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A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice by Rebecca W. Bushnell. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. Pp. xiii + 210, \$37.50 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

Rebecca Bushnell's new book is a self-professedly humanist study of Renaissance humanist pedagogy. The book begins with a short introduction, entitled "The Trials of Humanism," which surveys some of the political debates in which academic humanism has recently become embroiled. This survey, while dispassionate, and while denying any "essential resemblance" (7) between critiques from the right and the left, nevertheless portrays present-day humanism as a flexible and moderate way of thinking caught between rigid ideological extremes. Moreover, Bushnell maintains, the anti-humanism of much academic and postmodern theory in the 1980s has distorted recent scholarship on early modern humanism. In particular, she objects to Foucauldian readings which supposedly portray Renaissance humanist pedagogy as a "uniformly repressive . . . regime" (18). In *A Culture of Teaching*, Bushnell emphasizes rather what she variously calls the ambivalences, paradoxes, or contradictions of early humanist texts, arguing that they reflect the instabilities and uncertainties of power both in the early modern classroom and in early modern culture more generally. Describing her approach, she writes: "I have tried to remain open to the multiple resonances of these texts rather than merely tuning in those themes repeated in our own time, and I have looked for what terms, tropes, and theories were generated and exchanged in the past rather than laying a grid of modern theory over those texts" (9). Here Bushnell sounds rather like the Renaissance humanists themselves in their insistent return *ad fontes* and in polemically rejecting the "barbarous" abstractions of scholastic philosophy. The results, in this book, are mixed.

To be sure, much good comes of her approach. Bushnell's patient reading and thorough scholarship produce a detailed, nuanced portrait of (as her subtitle has it), the "theory and practice" of early modern humanism in England. Chapter Two, "The Sovereign Master and the Scholar Prince," exemplifies Bushnell's approach by stressing the paradoxical structure of authority in early Tudor schools. While humanist schoolteachers often exercised absolute (sometimes even tyrannical) authority in the classroom, they occupied a relatively lowly position in society at large, often below that of their pupils. This paradox is heightened, as Bushnell shows, when the pupil happened to be a prince of the realm. Bushnell also explores the contradictions inherent in humanist attempts to produce free and autonomous citizens who nevertheless respect authority, and to make the schoolroom into a space which is independent of family and state, yet reproduces their ideologies.

Chapter Three, "Cultivating the Mind," is perhaps the most successful and engaging in the whole book. By exploring the habitual recourse to horticultural metaphors in humanist pedagogical texts, Bushnell shows how "the analogy between teaching and gardening represents the student as completely malleable yet with a natural resistance to manipulation" (21). Bushnell makes this analogy more complex and compelling by examining not only teaching manuals but also the new literature on gardening and horticulture written for the middle and lower classes.

Chapter Four, "Harvesting Books," extends Bushnell's analysis of cultural authority to the curriculum of the humanist schools. Here the principal paradox involves a tension between pedagogical demands for "coverage" and the humanists' distinctive brand of close reading. Bushnell also shows how the humanist tendency to disintegrate or atomize texts eventually came into conflict with a more neoclassical aesthetic which saw literary works as unified wholes rather than collections of tropes or commonplaces.

Chapter Five, "Tradition and Sovereignty," has a slightly oblique relation to the rest of the book, since here the focus begins to shift from pedagogy to poetics. The humanist insistence on imitating classical literary forms, Bushnell argues, raises implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) political issues of freedom and authority, creativity and tradition, nature and custom. These, in turn, are taken up, reworked, and contested in the poetic treatises and practices of writers such as Philip Sidney and George Buchanan, the young King James (who wrote a tract on Scottish poetry) and Samuel Daniel. In essence, this chapter extends the book's earlier meditations on the politics of humanist pedagogy to the sphere of Renaissance poetic theory.

The virtue of *A Culture of Teaching* lies in its ability to fill in some blank areas and to make some helpful adjustments to the existing picture of humanist pedagogy. But the results of Bushnell's study are not nearly distinctive enough to justify the polemical energy she whips up in its behalf. She often seems driven to caricature or misrepresent the work of other scholars and theorists (whose views she then ends up largely reproducing) in order to exaggerate her own originality. In particular, her renditions of Foucault's views are frequently simplistic and reductive.

Bushnell is surely right to argue that theory will impose a "grid" on early modern humanism if it is applied without careful attention to the nuances of the texts themselves. Yet adopting a sympathetic, "empirical" attitude towards humanist writings can entail its own dangers if—as is sometimes the case in this book—it impedes a necessary skepticism towards those writings. *A Culture of Teaching* too often confuses the humanists' own portrayals of themselves with the objective effects of their theories and practices. Bushnell's approach ignores the fact that institutions often impose their own logics, which may not be identical with the views of any of the persons working within such institutions. Nor does it consider the possibility that the humanists' own political vocabulary might not adequately grasp or represent the manifold forms of power and domination at work in their society—forms which might be more apparent to theorists and historians with the advantage of historical hindsight. The expressed views of the humanists themselves surely provide crucial evidence for any historical reconstruction of early humanist pedagogy. But there is a fine line between sympathetic, attentive reading and credulous or apologetic reading, and Bushnell's book sometimes edges toward, if not over, this line.

Despite such shortcomings, however, *A Culture of Teaching* is an informative and challenging addition to the critical literature on early modern humanism. It adds considerable depth and detail to our understanding of Tudor pedagogy and poetics.

Shakespeare's Universal Wolf: Studies in Early Modern Reification by Hugh Grady. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 241. \$65.00.

This study is simultaneously one of the most important marxist readings of Shakespeare to date and a work that consciously shows the need to adapt such readings to less politicized, more humanistic forms of ethical criticism. With its main title this book refers, of course, to the well-known metaphor in *Troilus and Cressida*: "And appetite, an universal wolf / (So doubly seconded with will and power), / Must make perforce an universal prey, / And last eat up himself." Ulysses's sermonic speech, and others like it in *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *As You Like It*, provide part of the basis for Grady's claim that "Shakespeare and his art registered, reflected on, and . . . passionately denounced the historically new forms of reification erupting into a social world in the earliest stages of the permanent cultural revolution we blandly call modernity" (56).

Indeed, drawing on a deep acquaintance with twentieth-century social criticism and theory, *Shakespeare's Universal Wolf* seeks to restore a measure of personal agency to marxist literary criticism even as it extends backward the approximate *terminus a quo* of the "modernity" relevant to criticism influenced by the Frankfurt school. To this end, Grady replaces the Enlightenment with the more cluttered but profoundly significant era of Bacon, Montaigne, Donne, Marlowe, and Machiavelli. At the same time, his study joins Lars Engle's *Shakespearean Pragmatism* (1993) and the reviewer's own *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (1992) in seeing the early modern era as strongly affected by the market-centered ethos that has gradually assumed primacy in modern life.

We commonly understand reification to mean a process or state in which an abstraction is treated or seen as if it really existed. Because marxism has traditionally held it to be a product of newer economies, reification is often linked with alienation and commodity fetishism under capitalism. All three of these have at their base the notion of error: misrecognition, misplacement, misevaluation. As it functions in this study, "reification" strongly connotes this larger sense of error, though in an almost theological way: error resulting, that is, not from an individual's mistaken decision, but from a generalized mode of life. Building on Lukács's understanding of reification as the "tendency for abstracted, rationalized systems to enchain the social subjects who had collectively created them in *all* areas of capitalist society . . . not just in its economic relations" (42, Grady's paraphrase), Grady uses the term to cover a variety of practices and states in Shakespeare.

To Grady, reification involves both "an amoral, pleasure- and power-seeking 'will'" (44), and "'instrumental reason,'" a way of thinking "in which all values are suspended in a totalizing quest for techniques, means, and instruments to transform reality according to any human desires or purposes whatsoever" (52). In Shakespeare's plays, reification takes place in the vacuum of an *imagined* world (visualized melodramatically by Marlowe) that is post-Christian, postfeudal, and desacralized. Hence reification is the post-lapsarian condition of being divorced from a communicative society and its traditional, shared values. It is the condition of an individualism which only seems free and unconstrained, but is actually, like Shakespeare's "universal

wolf," a self-consuming artifact of modernity, caught up in what Horkheimer and Adorno refer to as a "'purposeless purposiveness'" (67). What Coleridge (in speaking of Iago) calls "motiveless malignity," and (in speaking of Thersites) a "portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary purpose," and what popular response labels simply as "evil," Grady calls reification.

The benefit of this reading is not that it gives the distant a familiar appearance, but that it uncovers, meaningfully and with a contemporary vocabulary, themes manifest in the early modern era itself—especially in relation to a handful of primary characters. As is perhaps not surprising for anyone whose political consciousness the Nixon era affected, Grady is fascinated by cunning, bad men who manifest their hatred privately. His readings of the instrumental rationality of such characters as Thersites, Iago, and Edmund are coupled, however, with an equivalent focus on the better halves of the tragedies' character pairings: along with the "foxes" previously named (the metaphor is Wyndham Lewis's), Grady examines the painfully deluded "lions" of Troilus, Othello, and Lear.

Yet it is not, finally, the tension between the Trojans' narcissistic idealism and the Greeks' *Realpolitik* that most interests Grady, nor that between Iago's instrumental reason and Othello's heroic subjectivity, or even between Edmund's radical scepticism and Lear's roots in a more traditionalistic cultural order. What most concerns him in this study is the way both sides of these pairings, and other characters in the plays, are shaped by, even in thrall to, apparently unprecedented habits of thought and practice that exceed their understanding and control.

Replacing the moral categories of critical tradition—which had stressed the differences among such characters—with an approach that emphasizes their common lack of commonality, Grady shows why these savage dramas speak so movingly to our condition. In his final reading he takes up *As You Like It* as a kind of utopian inversion of the thematics evident in the tragedies examined, *King Lear* in particular (of which *As You Like It* seems a comedic double). According to Grady, the two "worlds" of *As You Like It* are related by utopian projection: "the play creates an imagined, counter-factual realm of idealizations whose relation to the reified "real" of the play is that the former imaginatively fills the lack constituted by the play of desire within the real" (192). In itself an unobjectional point, the statement here asks us to ask, first, whether what Grady is describing as a historical phenomenon may have an equally strong generic determinant. Whether, that is, the "purposive purposelessness" he analyzes in Shakespeare isn't—with a different vocabulary, but similar form—present to tragedy from the Greeks forward. Grady would have strengthened his argument had he been able to prove the historical specificity of the phenomenon he explores, perhaps by contrasting literary texts of the same genre.

Similarly, it is worth asking here what we gain by replacing a moral vocabulary with a marxist one. This seems an especially pressing question considering this study's belief that reification does not have a strictly economic cause. What is the difference, one might ask, between saying Iago is "evil" and holding him the wielder of instrumental reason? Many answers come to mind, foremost among them that a marxist account points to something that

we openly live with—toward capitalism and its various manifestations in our everyday life. The difference, then, between calling Iago “evil” and seeing him as a manipulator of instrumental reason—even as he is manipulated by a subjectless system of life—is that the latter account relates not only the interpretation but the composition of Shakespeare’s plays to a way of living in the world that we might believe we can change.

Yet during the past decade it has become increasingly more difficult to believe this. The market, rather than class struggle, now seems to be—even, to have been—the motivating logic of history. As this realization sinks in, the practical differences between, on the one hand, a moralistic or ethical mode of reading and, on the other, marxist criticism seem to diminish in importance. Severed from purely economic determinism, Grady’s study has few implications that a person with any of a variety of religious or ethical convictions might not embrace. In an era during which political marxism can be said to have lost its subject, what seems most critical is not the source but the consequences of reification. Marxism is the most worldly theory of sin in its modern incarnation, and, as such, still has much to teach us. As *Shakespeare’s Universal Wolf* demonstrates, however, it can benefit in turn from the very human concerns of an otherwise conservative critical tradition.

The importance of this book extends beyond its readings and theory. Grady is arguably one of the most careful thinkers in Shakespeare studies today, and this care translates to his writing. It is a noteworthy irony that someone with so little concern for “professionalist” endeavor should be such an example for the profession, for few scholars currently produce works that are so completely readable, and so clearly *books*: substantive and coherent projects that concentrate on a well-defined question, and appear only after the author has devoted significant thought to the topic and texts at hand. I can think of few better models to recommend to those beginning books of their own.

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Revision and Romantic Authorship by Zachary Leader. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 354. \$70.00.

This book has a threefold argument: (1) Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Mary Shelley, Clare, and Keats had a personal identity with integrity over time, and the evidence is the fact that they said so (especially Wordsworth); (2) it is best to understand even collaborative work in terms of an individual writer if that writer consented to it; and mainly (3) readers should *appreciate*, editors should *reproduce*, and scholars should *know* what an individual writer preferred they should admire, reproduce, and know, because the writer (principally Wordsworth) said so. Readers of this journal will surely know that, over in law schools and among the biological and social sciences, “consent” is not such a simple matter; among departments of language and literature, textuality and personal identity are a donkey and a cart whose positionality has been shifting in the past few decades; but with occasional

recourse to declarations of "aesthetic value," this book's insistence on authorial personhood and intent may be appealing to traditionally minded academics.

Revision and Romantic Authorship follows important books on the relationships between textual histories and literary criticism of Romantic-period works: Jack Stillinger's *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991), for example, and then *Romantic Revisions*, edited by Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (1992), and then Stillinger's *Coleridge and Textual Instability* (1994). Important and controversial books include Jerome McGann's *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983) and his *The Textual Condition* (1991). *Revision and Romantic Authorship* voices a conservative point of view, without the rigorous work among archival materials or the theoretical sophistication that characterizes these earlier books.

The Introduction asserts that "currently fashionable . . . indeterminism can be seen as no less Romantic than primitivism" (3). From Stillinger's *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991), Leader gleans the principle that "the nominal author's contribution and authority are dominant but not exclusive": "even when fiercely professing independence, the author typically draws on a range of personal and institutional collaborators, including family, friends, publishers, reviewers, and readers" (15)—thus, for Leader, consent restores authorial intent.

Chapter One, "Wordsworth, Revision, and Personal Identity," begins by criticizing Stephen Gill's 1984 edition, *William Wordsworth* (Oxford Authors), for preferring early versions of poems: "the question of aesthetic value," Leader complains, "goes unmentioned" in the blurb on the back cover of Gill's edition. Further, Wordsworth wrote (in a letter to Alexander Dyce, 1830) that he would prefer editors to follow "strictly the last Copy of the text of an Author" (20). Leader asserts that Wordsworth's revisions and re-orderings manifest "his sense of the self as single and unified" (39). Though deconstruction and historicism may have challenged the idea that "imaginative or recollective power" is "redemptive," Leader finds "evidence for it—evidence that is was Wordsworth's view" (54). Wordsworth was evidently not a political apostate because he "was consistently scornful" of such charges (60).

A chapter on Byron quotes T. G. Steffan (*Don Juan* was written "for the most part without thoughtful revision"), Jerome J. McGann ("before he left England in 1816 he always paid scrupulous attention to the printing of his works"), and draws from Marilyn Butler the conclusion that "the occupation [of author] was socially degrading" for members of Byron's class (84). In Leader's words, "Early Byron, in [Peter] Manning's words, 'was unusually sensitive to the reception of his poetry'" (92); and *Don Juan*, "in McGann's words, 'is radically, aggressively episodic and meandering'" (95). This trait is said to reveal consistently Byron's personal identity.

A Chapter on Coleridge begins by pointing out that Coleridge called "unity" the "ultimate end of human Thought and human Feeling" (121). In the case of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Leader ascribes to Stillinger the view that "the editorial choice of the latest texts may well be artistically justifiable" (124).

A chapter on *Frankenstein* opposes the feminist contentions of critics in-

cluding Anne Mellor and Johanna Smith who have suggested that revisions to the novel were to a large extent impositions on Mary Shelley, who worked under gendered constraint. Instead, Leader argues that "Mary Shelley consciously, willingly welcomed Percy Shelley's contributions" (171). In a rare example, in this book, of primary scholarship, Leader reports having examined manuscripts of *Frankenstein* at the Bodleian Library, but concludes nothing from that examination on the grounds that Johanna Smith, writing in her student edition of the novel, suggests that the manuscript evidence is inconclusive (171). (Readers interested in the writing and revision of *Frankenstein* should, of course, consult the new edition, with facsimiles and transcriptions, *The "Frankenstein" Notebooks*, by Charles Robinson [New York: Garland, 1997], which was not available when Leader wrote.)

In Chapter Five Leader faults Eric Robertson and David Powell, editors of the Oxford English Texts edition, *The Early Poems of John Clare* (1989), for preferring manuscript versions of poems to the versions revised by Clare's publisher, John Taylor, and others; Leader doubts that "Clare would have preferred manuscript versions of his early poems" (207). Despite Clare's writing that "grammar in learning is like Tyranny in government," Leader denies that Clare's unconventional grammar and spelling had radical political importance, and likewise that Taylor's corrections had conservative meanings (223): "Taylor's political and moral revisions or censorings, and Clare's willingness to accept them" include other motives: "Taylor cared about profit" (238, 236-37).

The book's last chapter, on Keats, points out the familiar fact that poems in *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Other Poems* were revised by John Taylor, Richard Woodhouse, and others, and, more generally, the poems were modified in consideration of their likely effect on the public. As Keats critics commonly do, Leader points out that Keats's earlier poetry had been criticized by reviewers, including "Z" in "On the Cockney School of Poetry" in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Oct. 1817). (I will mention that readers interested in these issues will be well informed by such previous studies as McGann's "Keats and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism," *Modern Language Notes* 94 [1979], and the essays by many hands in *Keats and History*, ed. Nicholas Roe, 1995.) Leader affirms what Stillinger had previously shown with scholarly authority: Keats's 1820 volume represents a collaboration; Leader observes that "Keats . . . seems to have welcomed the . . . alterations" (294).

A seven-page Appendix, "Personal Identity in Eighteenth-Century Thought," summarizes positions ascribed to Locke and Hume, partly by briefly quoting familiar passages from their works and partly by relying on Christopher Fox's account of the subject in *Locke and the Scribblers* (1988).

Though the book might be informative for those who have not had leisure to acquaint themselves with scholarship on Romanticism or with work on scholarly editing over the last decade or so, some problems in the quality of thinking represented in this book's arguments deserve to be pointed out. Even if one could know what were Wordsworth's views on the question of his "personal identity"—a difficult condition because documents are imperfect indicators of belief—it would not follow that the view is a correct one. Even if Wordsworth had a "sense of the self as single and unified" (39), that fact is no evidence that his self *was* (in fact) single and unified. The fact that

Wordsworth "was consistently scornful" of charges that he was a political apostate does not establish (as Leader suggests it does) that he was *not* a political apostate. Similar errors in reasoning appear in (and even dominate) the chapters on the other authors.

The fact that Coleridge wrote in a notebook that "unity" is the "ultimate end of human Thought and human Feeling" (quoted on p. 121) does not in any way imply that unity *is* the ultimate end of those sorts of endeavor. And even if unity were the ultimate end of human thought, it would not follow that anything in the world is (or ever was) unified—no matter who likes it or does not.

As Leader points out, it was Clare's view, for a time, that he was Lord Byron; it does not follow that Clare *was* Lord Byron, and it does not follow that scholars or editors are condemned to maintain that he *was* Lord Byron because he *said* that he was. Whether editors should reproduce altered texts of poems because authors wanted them to do so, and whether literary scholarship has a sciential function at all, or whether *preference* and an obsolete concept of "the self" should determine the aims and methods of literary studies—these are extremely important questions.

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Wordsworth and Feeling: The Poetry of an Adult Child by G. Kim Blank. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995. Pp. 261. \$39.50.

In *Wordsworth and Feeling: The Poetry of an Adult Child*, G. Kim Blank argues that "What often motivated Wordsworth's best poetry and what his poetry is all about is the desire to describe and admit to those particular feelings, especially negative feelings, such as fear, anxiety, loss, sorrow, grief, and guilt, and by such description and admission to attempt to transform those feelings and then leave them" (23). Thus Blank sees the poet's achievement both as "a personal or intellectual investigation," and as a form of "therapy . . . necessitated by the need to understand himself in order, quite simply, to feel better about himself": "The clarity, hope, bliss, happiness, and ecstasy that we sometimes associate with his poetry and the scene of production is overbalanced by the confusion, fear, pain, helplessness, sorrow, and depression in his life and poetry; and the joy in life is overshadowed by a concern for death" (26). To understand Wordsworth's poetry, then, we cannot simply read it in isolation from the events of his life; instead, we must view it as a "*poetry of reenactment*" (27) of an emotional life severely scarred by childhood trauma. It is from such trauma, and the desire to come to terms with it, that the powerful intensity of his poetry springs.

In the first chapter, Blank argues his position by weaving together passages from *The Prelude* and biographical summaries of Wordsworth's early life. His point is that "certain aspects and episodes of Wordsworth's life and . . . portrayals of that life-into-poetry . . . need revaluation" (46). And those episodes, for Blank, are primarily ones of "confusion and loss": the death of his parents, his stressful relations with his guardians, the affair with Annette

Vallon. Blank has no new information about these episodes, but by emphasizing the darker side of Wordsworth's childhood and early manhood, and by interpreting them in light of Alice Miller's "extensive and powerful writings on childhood trauma, child rearing, and psychotherapy" (27), he tries to show just how anguished Wordsworth's emotional life really was, and how his poetry represents an extraordinary attempt to achieve emotional equilibrium, in spite of it all.

Later chapters treat *The Ruined Cottage* and *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) (with "Tintern Abbey" receiving a chapter of its own), the Goslar winter of 1798-1799, the Wordsworths' move to Grasmere in 1799-1800, and, finally, the "Intimations" ode. In the course of each chapter, Blank draws on biographical information about Wordsworth and the work of practicing psychologists (besides Miller, these include John Bradshaw and Deepak Chopra) to demonstrate the ways in which Wordsworth used the writing of poetry to confront and heal a psyche deeply wounded by extraordinary childhood trauma. Blank concludes with the "Ode" because he believes that, in writing that poem, Wordsworth worked out most of his emotional problems; thus the later poetry lacks the kind of emotional intensity that Blank finds in the verse composed in the so-called Great Decade (and by Blank's model, it becomes more of a Great Eight Years).

The book has strengths. Blank is absolutely right to call attention to the darker side of Wordsworth's make-up, and focus us on the powerful and distressing emotional content of the poetry. It is surely emotional force that made the poems worth reading in the first place, and has allowed them to survive in spite of the gyrations that generations of ambitious critics have put them through. And Blank is also right to focus on the therapeutic value of the poetry (*The Prelude*, for instance, is about nothing, if it is not about therapy), and refreshingly iconoclastic in his choice of psychologists to provide his interpretive models: the triumvirate of Miller, Choprak, and Bradshaw is undoubtedly less well-known to Romantics than, say, Lacan, but they have the virtue of not having been largely discredited by their own profession.

In spite of these strengths, however, *Wordsworth and Feeling* is ultimately disappointing, and for a number of reasons. I will focus on two of these, setting aside my own distaste for any argument that dismisses the later Wordsworth (and here "late" means anything written after age thirty-five). First is a problem of audience. Blank seems originally to have intended this book for an audience of non-specialists, probably undergraduates and perhaps even younger than that. Thus his prose is rich with allusions to pop-culture icons (Jane Fonda, for instance) and Hollywood movies ("Back to the Future" and "Down and Out in Beverly Hills" figure in chapter titles). He also summarizes very familiar passages from the poetry, such as the boat-stealing episode (159-60), and retells, without adding anything new, well-known episodes in Wordsworth's life. But somewhere in the process of writing the book, Blank decided to change direction: "I felt," he explains, "that I should, in the spirit of what is sometimes politely called academic socialization, enter the continuing critical dialogue that speaks to and about Wordsworth" (9-10). The problem is that the popular audience he originally aimed for will not be interested in the critical debate that shows on nearly every page of

Wordsworth and Feeling, and the academic audience will find Blank's summaries a waste of time and his pop-culture references a bit vulgar. Stylistically the book is betwixt and between.

A more serious problem is Blank's failure to explain what he means by feeling and emotion, what Wordsworth might have meant by the words, whether he would have regarded them as interchangeable terms, as Blank seems to do, and how emotion is related to rational thought. Blank seems to assume that these are unproblematic ideas that we all understand and agree about, disregarding the extensive discussions of them by eighteenth-century moral philosophers, most of whom Wordsworth was at least familiar with, and disregarding as well the lively debate about emotion in philosophical circles today. Now perhaps this, too, is part of Blank's resistance to critique: perhaps he feels that the philosophical distinctions of scholars old and new would be unnecessarily burdensome for non-specialist readers. But to this scholar it simply looks like a lack of seriousness and intellectual rigor. One hopes that Blank returns to the kind of work he did when writing *Wordsworth's Influence on Shelley*, a book that considerably advanced our understanding of both poets and contributed in important ways to the critical debate about literary influence. *Wordsworth and Feeling*, I fear, will not be so highly regarded.

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Manet's Modernism, or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s by Michael Fried. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. Pp. 648. \$50.00 cloth.

It would be futile to try to provide an "objective" assessment of "Manet's Sources: Aspects of His Art, 1859-1865," the 1969 work that provides the basis for Michael Fried's book, *Manet's Modernism, or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s*. The mammoth work (actually Fried's doctoral dissertation at Harvard) galvanized Manet studies in every sense of the word: it delivered something like an electric shock to the field when it appeared as a special issue of *Artforum*. (It is reprinted in its entirety as the first chapter of *Manet's Modernism*.) With its provocatively questioning thesis (asking what to make of the "specificity" of Manet's sources), it also spurred art historians into action. As inevitably as a cottage industry of "source" studies sprang up, so too did more thoughtful textual readings of the critical reaction to Manet's work. Many an art historian was literally jolted to life in a formative seminar by learning to read critically in engaging with Fried's work. (Such, at least, was my experience in becoming an art historian and a Manet scholar.) But just as "to galvanize" can also mean "to coat with rust-resistant zinc," the galvanizing effect of "Manet's Sources" has also in part been an insulating one. The varieties of art-historical discourse indebted to Fried, as well as the larger development of the work of Fried himself as exemplified by the present study, analyze works of art primarily in relation to other works, and to bod-

ies of writing (principally, but not exclusively, on the visual arts), as if most questions worth asking can be exclusively derived therein. In that sense, the word "modernism" for Fried concerns a set of pictorial issues in which the stakes are the very fate of painting as an art, but in which the game remains restricted to the domain of art. Fried's project thus differs fundamentally from the analysis of modernism in relation to modernity one finds in the work of T. J. Clark, for instance.

Manet's Modernism positions itself as a continuation of Fried's studies in French painting of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (1980) and *Courbet's Realism* (1990). Readers of these earlier works will recognize Fried's clear, forceful, energetic writing, and they will find themselves on familiar analytical ground. As in Fried's earlier books, close readings of critical texts inform analyses of gestures, poses, and compositions that exemplify pictorial models of figure painting such as absorption, theatricality, and antitheatricality. Insofar as painting of the French school was of particular importance to Manet, this dimension of Fried's study allows us to think afresh of the relationship of Manet's art to its predecessors as opposed to its successors.

The book's weightiest contribution to Manet studies comes in Chapter Four, "Manet in His Generation," in which Fried reexamines major canvases by Manet in light of concerns explored in Chapter Three, "The Generation of 1863." Fried argues that Manet "belonged to a specific artistic generation" which Fried names after the notorious Salon des Refusés, a group of painters including Henri Fantin-Latour, Alphonse Legros, and James McNeill Whistler (185). The author identifies aspects of these artists' intense involvement with the art of the past, as well as particular pictorial interests such as "facingness" and "strikingness" (which Fried sees as illustrative of these painters' antitheatricality). Manet's interest in religious painting is highlighted by Fried's examination of the artistic matrix of such contemporary religious paintings as Legros' *The Ex-Voto* and *The Vocation of St. Francis*. An extensive meditation on Manet's *The Angels at the Tomb of Christ* side by side with Moreau's *Oedipus and the Sphinx*, both of which hung in Room "M" of the Salon of 1864 (both now in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) opens onto a new understanding of the negative critical reaction to Manet's canvases of that year. Moreau's remarkable painting, with its element of the supernatural, was seen as Baudelairean, and hence capitalized on an audience and on critical support which might have been Manet's (317). Only the kind of careful work Fried undertakes with Salon reviews and with the pictures themselves can produce these kinds of important arguments, and Fried's focus on Manet among artists such as Legros and Fantin thus bears fruit.

Fried is to be applauded for constructing this new view of Manet in his generation. It is extraordinarily refreshing to read an account of Manet that does not consistently taint him with the themes and pictorial concerns of the Impressionist painters who took certain cues from him, but who broke definitively with the Salon and with the art of the past in ways Manet never did. Here is a book on Manet that does not unthinkingly repeat that every subject which ever struck the artist's fancy must have been "modern"; here, too, is a book which does not catalogue more cafés, streets, prostitutes, vacant lots and other material on offer in what Fried calls "the low-wattage social

history of art that was popular during much of the 1970s and 1980s" (178). Yet if art history in some quarters has tired of the approach that claims to discover the picture's meaning in the revelation of social and physical material which might have been a reference point, I am not sure if art history can content itself with a view of "context" or of a given artist's "generation" which is so exclusively pictorial. (Think, for instance, of Sartre's view of Mallarmé's "generation" of poets: their atheism, their narcissism, their new relationship to their public, their consciousness of themselves as "sons.")

Michael Fried's writing has shaped the way many of us think about modernism, and considering the pivotal place of Manet in Fried's own thinking, it is appropriate that he should give us an expanded view of his writings on the artist. Clement Greenberg's formulation that Manet's pictures of the 1860s can be seen as the first modernist paintings "by virtue of the frankness with which they declared the surfaces on which they were painted" necessarily reappears here (409), as it should. Manet's art can still support this view of modernism, as it can Fried's suggestion that the "bullfinch frozen in flight at the upper center" of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* can be seen as "emblemizing the notion of a representational act" which was "lightning fast in its attack" (295). Such an account of painting's self-reflexivity is quintessential Fried, as are so many idiosyncratic readings of pictures throughout the book. Fried might consider Manet's highly politicized *Execution of Maximilian* to be "the most ambitious project of Manet's career" (346), but the author characteristically compares the "point-blank range at which the firing squad performs its task" to "something like picture-viewing distance" (357; emphasis original). Thus "a metaphysics of spectatorly aggression against Manet's paintings" emerges, as the artist both withstands hostile criticism and fires back. If Manet inserted himself metaphorically into the arena near Querétaro, as Fried suggests—if the *Execution* is "a field of multiple, labile, and conflictual identifications and counteridentifications, with Manet himself—Manet as painter-beholder—at once everywhere and nowhere," then surely that field involves more than spectatorly aggression, or even "a point of absolute crisis in the French tradition" with regards to the "conflict between painting and beholder" (358). I take this passage to be emblematic of the best of Fried's book: it is the kind of proposition which moves us out of Fried's often ingenious constructs and into the social world around the artist. To picture Manet as both victim and accomplice at his own execution is to grasp something about the larger situation of modernist art in the 1860s. Fried's image reveals the contradictory roles bourgeois society scripts for artists, the best of whom find themselves playing the martyr as well as the provocateur.

After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture by Mikhail Epstein. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995. Pp. xvi + 394. \$55.00 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

Mikhail Epstein has become a pivotal figure in Russian (formerly Soviet) criticism since the beginning of the 1980s. He was among the very first to write on the Russian neo-avant-garde in poetry and, a bit later, in prose. This is how it happened.

In 1985 the major official magazine for literary criticism in the Soviet Union, *Voprosy literatury* (Problems of Literature), commissioned articles from two critics, Epstein and Igor Shaitanov, on recent trends in poetry known as conceptualism and metametaphorism, both of which had already been officially condemned. (I was linked closely with the formation of the latter and was thus under similar pressure.) When these articles were published, they turned out otherwise than the official literati expected. According to Epstein and Shaitanov, we had seen the emergence of a new and unconstrained poetry as well as the birth of a new criticism. For the first time since the "Formalist" 1920s and the "scandalous" 1960s of Khrushchev's thaw, Russian criticism was presented with complicated new material to analyze and from which to build up a new view of culture. Now, for the first time, this view is available in a collection of essays published in America.

To understand this "alien" view better one has to recognize some peculiarities of Russian approaches to critical writing. For example, Andrei Bitov, famous writer and canonized martyr to Russian syntax, once described to me how, when translating a paragraph from John Locke to use as an epigraph for his novel, he had to employ at least twice as many sentences in Russian to make Locke's ideas clear. Was this because of the syntactical differences between the two languages? Not exactly. From the Russian perspective, Americans, due to perhaps to the "metonymical" nature of English, are taught to explain their ideas in order to make them clear to almost everybody, while Russians, progeny of a "metaphorical" language, make their readers discern those ideas on their own in the course of their reading. Russians like to make their ideas sound like a *pun*, while Americans prefer to *pin* them up with logical development to some not less logical, even if paradoxical, conclusion. Vladimir Nabokov himself, who consumed pins as lances in his lifelong battle against butterflies, could not resist puns when writing in both Russian and English. Mikhail Epstein, translated into English, does not escape this Russian feature either when employing his native language.

It would not be out of place here to ask whether national mentality is determined by language. My answer is affirmative. Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*, mentioned in passing in Epstein's book, is an example of what Russians believe any criticism is: a play on words and thoughts. While the Russian Formalists, in the modernist period, were still trying to explore the border between literature and "what is," Russian formalists in the post-modern period, both in literature and in literary criticism (including Epstein), decided that *border* means "conflict." Conflict, while recognized from classical antiquity onward as the most powerful technique in art for its relation to catharsis, is not the only possible technique. For postmodernism, which seeks to make peace between contraries (to yoke together, as in the

Russian fable, the lion and the doe), conflict as either device or border is obsolete, while the formal idea of a "game," even with "glass beads," is really what matters. The hero of Hesse's novel, by the way, never thought otherwise, and neither does Epstein—though he seems to object: "As distinct from Hesse's conservative and escapist Game, which is essentially derivative and forbids the creation of new signs and values, transculture aspires entirely to the sphere of creativity" (299). I use this unobliging quotation to illustrate the convergence of Epstein's many neologisms in the term *transculture*, by which he defines and distinguishes his position. What is a "transculture" and who is a "transculturist"? For Epstein,

Transculture is the mode of existence of one liberated from nature by culture and culture itself by culturology. The transcultural world has never been extensively described because the path that leads to it—culturology, or the comparative study of cultures—was opened only recently. . . . The transcultural world lies not apart from, but within, all existing cultures, like a multidimensional space that appears gradually over the course of historical time. It is a continuous space in which unrealized, potential elements are no less meaningful than "real" ones. . . . Through the signs of existing cultures, a "transculturalist" tries to restore the mysterious script of the simultaneously present and absent transcultural condition. In essence, s/he both discovers and creates this realm. While scientists, artists, and politicians make significant but separate contributions to culture in their respective fields, the transculturist elaborates the space of transculture using various arts, philosophies, and sciences as tools to develop the all-encompassing genre of cultural creativity. (298-99)

Epstein implies that the critic as "transculturalist" has the same rights as any author to create an "unreal" equivalent to the "real" of scientists, artists, and politicians—which, in turn, is the same "unreal" in relation to everyday reality. In other words, "the critic is an author" who is free to go in any direction "within all existing cultures" that s/he wants. In the first place, Russian Formalists such as Viktor Shklovsky and Yuri Tynianov already believed, in the modernist period, in the "equal rights" of critic and author, and were writers as well as critics (cf. French-American poststructuralism, where the critic is the only author who may be discussed). Second, any direction "within all existing cultures" implies directions that are "existing," if perhaps not yet revealed (or, as Epstein writes, "unrealized")—that is the essence of any "conservative" game, be it chess or glass beads. This direction will reveal, either through literature or criticism and philosophy, some "new" reality about which we have only intimation. Here, Epstein goes farther than the Formalists, who believed in the "new" in opposition to "old" values (language included) and thus in conflict with them. Unlike the Formalists, and like the Russian metataphorists as well, Epstein knows that the "new" (including language) is a matter of combinations. It is what the game is about, and no other conflict than the tension of the game exists. The "transculturalist," who "using various arts, philosophies, and sciences as tools to develop the all-encompassing genre of cultural creativity," seems

thus emblematic of a postmodernist and postformalist paradox of pluralistic mastery.

Finally, we come back to where we started: the pun. Epstein's neologism also originates in pun; it is a "trans-culture" and a "culture of a trance," since both terms are spelled the same way in Russian. This is a culture that is able to foresee, through the contribution of language, its own "afterfuture" as if being in a trance or in cyberspace. Thus, pan-Russian tradition (if you excuse the pun) is maintained: Epstein's terms do not just attract thought but are their very essence. *Pun* and *pin* are, in this sense, not just consonances but head and tails of one and the same penny. The play on words at some point demands that the player set up some rules and start classifying in the new world. Adam gave names to what was created not by him and already classified by its creator; Lamarck gave names to different plants and classified them, but they were not created by him either. Borges, on the contrary, created and classified himself, but his classification touches only on his own creation and leaves no space for alien inventiveness. His type, of course, is close to that of Epstein's transculturalist, though far from Epstein's own ambitions.

Epstein's ambitions are very Russian, based as they are on the work of Dmitri Mendeleev, the inventor of the periodic table of the elements. It was Mendeleev who put all the known elements in good order, named those already discovered, and, even more important, predicted the existence of many as yet unrevealed elements by leaving space for them in his table. Epstein follows Mendeleev's path in creating what he calls a "Periodic Table of the New Russian Literature" (86-87). On this table he places all Russian literature from 1730 to F, which he marks "1990-?" Of course, when he discusses the literature of earlier periods, Epstein uses terms already accepted (such as *classicism*, *romanticism*, and *acmeism*), but for the new literature he establishes some of his own. Thus he defines *metametaphorism* as composed of two branches, *metarealism* and *presentalism* (the present author, according to Epstein, belongs to the second category). Again, what is pinned down here are not just terms but also puns: *metarealism*, for example, encompasses both "metareality" and "metaphorical realism"; here, metaphor works as compass to reveal metareality. Moreover, Epstein leaves blank spaces, as did Mendeleev, for directions in literature that are hard to imagine now, even if one is a transculturalist and a seer.

Epstein's book, in many respects, is an attempt to remain Mendeleev while becoming Borges; it is both a literary criticism that seeks science and a game that knows its own earnestness. After the future, both possibilities may occur.

The McDonaldization of Society: An Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life by George Ritzer. Revised edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996. Pp xxi + 265. \$17.95.

George Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society* is a lucid, and, in many ways, provocative analysis of the increasing entrenchment and steady institutionalization of the logic and structure of McDonald's in almost all spheres of vital activities. For Ritzer, McDonald's is not simply in the restaurant business. Rather than an efficient, cheap, and fast meal, McDonald's offers a whole *modus vivendi*. This notorious chain has come to epitomize a scandalous and increasingly insistent phenomenon—McDonaldization; that is, the ways in which the principles of the fast-food restaurant operate in an increasingly wide array of social settings (such as the work place, higher education, and health care). Contributing to the acceleration of these structural changes are several factors, the most important being: the aggressive seeking of economic interests, the pursuit of McDonaldization as an end in itself (and, in many ways, as an attachment to a traditional life style), and McDonaldization's attunement to certain changes taking place within society (namely, increased mobility, expanding needs, working parents, and technological changes).

According to Ritzer, the socioeconomic structures adumbrated by the process of McDonaldization revolve around four interconnected principles: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. In a McDonaldizing society, the pressure for efficiency—that is, the search for the optimum means for a given end—is enormous. This pressure calls for increasing calculability—that is, the emphasis on quantity rather than quality—which in turn leads to a predictability that is enhanced all the more by the creation of precise, programmable, non-human technologies. This pursuit of systematization, standardization, consistency, scientific management, and methodological operation is itself motivated by the desire for greater control over people.

Central to Ritzer's argument is Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy and the larger process of rationalization that underlies it. While for Weber bureaucracy is the model of rationalization, for Ritzer the fast food restaurant is the paradigm of McDonaldization. Both instances describe an organizational model that strives to eliminate inefficiency, irrationality, uncertainty, and unpredictability. It should not overhastily be concluded, however, that the two processes are the same. McDonaldization is not just an extension of rationalization, it is also an extreme version of it or, as Ritzer himself puts it, "a quantum leap" (33) in the process of rationalization.

Seen from this vantage point, Ritzer's project is not only an elaborate analysis of the McDonaldization of contemporary society, but also a pointed critique of the excesses of rationalization, in particular, and the legacy of modernity, in general. While many proclaim the end of modernity, Ritzer argues for its continuing strong hold. His book takes issue with the common view that we live in an era that is radically different from the previous one: "a number of contemporary perspectives, especially postindustrialism, post-Fordism, and postmodernism contend that we have already moved beyond the modern world and into a new, starkly different society. These views imply that this book is retrograde because it deals with a 'modern' phenome-

non that will soon disappear with the emergence of a new societal form. This book contends, however, that McDonaldization and its 'modern' characteristics not only are here for the foreseeable future, but also are influencing society at an accelerating rate" (148). While other sociologists emphasize a shift in modern society from uniformity, predictability, and standardization to contingency, uncertainty, and deregulation, Ritzer emphasizes the increasing domination of a system—that is, McDonaldization—that is built on many of the ideas that have prevailed in industrial societies, namely bureaucratization, the assembly line, and scientific management.

This hybridity is all the more interesting because it recalls a historical principle that Raymond Williams has aptly articulated in *Marxism and Literature* (1977)—namely that society is an uneven formation that is constituted by the conjunctural overlapping between three trends: "the dominant, residual, and emergent" (121). For Williams, dominant practices are always in concert, if not in tension with passive survivals from the past, on the one hand, and inchoate formations and anticipatory developments, on the other hand. Stated differently, historical developments are not even, demarcations between different periods are hardly ever rigid, transitions are not necessarily complete, and transformations are never vectored. By reiterating this basic premise, Ritzer provides a nuanced account of the postmodern condition. Although not necessarily wrong, the widely-held post-industrial thesis is more limited than many of its adherents tend to believe. Post-industrialization is, in many ways, coextensive with McDonaldization. The latter is not disappearing; on the contrary, it is dramatically increasing in importance.

This proposition has Jamesonian overtones. Following the author of *The Political Unconscious*, Ritzer argues that postmodernism does not represent a break with modernism; rather, it is a continuation—albeit with a difference—of modernism. While other critics emphasize a break between modernity and postmodernity (or more pointedly, between that which is rational and rigid, on the one hand, and that which is irrational and flexible, on the other hand), Fredric Jameson argues that postmodernism constitutes the cultural logic of late capitalism and that it is structurally continuous with older forms of capitalism. Like Jameson, Ritzer argues that there has been no definite historical break from Fordism. On the contrary, one can point out some commonalities between McDonaldization and Fordism such as rigid technologies, standardized work routines, and the deskilling of labor. Simply put, Fordism has not completely vanished; instead, it has evolved into McDonaldism: "Clearly, while some characteristics of today's 'postmodern' society differ dramatically from its 'modern' predecessor, great continuity exists as well. McDonaldization is a highly rational modern phenomenon yielding, among other things, extremely rigid structures" (159). Ritzer, then does not deny the intensification of the economy and the complexification of society in the postmodern era, but emphasizes the continuing relevance of rational trends, in particular, and the enduring legacy of the spirit of modernity, in general.

The most interesting and most promising aspect of the book is perhaps Ritzer's analysis of the extent to which the rationality of the system imposed by McDonaldization spawns irrational tendencies. For example, the replacement of human by nonhuman technology can be unbeneficial. The worker or

the employee is often forced to learn new technologies, master new techniques, keep up with upgraded software, figure out new functions, and memorize new numbers—all of which means that business often has to pay high prices in order to operate efficiently. In addition, the types of jobs that ensue from the McDonaldization of society are jobs that require almost no skill or thinking from the worker. Whether it be a student serving food at McDonald's or a checker scanning barcodes at a supermarket, there is an increasing dependence upon and subordination to the machine: "Perhaps the ultimate irrationality of McDonaldization is the possibility that people could come to lose control over the system—that it could some day come to control them. Already, these rational systems control many aspects of people's lives" (143). In the rationalized settings imposed by McDonaldization people behave not as human beings but as functions of the system. A McDonaldized society is not just a panoptic society *à la Foucault*—that is, a society that is structured around quasi-utilitarian principles and based on self-policing—but also a dehumanizing society: "though it at least appears that people still control them, these rational systems can spin beyond the control of even those who occupy the highest positions within those systems" (143). Because red tape can render bureaucracies increasingly inefficient and unpredictable, individuals become both confused and counterproductive. The anger and frustration generated by the inadequacies of nonhuman technologies can even lead people to undercut or sabotage the operation of such technologies.

However, Ritzer's analysis of the irrationality that accompanies the rational system he describes is limited, to say the least. Overall, Ritzer rightly emphasizes the irrationality of rationality, but does not draw the full implications of this proposition. For one thing, *The McDonaldization of Society* is constrained by a humanistic perspective that arguably smacks of a nostalgia for what may be termed, after the French sociologist Alain Touraine, the return of the social actor. Over and over again, Ritzer emphasizes the waning relevance of agency as one of the main causes leading to the irrationality of rationality. Even when he moves beyond this analytical frame, he seems to be content with the assertion that the system that structures contemporary society is not as efficient, manageable, and predictable as we think it is. Waiting in long lines at fast food restaurants, being put to work at gas stations and at automated teller machines, or having to learn new technologies—all these are practices that are indicative of new trends whereby the modern consumer spends an increasingly significant amount of time and energy doing unpaid labor for a number of organizations and businesses. However, these are more nuisances than real problems. Occasionally, Ritzer explores more detrimental problems—such as the impact of McDonaldization on health and family relationships—but he does so only passingly. His analysis of the effect of the process he describes on the environment, for instance, amounts to little more than lip service. It is true, as Ritzer points out, that the styrofoam packaging used in the fast-food industry does pollute the environment, and that the litter associated with it does create "a public eye sore across the countryside" (130); but the problems generated by McDonald's are arguably more deep-seated. In its abuse of resources, its glamorization of over-consumption, and its generation of tremendous waste, McDonald's epitomizes the very excesses of capitalism in its endless drive

towards surplus value. With McDonald's we are no longer in use or exchange value, but in "abuse value," to borrow Michel Serres' term.

These shortcomings are all the more disappointing when considering the fact that we are dealing with a revised edition of Ritzer's book (the first edition appeared in 1993). By and large, the revisions Ritzer undertakes in this volume are far from being a reassessment of the general premise that underlies his argument. The two most significant changes consist in adding a chapter that discusses the extent to which even birth and death are McDonaldized, and a section that explores the ways in which the Holocaust was driven by both rationalization and bureaucratization. Interesting as they may be, these additions hardly change the scope and nature of Ritzer's argument. Ritzer is very candid about his intentions: "I have, to a large extent, rewritten the text to make the themes and issues even clearer and more accessible. Thus, I offer a substantial revision, although the basic structure and thrust of the argument remain the same as those of the first edition" (xiv). Such as it is, the new edition of *The McDonaldization of Society* is more a refinement than a revision in the full import of the term.

The most insistent problem the reader encounters in *The McDonaldization of Society* pertains to the theoretical implications of Ritzer's neo-Weberian perspective. Ultimately, McDonaldization strikes the reader as a totalizing concept that is informed by a deterministic logic. Part of the problem is that Ritzer is insufficiently critical of Weber's characterization of modernity as the "iron cage" of rationality. Broadly speaking, the iron cage is a neologism for a system that alienates, controls, and imprisons its participants. In Weber's original formulations, bureaucracies are institutions or cages in which people are trapped and their basic humanity is denied, which is tantamount to saying that society is caught up in a seamless web of rationalized structures with little or no way out. Weber's emphasis on "reason" in his prognosis of modern or rational capitalism is particularly emphasized in Ritzer's project: "Just as Weber fettered over the emerging iron cage of rationality, I foresee a similar iron cage being created by the increasing ubiquity of the fast-food model" (33). To put it somewhat differently, Ritzer proclaims that McDonaldization has no bounds; opposition may momentarily delay this process, but not hinder its negative effects or reverse its course.

Of course, not everybody shares this pessimistic vision. Ritzer himself concedes that people do not react uniformly to their McDonaldized environment. Some people like the predictability of many aspects of their lives. For this group, McDonaldization is "a velvet cage" (177) that poses no threat whatsoever but, instead, promises nirvana. Others do acknowledge that contemporary life is predictable, impersonal, and dehumanizing, but believe that the spell of the system that produces these trends is not without possible escapes; that one can, in fact, be momentarily de-McDonaldized. For these people, McDonaldization is a "rubber cage the bars of which can be stretched to allow adequate means for escape" (177). Ritzer, however, shares neither the optimist attitude of the former group, nor the sober claims of the latter group. In his view, the McDonaldized cage is made of iron, pure and simple: "the most extreme sense of the iron cage of McDonaldization, is this: it can become an inhuman system that controls everyone, leaders included.

With no people to appeal to, oppose, or overthrow in their efforts to escape, people may become even more hopelessly imprisoned" (143).

The problems that transpire in Ritzer's sociological perspective are worthy of attention partly because they transcend the issue at hand. They are endemic of methodological difficulties common in a variety of fields ranging from cultural studies to historical analyses. Skeptical of the legacy—and even cynicism—of poststructuralism, particularly in its emphasis on the aleatory, the stochastic, and the different, many historians and critics have pointed out the need to recognize an irreducible system or a basic structure. If everything were a matter of difference and diffraction, then nothing can be held with certainty to be systematic. To ignore this fundamental premise is to fall prey to what may be termed a spectral analysis which accentuates difference but falls short of effectively synthesizing the ensuing discontinuities within the precincts of a projected totality. Pursuing heterogeneity beyond any conceivable totality, as Steven Best has rightly pointed out in his contribution to *Postmodernism/Jameson/Critique* (1989), "mystifies the fact that in capitalist society, there are not just differences and antinomies, but also strong tendencies towards reified sameness, conformity, and generality" (362). Weary of the shortcomings of poststructuralism, Ritzer does provide a systematic analysis of postmodern society, but the system he envisages is, in many ways, totalitarian. What needs to be addressed is the possibility of holding in tension the total and the fragmentary without necessarily being inconsistent.

Even in a project as far-reaching as that of the Frankfurt School—and more specifically in Adorno and Horkheimer's neo-Weberian critique of the culture industry in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1982)—this question is not satisfactorily resolved. What Adorno and Horkheimer saw in modern industrial society is a "totality" characterized above all by its ability to control individual consciousness, manipulate needs, promote obedience, and induce submission: "The might of industrial society is lodged in men's minds. . . . The industry as a whole has molded men as a type unfailingly reproduced in every product . . . what is decisive today is the necessity inherent in the system not to leave the customer alone, not for a moment to allow him any suspicion that resistance is possible" (127-41). Seen from this perspective, the culture industry is a seamless web in which all forms of resistance and all possibilities of change—being programmed by the system itself—are ultimately reified. In Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as in Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society*, capitalism is presented as a space from which nothing can free itself. To talk about the culture industry or the culture of McDonaldization is to talk about the hegemony of capitalism *tout court*. If McDonaldization eases its spell, we are told, it is only in response to consumer dissatisfaction and in return for a more thoroughly engulfing system. The inefficiency that ensues from McDonaldization does not constitute a threat but a strategy that ensures the continuity of the system: "When people have pressured McDonaldized systems, these systems have responded by mitigating their excesses" (179). What this proposition means, in part, is that McDonaldization is an inalienable process and, more importantly for our purpose, that it is a closed system.

In order to rid the concept of the system of its totalitarian bent, one has to

recognize that an inexorable part of the system's logic is its tendency to develop contradictory tendencies which suggest the existence of limits to the capacity of society to be over-organized. The emphasis on the openness of the system makes it possible to propose a more viable understanding of capitalism, namely that capitalism has not only a tendency to envelop the entirety of the social body, but also a proclivity to develop dysfunctionalities, create deficiencies, provoke deviations, and generate counter-processes that are more tendentious than Ritzer is willing to admit. What the author of *The McDonaldization of Society* fails to observe is that the deployment of the system produces unpredictable conditions which call for a special attention not only to the reproduction of the system, but also the movement of its elements. Systems theory teaches us that the continuity of the system does not reside in its identity but in the relation of its elements to their environment. Capitalism is an inherently unstable system which engenders a continuous interplay of its elements; this play of elements, however, is not without consequences—in attenuating its internal contradictions and replacing its elements, the system transforms itself. The system feeds, as it were, on its own problems, but in the process it evolves and changes. To fail to acknowledge this basic premise is to characterize postmodernity as yet another iron cage.

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