman" (U 727), and as the Odysseus figure in Ulysses  
this designation befits Bloom. At the end of "Scylla and  
Charybdis" we learn that Bloom is the missing element  
which Stephen needs to become Shakespeare, therefore,  
Bloom is part of Stephen's gnomon or shadow. \*09

Benstock's interpretation, in conjunction with Sultan's,  
can convince us that Jameson's use of an impalpable "third" is  
"intrinsically" appropriate to the text Ulysses, and moreover  
that Joyce made the triangular structure particularly explicit  
in the library chapter. The two formalists share the conclusion  
that the writer has a transcending perspective on the historical  
situation described in the novel, but it is based on an  
aesthetic ideology Jameson purports to oppose:

The real, actual, historical Dublin is of interest only  
as it serves Joyce's artistic vision--just as the "real"

Shakespeare is of interest to Stephen only when he can reinforce Stephen's aesthetic perceptions about him. History serves literature as life serves art.<sup>10</sup>

From Jameson's historical perspective, Joyce's fabrications and Stephen's failures with the Shakespeare theory must be attributed to a breakdown of narrative coherence and the possibility of a successful "dialectic" in the library, i.e. in an intellectual milieu which can tolerate or envy but not incorporate or satisfactorily reward the modern genius. Jameson may be in tacit agreement with those critics who would abandon Stephen in favor of a Joyce who formally supersedes his problems. Yet how is the "totalization" Jameson attributes to Joyce different from what Benstock and Sultan consider as Stephen's destiny? There is at least a formal resemblance between History as a postnarrative verbal system and Leopold Bloom as Stephen's ghost-father.

Benstock, like Sultan, maintains theoretical sympathy for the psychological/aesthetic principle that the subject both engenders and imaginatively resolves the problem of his "ghosthood":

Though the past dominates this particular day for Stephen, his potential form as creative artist (Shakespeare-Dedalus) is revealed to us: "I. I and I. I."<sup>11</sup>

She qualifies Stephen's current achievements and insists that a reconciliation with his symbolic father must come first. With other critics, Benstock proposes that it is really Bloom, in his

exile from Jerusalem, with his untrue wife, his dead son, his polymorphous humanity, who is the analogue to the father and author of Hamlet.<sup>12</sup> Stephen's own identification with Shakespeare (e.g. his Paris "exile" with Shakespeare's career in London) is childish, and a lapse into facile imagination. Bloom thus becomes a technical/symbolic "answer" to the question of the future of "the subject"--he can be alternatively correlated, depending on one's theory, to a genuine psychosocial resolution of its contradictions, an aesthetic-fictional transcendence, or ironically, as an apparition of the postnarrative dualism to come. (While essential to the dialectics of Joyce's chapter, Bloom's appearance is given as incidental and accidental, not as the culmination of Stephen's logic. The event is seen from Stephen's point-of-view, which Benstock and Sultan consider the potential meta-perspective on the novel, but at this juncture Stephen only notes his passing and Mulligan's remark: "Did you see his eye?"<sup>13</sup> If Bloom's is the Look of the Other, which suddenly defines the library-group as such, he is both the unconscious mediator--the alien Shakespeare, the Irish public--and the limit of their knowledge and social position.)

By ignoring the library chapter and the aesthetic that is explored in it, Jameson elided the fact that Joyce had dramatized a dialectics of critical theory and practice, within a metacritical structure of "thirds" which have become impalpable or oppressive, in the context of Stephen's social and



psychological contradictions and failure, at the point in the novel immediately preceding its post-narrative departures. Jameson's notion of the artist-subject's practical "recuperation" of history in the text--as committed activist rather than alienated, detached "author"--becomes difficult to justify. The crucial question is whether the dialectic, as portrayed in "Scylla and Charybdis" or enacted in Jameson's criticism, is ultimately resolved in the praxis of Joyce's text, or whether it is aborted, suddenly abandoned to the dehumanized textuality of the serial. For the traditionalist critics Sultan and Benstock the novel's "recuperation" implies a Murray Krieger-like, metaphorical "fiction" which is safely beyond any empirical history. For Jameson, the same text should entail a modernist, post-narrative theoretical "project", defined against and superceding the discursive system. Insisting on a classical dialectical synthesis, Jameson seems to have missed the antithesis before his eyes.

Thus, we might validate Jameson's formal assessment of the "serial" chapters of Ulysses against the "intrinsic" readings of the library chapter: the problematical triangular structure of the community narrative does give way to seriality. Yet Jameson's hypothesis that we can critically "recuperate" the post-narrative chapters by explicating them back into the triangle is too similar to the dialectical "logic" of the formalist aesthetics of Sultan and Benstock, or Stephen himself:

like theirs his assertion underestimates Joyce's explicit theoretical assessment of the narrative. "Seriality in Modern Literature" depended on and yet failed to address its situation in contemporary criticism, in that if Jameson remains true to Sartre's dialectic, the text must involve the interpersonal dynamics of a reading community, a "group". Instead, Jameson rejected, rather than engaging, the idealized unity provided by "the subject" of the novel, in favor of a materialist conception of the text, i.e. as historical. The "logic of its content" is seriality, the absence of ascertainable group dialectics (of the sort which would demand an answer to the problem of "the subject"). Jameson's affirmation of the post-humanist "System" might prefigure the post-structuralist direction of his recent interpretations. Yet even in his Lacanian/Althusserian speculations Jameson returns to the "regressive" moment of phenomenological reduction, still the possibility of personal freedom, affiliation and praxis, and to the "glimpse" of a Utopian future. The existence and efficacy of this apparition is the ultimate problem of Jameson's method, especially since his good intentions were foresworn by the impalpable Joyce. It remains for a future understanding of the literary criticism of the 1970s to determine whether Jameson's "totalization" of Ulysses is not based on an aesthetic rather than a materialism. My conjecture is that Jameson's dialectical method was too close to Joyce's to glimpse its own logical fulfillment in his novel.

## List of References

1. My use of the term "metatheory" is heuristic and historical: I consider the work of critics who have emphasized premises and constitutive propositions which are theoretically prior to interpretation of literature. A great deal of the exuberant "demystification" of criticism in the early and mid seventies consisted of a "theoretical" practice of questioning hitherto uncontested metatheoretical assumptions. To some extent, the conscious emphasis on metatheory effects a dialectical reversal of what T.S. Kuhn called the "priority of paradigms" in traditional positivism: see T.S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) p.43-51, and discussion below. The problem for literary criticism was posed in Fredric Jameson's "Metacommentary", PMLA, 86, No. 1, p.9-18
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8. Kuhn, p191-198
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11. Murray Krieger, The Play and Place of Criticism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p.239-51
12. Murray Krieger, Theory of Criticism: A Tradition and Its System (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 149-75
13. For perhaps his most eloquent statement, the essay "Mediation, Language and Vision in the Reading of Literature" in Murray Krieger, Poetic Presence and Illusion (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 270
14. Krieger, Poetic Presence, p.175
15. Krieger, Theory, p. 11-14
16. Concerning the Chicago School, see Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956);  
on "extrinsic criticisms": Theory, p.149;  
on phenomenology: Murray Krieger, The Classic Vision (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), p. 11-15 and Theory, p.56-58;  
on structuralism and deconstruction: Theory, p. 207-245 and Poetic Presence, p. 169-187
17. Krieger, Theory, p.220-233, 238-240

18. Krieger, Theory, p. 228-233
19. Krieger, Theory, p. 242; and Poetic Presence, p. 148-153, 157-158
20. Krieger, Theory, p. 239
21. Krieger, Theory, p. 194-200
22. Krieger, Theory, p. 240-241
23. Krieger, Theory, p. 57-59
24. Krieger, Theory, p. 40-44
25. J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host", Critical Inquiry, 3, No. 1 (Spring 1977), p. 439-447
26. See "Criticism in Practice: Action, Inaction, and the Medium" below, and Krieger, Theory, p. 240n.38
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33. Krieger, Theory, p. 25
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36. See Roland Barthes' discussion in "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?", Macksey and Donato, p. 141-2. Barthes cites Jakobsen's Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957).
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39. Krieger, Theory, p. 147
40. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p. 179
41. See "Action, Inaction, and the Medium", pages 61-2 below
42. Krieger, Theory, p. 163-165
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44. Krieger, Theory, p. 164
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47. Krieger, Theory, p. 162-163, and compare pages 193-4, below, with my discussion of the notion in Joyce's novel, p. 249-51.
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50. Krieger, Theory, p. 166-168
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52. See below, pages 63-64, and compare Bleich as discussed p. 125-7.
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67. Vivas, p. 30
68. Krieger, Theory, p. 150
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72. Krieger, Theory, p. 41
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80. Krieger, Theory, p. 98-148
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83. This is a parenthetical insertion in a paper Krieger read at the Irvine School of Criticism and Theory, Summer 1978. It was deleted from the published version, c.f. "literature versus Ecriture: Constructions and Deconstructions in Recent Critical Theory", Poetic Presence, p.169-187
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87. Krieger, Theory, p.202
88. Krieger, Theory, p.185, 221, 224
89. Krieger, Play and Place, p.13-16
90. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.11-21 and Krieger, Classic Vision, p.361-362
91. Krieger, Poetic Presence, p.303-322
92. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.27-30
93. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.34-36
94. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.ix-xiii
95. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.242
96. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.241-249
97. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.6
98. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.13, and Krieger, Classic Vision, p.47
99. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.42
100. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.42-52
101. See "Action, Inaction, and the Medium", below
102. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.42
103. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.38-40
104. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.37-38



105. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.155, 179
106. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.38-40
107. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.40-41
108. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.41-42
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110. See Avrom Fleishman, Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1967) p55-59, 62-64
111. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.154-194
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113. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.159
114. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.160
115. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.163-165
116. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.165
117. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.172 and 177
118. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.178
119. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.171
120. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.174-175
121. Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Ltd., 1968), p.68
122. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.170
123. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.171
124. Conrad, Lord Jim, p.68: "...I was oppressed by a sad sense of resigned wisdom, mingled with the amused and profound pity of an old man helpless before a childish disaster."
125. Conrad, Lord Jim, p.76
126. Conrad, Lord Jim, p.60. And on page 61: "The whites did not give them half a glance; had probably forgotten their

existence. Assuredly Jim did not remember it. He remembered he could do nothing; he could do nothing, now he was alone."

127. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.179
128. Conrad, Lord Jim, p.76
129. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.174, Conrad, Lord Jim, p.194
130. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.177
131. Krieger, Classic Vision, p.52
132. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.174

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133. Problems of discourse aside, Fleishman concurs, P. 110:  
"But he fails to make a total identification with the community, with the result that his resolution breaks down. When Brown appeals to him on grounds of their common moral failings and status as outcasts, Jim places Brown, who is to him the image of his own prior self, above his group ties. With this decision he is cast back into his hollow selfhood, and is sundered from his social group.  
"In his final act, Jim gives himself back to the group by accepting its justice and passively submitting to it his life... 'There is to my mind a sort of profound and terrifying logic in it,' writes Marlow. If we are to find the axiom of this logic it must be in the philosophy of the organic state."
134. See note 126, above. The steadfast Malays are reprehensible to Jim, although any sense that they are "heroic" is undercut at the Inquiry. This alien, disquieting effectiveness is also found in Wang in Victory.
135. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.174, Conrad, Lord Jim, p.188-194
136. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.178
137. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.179-80, and Joseph Conrad, Victory (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1921) p.54, 173-4

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138. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.183

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139. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p.193

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140. I use "dramatic" in Stephen Dedalus' sense of disinterested

presentation.

141. Krieger surveys these relationships from the "point of view" of their relationships to Heyst, rather than in the structural overview I have proposed. See Krieger, Tragic Vision, p. 188-190, and especially page 192.
142. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p. 182; Conrad, Victory, p. 77
143. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p. 192
144. Krieger, Tragic Vision, p. 186-187
145. Conrad, Victory, p. 404
146. Conrad, Victory, p. 406
147. Conrad, Victory, p. 410
148. Conrad, Victory, p. 410
149. Conrad, Victory, p. 411
150. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 13, 88
151. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 10, 14, 21, 25, 26, 39, 42n., 66, 133, 213.
152. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 13
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156. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 38-67
157. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 65
158. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 120 and below pages 130-140
159. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 88
160. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 42-47
161. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 61-62, 135
162. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 111, 150

163. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 88
164. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 97
165. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 88
166. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 53, 179, 188
167. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 88
168. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 111-112
169. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 112
170. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 110
171. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 96
172. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 30-31. 124, 159-167,  
238-263
173. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 161
174. W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional  
Fallacy", in Polletta, p. 194
175. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 239
176. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 160
177. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 239-240
178. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 259
179. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 160
180. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 94, 238
181. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 93-95
182. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 239
183. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 241-259
184. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 259
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186. Bleich, Subjective Criticisn, p. 260-263

187. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 262
188. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 262
189. See below, pages 161-165
190. Kuhn, Structure, p. 1-9
191. Kuhn, Structure, p. 35-42
192. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 27
193. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 264-265
194. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 265
195. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 265-284
196. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 273
197. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 284
198. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 162-163
199. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 163
200. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 285-293
201. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 289
202. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 293
203. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 150-151
204. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 150
205. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 61
206. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 38-67
207. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 40-48
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210. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p. 41.n2
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212. Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p.45-53
213. David Bleich, "New Considerations of the Infantile Acquisition of Language and Symbolic Thought", The Psychoanalytic Review, 63, No. 1, 1976, p.56-7
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228. Kuhn, Structure, p.35-42
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284. Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan", p.366-368
285. Fredric Jameson, The Prison-house of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) p.214
286. Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan", p.373
287. Jean-Paul Sartre, What is Literature?, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1965), p.35-36, 57, 149-151, 154
288. Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan", p.376
289. Jameson, "...in La Rabouilleuse", p.68
290. Jameson, "...in La Rabouilleuse", p.79

291. Jameson, "...in La Rabouilleuse", p.79
292. Jameson, "...in La Rabouilleuse", p.79
293. T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"; in Enright, D.J. and de Chickera, Ernst, English Critical Texts: 16th Century to 20th Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p.293-301; and Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957)
294. Foucault, Archaeology and Order.
295. Sartre, Search, p.50-51
296. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.330-331, 361
297. Sartre, Search, p.135
298. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.327-340
299. See Jameson's concluding reference to The Condemned of Altona in "Marxism and Historicism", p.71-72
300. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.319
301. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.320
302. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.339, 340-41
303. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.326
304. For example, Fredric Jameson "Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: Dog Day Afternoon as a Political Film", College English, 38, No. 8, (April 1977), p.843-854
305. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.369-372, 376-389
306. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.329. Content, as the ultimate social-material determinant of aesthetic form, is not considered static but in perpetual historical process. A governing image in Jameson's sense of history is that of an almost liquid material-temporal reality perpetually moving out from under the actualizing and contradictory, wrought forms of human conceptualization: we can remember that Marxism and Form was written in Surf City.
307. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.331

308. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.328
309. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.333
310. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.329
311. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.179 -- The very persistence of novels may be attributed to "nostalgia", c.f. his discussion of Lukacs.
312. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.353
313. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.295-297, 331-333
314. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.329
315. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.380-383
316. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.381-382
317. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.382
318. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.385
319. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.389
320. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.390
321. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.392
322. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.394
323. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.395
324. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.396, also 401-402
325. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.396
326. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.232-233
327. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.326, 340, 342, 347-348, 361-370
328. Sartre, Search, p.9 note 6
329. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.401
330. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.373

331. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.372
332. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.117 and 157-158
333. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.402
334. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.407-408
335. Jameson, Prison-House, p.140-141
336. Jameson, "Demystifying Literary History", New Literary History, number 3, 7, p.611
337. Jameson, Prison-House, p.143
338. Thereby rejecting structuralism's own "metalinguistic" methodology: see Prison-House, p.206-209
339. Jameson, Prison-House, p. 212
340. Jameson, "Demystifying", p.608-609
341. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.xvi-xvii
342. Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism", p.69
343. Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism", p.69-70
344. Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism", p.70
345. Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism", p.71
346. Fredric Jameson, "Seriality in Modern Literature", Bucknell Review, 18, No. 1 (Spring 1970), p.63-80
347. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.242-250
348. For example, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture", Social Text, 1, No. 1 (Winter 1979), p.130-148
349. Jameson, "Seriality", p.76
350. Jameson, "Seriality", p.76
351. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.249
352. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.252
353. Compare David Bleich, above p.107

354. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.257
355. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.274
356. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.236-237, 283-284 .
357. Jameson, "Seriality", p.77
358. Jameson, "Seriality", p.64
359. Jameson, "Seriality", p.78
360. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.169, 190, and 205, as follows:  
"Thus that ideal of the concrete which was inscribed in the Theory of the Novel as a will to reestablish epic narration remains intact in the later theory of realism, where it is shown...like revolutionary praxis itself, to depend on those privileged historical moments in which access to society as a totality may once again be reinvented. At the same time, the valorization of narrative implied here emphasizes a preoccupation which is increasingly central to the most divergent schools of modern thought."
361. Jameson, "Seriality", p.65-67
362. Jameson, "Seriality", p.79-80
363. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.242-244
364. Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.243
365. Compare the "negative dialectics" of Adorno, et al.
366. Jameson, "Seriality", p.79
367. Jameson, "Seriality", p.66
368. Jameson, "Seriality", p.71
369. Jameson, "Seriality", p.73
370. Jameson, "Seriality", p.73
371. Jameson, "Seriality", p.73-74
372. Jameson, "Seriality", p.74
373. S.L. Goldberg and Michael Groden himself in Michael Groden's Ulysses in Progress (Princeton: Princeton

- University Press, 1977), p. 19-20, 33, 37-38. Also Stanley Sultan, The Argument of Ulysses (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p.23-24; Richard Ellman, James Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) p.467; and John Maddox, Ulysses and the Assault on Character (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978), p.146.
374. Groden, p.17
375. Sultan, p.23
376. Sultan, Argument, p-23
377. Ellman, p.473
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378. Jameson, "Seriality", p.66
379. Stuart Gilbert, quoted in Sultan, Argument, p.205. Sultan himself disagrees with the "centrist" interpretation, favouring a narrative "argument" that develops with the plot.
380. Hugh Kenner, Dublin's Joyce (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955), p.183
381. Jameson, "Seriality", p.69
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382. Groden, p.73.
383. Shari Benstock, "Ulysses as Ghoststory", James Joyce Quarterly, 12, No. 4, p.396-413
384. Sultan, Argument, p.149-204
385. The chapter is divided between these by Mulligan's Entr'acte of clowning--if this break corresponds to the larger at "Wandering Rocks", we can speculate that it is Mulligan's "soullessness" that dominates the "serial" half of the novel. Sultan, Argument, p.150
386. Sultan, Argument, p.154, and Bleich, Subjective Criticism, p.15
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387. Sultan, Argument, p.154
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388. Jameson, "Seriality", p.70
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389. James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Vintage, 1961), p.208

390. Sultan, Argument, p.168-173
391. Joyce, Ulysses, p.207
392. Joyce, Ulysses, p.213-214
393. Sultan, Argument, p.173
394. See above, p.178
395. Sultan, Argument, p.173-174
396. Sultan, Argument, p.182
397. Sultan, Argument, p.199
398. Sultan, Argument, p.178-181
399. Jameson, "Seriality", p.80
400. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.397
401. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.398
402. Joyce, Ulysses, p.188
403. Joyce, Ulysses, p.212
404. Joyce, Ulysses, p.192
405. Joyce, Ulysses, in "Nestor", p.27
406. Joyce, Ulysses, p.193
407. Joyce, Ulysses, p.28
408. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.396
409. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.412 n.3
410. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.404
411. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.403
412. Benstock, "Ghoststory", p.409, and Sultan, Argument, p.180
413. Joyce, Ulysses, p.217

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