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STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE AND EAST
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RESISTANCE TO RATIONALIZATION, A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE
AND EAST VILLAGE POETS

by

JEFFREY A. HALLEY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
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1978

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Abstract

RESISTANCE TO RATIONALIZATION, A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE
AND EAST VILLAGE POETS

by

Jeffrey A. Halley

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This study is concerned with rationalization, legitimation, and resistance within the contexts of contemporary and past artistic movements. It investigates the development of and forms of resistance to instrumental rationalization, on the following assumptions: (1) instrumental rationalization inevitably engages resistance or counter-activity; (2) resistance takes place in the form of a history involving concrete stages of an increasingly concrete and self-conscious project; (3) this history and project can profitably be studied as an ideological transformation in which the disenchantment of the rationalized world is confronted with an ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment. The abstract movement from disenchantment to delegitimation and reenchantment that characterizes this transformation is

identified initially within this study by an interpretation of the writings of the European avant-garde. The concrete representation of this movement is established in an ethnographic and interpretative analysis of a group of poets living and writing in New York's East Village in the 1960's. This concrete transformation of disenchantment appears as a series of dialectically related cultural, psychedelic, and everyday practices. Specifically, this consists of and is organized as a succession of stages that involve, in order, (1) social and economic breaks with the past, (2) the use of psychedelic drugs to radically alter the relationship between consciousness and language, (3) the articulation within non-serial aesthetic structures (primarily poetry) of a radical rejection of rationalized action and a vision of a reenchantment of life, and (4) the establishment of a commune. Each of these stages appears both in relation to prior stages and as a set of tensions, or contradictions. The disintegration of each represents, then, the possibility of movement rather than simply failure. The study argues that resistance to rationalization is a feature of the implementation of rationalization within structures of domination. Therefore it is enmeshed in the very processes and consequences it confronts. This is its dialectic. The progress of resistance is, to a great extent, the progress of a self-clarification and the establishment of a project within which contradictions re-emerge as concrete problems and possibilities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments.	vi
Chapter 1. Introduction: Theory of Rationalization and Resistance.	1

PART ONE

ARTICULATING DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT:

THE AVANT-GARDE'S HISTORICAL RESISTANCE

Prologue: A Model of Delegitimation and Reenchantment .	33
Chapter 2. Negating Hierarchy.	39
Chapter 3. Negating Time	73
Chapter 4. Negating Means/Ends Relationships	78
Chapter 5. Negating Objectivity.	90
Conclusion to Part One	95

PART TWO

DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT:

EAST VILLAGE POETS

Prologue: Project and Observer.	99
Chapter 6. First Steps: Breaks with the Past and Psychedelic Practices	102
Chapter 7. The Poetry Group: Ideology Concretized in Art.	148

Chapter 8. The Commune Stage: The Contradictions of Living Out Continuous Reenchantment	191
Chapter 9. Conclusion: Resistance to Rationalization in Theory and Practice.	216
Bibliography	227

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Conceptual Model of Features of Ideology of Delegitimation and Reenchantment.	32
Table 2.	Degree of Intermarriage Among East Village Poets.	114

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THEORY OF RATIONALIZATION
AND RESISTANCE

This interpretive study grows out of a five-year observation of a group of young American poets. Part Two examines the growth and development of their activities in the counter-culture of the 1960s from their early involvement in New York's East Village through their move to communal life in northern New Hampshire.

As I followed this group over time, their efforts seemed to be at variance with most analyses of the sociological literature that treat these counter-culture activities as examples of deviance.¹ Rather, my association suggests that something more was involved. First, it suggests that their activities had ideological significance, in the sense that they criticize domination and justify resistance to it. Still more, contact with these people suggests that their activities can be understood as a concrete resistance to the rationalization of modern life that Max Weber and the Frankfurt School of critical sociology have written about. Therefore, the relevant literature for our study deals with theoretical questions of rationalization, legitimation of rationalization, and the forms of resistance to rationalization that develop.

Accordingly, in this introductory chapter, I will discuss the problem of rationalization and resistance as it pertains to this study. In addition, I will discuss how several theorists view the possibility of resistance to rationalization in modern cultural movements.

Part One extends this concern more systematically. There I develop a theoretical model of the process of resistance to rationalization, drawing on data from the European avant-garde. I then examine each major feature of the avant-garde's historical resistance.

In Part Two, I turn to this group of East Village poets I observed closely. By means of a case study, I examine the growth and development of the activities of these 1960s poets as they resist the pervasive rationalization of modern life. This case study will also display the historical working out of the problems any group faces in an ongoing and more total attempt to resist what Weber has called "the iron cage."

Rationalization and Resistance

Central to this study is the line of critical analysis from Max Weber, through Georg Lukacs, to the theorists of the Frankfurt school. All these social critics are concerned with the problem of rationalization as, ultimately, a form of domination in our time. In this section I would like to discuss this problem of rationalization and the resistance that arises to it.

Max Weber characterized as the fate of the western world a movement towards formal rationality. Formal rationality orients action to abstract, formal rules and norms that are totally impersonal. He saw the basis of this new rationalization in bureaucracy and technology.

Weber was concerned with rationalization because he believed that formal rationality would pervade everyday life as a form of domination. What is irrational about rationalization is the raising of means to the place of ends. Therefore any substantive rationality, in the sense of action that embodies subjective human needs, is ruled out by this legal-rational form of domination.

In this sense, bureaucracy is rationalized domination. Weber saw that bureaucracy increasingly specializes the division of labor, centralizes authority, and creates a new source of legitimacy for the bourgeoisie itself. This new legitimacy extended to all domains of society as the development of a legal-rational culture emphasized impersonal social relations, instrumental norms, routine work procedures, an impersonal market, obedience to authority, and professionalism.

Weber thus saw this rationalization process as a new form of domination available to political elites, which would secure for them a fragmented, depoliticized, and loyal population.

At the conclusion of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Weber summarizes a trend of routinization and the denial of substantive rationality, the loss of

community, the mysterious, and the sacred, which he calls the disenchantment of the world. I quote more fully Weber's crucial complaint:

The puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly mentality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production to which today determine the lives of all individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burst. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only be on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage. . . .

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or whether there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."²

Note here that disenchantment articulates a cultural dimension. Weber finds that rationalization pervades the production and reproduction of all spheres of life.

And further, Weber is clearly critical of disenchantment, yet he is fatalistic about the ultimate outcome: the end result of formal rationality is the iron cage.

But Weber was also aware of the unintended consequences of disenchantment, that rationalization produced problems and resistance. Thus substantive rationality, expressed as the desire to satisfy subjectively felt needs, keeps recurring in opposition to formal rationality.³ Most notably for my

study, he discusses the possibility of a reenchantment, locating some of these counterforces in the esthetic⁴ and the erotic. For example, of the latter he writes:

The erotic relation seems to offer the unsurpassable peak of the fulfillment of the request of love in the direct fusion of the souls of one another. The boundless giving of oneself is as radical as possible in its opposition to all functionality, rationality, and generality.⁵

Suggestive for this study as well is his examination of spontaneous play and intense interpersonal communal efforts to give radical opposition to the trend of disenchantment.⁶

Yet elsewhere he is skeptical of these countertrends.⁷ However suggestive his speculations may be, this resistance is clearly a marginal concern for Weber. He remains unshaken in his pessimistic belief about the outcome of rationalization, viewing it as the fate of the western world.

One reason for this stems from Weber's own ideal type method, where he separates fact from value, thereby treating his concepts as free from valuations. He thus reduces reason to formal rationality. For, although "formal and substantive rationality are always in principle in conflict"⁸ they clash within the rationalized world of domination. Hence Weber takes for granted the very rationality he lays bare,⁹ and allows no real place for an analysis of subjective interests that can resist rationalization.

Weber's seminal development of the problem of rationalization as domination was filled out and adumbrated by the cultural marxism of Georg Lukacs and the Frankfurt school. Gerog Lukacs¹⁰ wrestles with the problem of domination in

the form of alienation and reification. In line with Marx's analysis of the commodity,¹¹ Lukacs sees that in a capitalist system all human relationships are reduced to the function of the exchange of commodities. This fetish character of commodities means that they take on a life of their own, over and against their producers; they become thinglike, or, in his terms, reified. Thus reification implies in Marx's terms that people become reduced to their market relations, as their labor power is bought and sold as a thing. Exchange value dominates use value. And in Weber's terms reification is the domination of formal rationality over substantive rationality. Thus for Lukacs reification signifies the increased calculability of formal rationality that Weber felt led to the disenchantment of the world.

But Lukacs criticizes Weber here for depicting the growth of formal rationality as neutral, fated, and part of the development of a broad process of rationalization in the West. Rather, Lukacs' concept of reification calls attention to the fact that rationalization is not autonomous, but has its origins in the growth and development of capitalism. For example, the development of bureaucracy and the increased division of labor allows for the growth of the capitalist economy. Therefore rationalization is not an independent force, but is an extension of capitalist rationality.

The theorists of the Frankfurt school extend and deepen Lukacs's formulation of reification by stressing the historical, ideological, and dialectical nature of

rationalization. Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas all stress that rationalization is not simply development, but the legitimation of domination in our time.

For example, Horkheimer and Adorno, in The Dialectic of Enlightenment,¹² argue that instrumental reason, in the sense of knowledge in the technical control of nature, has eclipsed a practical reason that could guide people's emancipatory interests. The technical domination of nature includes the domination of humanity. In Adorno's terms, the growth of instrumental means-ends rationality ends in the "totally administered" society.

And Marcuse criticizes Weber on the same grounds, for Weber's notion of rationalization forgets that instrumental rationalization is capitalist rationalization:

. . .the very concept of technical reason is perhaps ideological. Not only the application of technology but technology itself is domination (of nature and men) --methodological, scientific, calculated, calculating control. Specific purposes and interests of domination are not foisted upon technology "subsequently" and from the outside; they enter into the very construction of the technical apparatus. Technology is always a historical-social project: in it is projected what a society and its ruling interests intend to do with men and things. Such a "purpose" of domination is "substantive" and to this extent belongs to the very form of technical reason.¹³

Marcuse's concept of "one-dimensional society" expresses the alarming degree to which instrumental rationality has developed as a form of domination, becoming "totalitarian to the extent to which it determines not only the socially needed occupations, skills, and attitudes, but also individual needs and aspirations."¹⁴ Thus as technology

institutes more and more effective modes of social control, it attempts to block the dialectic between instrumental and substantive rationalization.

But there is a crucial difference for this study between the positions of Horkheimer and Adorno, on the one hand, and Marcuse and Habermas, on the other. That difference is in the degree to which they keep the tension between instrumental rationalization and substantive rationalization.

Horkheimer and Adorno's position loses this tension in characterizing instrumental rationalization as a total system of domination. They could not shake the pessimism of Weber, possibly because of the trauma of fascism. Therefore, they do not develop the notion of a substantive resistance to rationalization.

In contrast, Marcuse and Habermas make an important contribution in that they leave the pessimism of Weber behind. They suggest that resistance to rationalization is neither irrational, primitive, or deviant behavior, nor totally eclipsed by instrumental rationalization, but is a pervasive and recurrent feature of late capitalism. They thus restore the tension between instrumental and substantive reason by stressing that social groups are involved in an ongoing critique of instrumental rationalization itself.

Marcuse's suggestive work, An Essay on Liberation,¹⁵ sees new emancipatory needs arising in late capitalism that resist technical rationality. He discusses the

development of a new sensibility, esthetic, language, and imagination, that have begun to contest the growing forms of domination.

And, most notably, Habermas speaks of the development of a critical interest. He counterposes "work," or instrumental action, which is interested in the domination of nature and man, to "interaction," or communicative action, concerned with communication without the desire for domination. Habermas believes that there is a human interest in emancipation, and that undistorted communication and reflection can be a force toward overcoming instrumental domination.¹⁶

Regardless of the details of these two positions, they are important for this study in that each of them posits a recovery of human needs and interests. They are a theoretical advance in that they revive the possibility of a practical or substantive reason that can oppose instrumental reason. In a world dominated by instrumental rationality, then, this new formulation of the problem suggests that human freedom can be recovered through activities which resist rationalization.

Marcuse and Habermas suggest that the domain of art, among others, has a special role in this process of resisting rationalization. As Habermas puts it:

Only bourgeois art . . . has taken up positions on behalf of the victims of bourgeois rationalization. . . . I refer here to the desire for a mimetic relation with nature; the need for living together in solidarity

outside the group egoism of the immediate family; the longing for the happiness of a communicative experience exempt from the imperatives of purposive rationality; and giving scope to imagination as well as spontaneity. Bourgeois art . . . collected residual needs that could find no satisfaction within the "system of needs." Thus . . . art and aesthetics (from Schiller to Marcuse) are explosive ingredients built into the bourgeois ideology.¹⁷

But how does this actually come about? So far sociological literature has focused little on the forms of resistance to rationalization. One of the main theoretical problems of this study is to show how a set of activities, programmatic statements, and products that I have observed in this group of counter-cultural artists can be understood as an attempt to resist the increasingly rationalized and reified world that Weber and the Frankfurt school spoke about.

I expect to find a line of development in this group that displays a commitment to activities which resist rationalization. If this can be shown, I will feel justified in arguing that one of the crucial features of activities in the counter-culture is a movement toward delegitimation of rationality.

Central to my conceptualization of rationalization and resistance is the notion of ideology. When Marx uses the term ideology, in most cases he is speaking of bourgeois ideology. That is, he recognizes that the term is polemical and implies a position within a conflict. Thus when we speak of ideology we recognize that there is a struggle between the dominant ideology and the ideology of resistance,

that they come in pairs.

This view of ideology allows one to contrast control with resistance to control. Towards that end, in this chapter I have contrasted notions of instrumental rationalization, as an ideology of control, with practical or substantive rationalization, which means that we can reflect on our constraints and resist control. For ideologies that resist control, I will use the term counter-ideology.

Both Marx and Karl Korsch stress that ideology is rooted in practice. In fact, Marx characterized as ideological the very abstraction of ideas from practice in the dominant ideology, which gives these ideas an autonomous appearance.¹⁸ Ideology, whether dominant or counter-ideology, cannot be separated from the practices of which it is part.

A number of recent theorists have treated ideology in this manner, as rooted in practice.¹⁹ For example, in terms of the dominant ideology, Bourdieu and Balibar respectively link artistic consumption and literary practices to the educational institutions and the state.²⁰ And I have earlier noted that for Habermas, the practices of avant-garde art are counter-ideological in that they resist rationalization.

Turning to this counter-ideology of the avant-garde, their critical practice attacks the apparent rationality of modern social life. Further, counter-ideology has both a negative and a positive side: on one hand, it challenges instrumental rationalization, on the other, it puts forward a vision of social change.²¹ The negative side I see as one

of delegitimation of instrumental rationality, and the positive one as a reintegration or reenchantment of the world.

Summing up, we have a unitary ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment. This counter-ideology has two sides, the negative one of delegitimation, and the positive one of reenchantment.

I have suggested that art is a domain that has a special role in resisting rationalization. If we look at the history of avant-garde art as an example of critical ideology, we find that delegitimation of rationality takes a variety of forms, such as: radical refusal, disaffiliation, deconstitution of authority, and negation of "meaning," "rationality," and standard language use, along with special subsidiary practices such as drug use and "deviant" activities.

And within the same avant-garde cultural practice, there is much emphasis on the positive side of this ideology of resistance to rationalization, that which I call the reenchantment of the world. I stress reenchantment in the sense of rediscovering and rebuilding some vision of unity and integration. As this study illustrates, we find an emphasis on ecstatic or special states, a denial of utilitarian interest, a search for unity.

However, the process of struggling against instrumental rationalization takes the form of a life history with concrete steps. That is, this critical ideology is part of an ongoing critical practice, one that is not developed immediately, but transpires over time. Hence, I will examine the

various forms of delegitimation and reenchantment that develop at each stage of a group's life history.

This life history of the group can best be conceptualized as stages in a developing project. I derive the concept of project from recent works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Alfred Willener.²² It underscores that groups are engaged in practical activity, by means of work and action, that strives to go beyond their given situation.

Sartre defines the project in the same sense as we have defined a counter-ideology, as having essentially negative and positive sides:

Starting with the project, we define a double simultaneous relationship. In relation to the given, the praxis is negativity; but what is always involved is the negation of a negation. In relation to the object aimed at, praxis is positivity, but this positivity opens onto the "non-existent," to what has not yet been. A flight and a leap ahead, at once a refusal and a realization, the project retains and unveils the surpassed reality which is refused by the very movement which surpassed it.²³

This concept of project lets us see people as active agents, not as mere objects. Hence such active agents, or actors, produce or construct their ideology. We can thus get a sense of historical transition by observing and analyzing how actors work through the practical conflicts they face.

In my study, then, the section on East Village poets has been presented in the order in which transition occurred. Through following this chronology the reader can recapitulate the project, meaning here the production and transformation of the ideology of the group. We should note that the stages of the project are reflexive, that is, consciously

produced by the actors' intent to change themselves.

We examine the succession of stages that pushed the project of the group along, and show the logic of its development. Each stage produced problems and conflicts in their resistance to instrumental rationality. These conflicts reveal how the group was developing and express the limits of their development. For resistance to rationalization does not occur in a vacuum, but develops in the midst of domination itself. Therefore, the project of delegitimation and reenchancement is laden with the very contradictions that the group is trying to overcome. In exploring their history, then, I will be exploring the history of their troubles.

And further, the experience of intensity itself, the very intensity of group involvement in an expressionistic movement, acts to exhaust the possibilities of each stage, and pushes the group on to the next formation.

Cultural Production as a Liberating Practice

In addition to the theoretical base of rationalization and resistance that I have developed, there are a number of figures who take these themes further. Particularly, in avant-garde art and literature, the problem of rationalization and resistance is made the thesis of both work and discussion of work. In the following section I will discuss this more tangible concern which underlies my study. As these authors try to show, cultural production can

provide a basis for a liberating practice, in that it takes a critical stance toward the development of alienation, reification, and rationalization of late capitalism.

No one speaks more to this problem than does Walter Benjamin. In fact, the unifying theme in all of his work is a search on modern art for techniques which would break objects from their reified spell as commodities. The following examples all share this intention to make this break, or in other terms, to delegitimize instrumental rationality. Note that this rationality is conceived as a false whole of domination. For Benjamin and others, these liberating practices champion the fragment, the collage, the particular, in order to attack this generalized and dominating rationality.

Therefore, he points to Baudelaire's use of gambling, chance, strolling in the city, and the literary device of "correspondences," as all giving the element of shock that detaches the artist from the context of experience. Like Simmel, Benjamin argues that the shocks of contact with the 19th century metropolitan masses gave rise to a new subjectivity; the stroller in the city takes it all in, creatively recombining the fragments, "like a kaleidoscope equipped with a consciousness."²⁴ Similarly, Baudelaire's "correspondences" attack the congealed language of the bourgeoisie by the shock of new juxtapositions of images. In Benjamin's essay on surrealism, the loss of self

in the ecstasy of language, hashish use, and love breaks through the conventions of the bourgeois individual and unleashes a new public of collective need. Extending Baudelaire's poetic techniques, the use by surrealism of chance and imaginary combinations of words releases us from the automatism of language and points to new emancipatory possibilities.

Benjamin further develops this notion of the part as a liberating agent of the reified whole. He was one of the first to see that German fascism developed new forms of total domination through the mobilizing power of the new electronic media. He called this false, mystified whole in art "the aura."

The aura is the dead weight of tradition that mystically halos a work of art, lending it a quasi-religious authority. The museum becomes a cultish shrine, and bourgeois art develops a fetishistic character. Fascist art wanted to intensify the aura by estheticizing and mystifying politics, dramatically exemplified by the Nazi movie, "Triumph of Will."

For Benjamin, intensification of the aura is the basis of the cult of the Fuehrer and leads to war. As the Italian fascist Marinetti states as one of the principles of his futuristic esthetic, "War is beautiful because it initiates the dream of metalization of the human body."²⁵ Benjamin proposes, on the contrary, to demystify the aura by politicizing art. His model here is the theater of his friend

Bertolt Brecht, which lays bare the device, reveals rather than mystifies.²⁶ In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin develops the position that the new techniques of photomontage and reproducibility of art have dealienating possibilities. Like dada's juxtaposition of objects, the process of reproduction in art breaks the aura by separating the art object from its traditional framework.²⁷

Benjamin is aware, however, of contradictions in the artistic practice of the avant-garde. He notes that even as new poetic techniques attacked the reified world, they are nonetheless developed in a literary market that functions to put other poets in the shade.²⁸ In other words, even as avant-garde art functions to resist commodification, it becomes simultaneously a new marketable commodity. One can make the same comment about dada's entry into the museum; an art conceived as the rejection of art becomes absorbed by the market.

Theodor Adorno, another major writer on the problem and affiliated with the Frankfurt Institute, disagrees with Benjamin. He characterizes the breakdown of the aura as a regression and intensification of the fetishism of commodities rather than an advance. Adorno thus shares the same concern for the dealienation of art as Benjamin, but is more sensitive to the increasingly "administered" nature of capitalist instrumental rationalization. As he writes, the culture industry:

demonstrates the regression of enlightenment to ideology which finds its typical expression in cinema and radio. Here enlightenment consists above all in the calculation of effectiveness and of the techniques of production and distribution; in accordance with its content, ideology expends itself in the idolization of given existence and of the power which controls technology.²⁹

Commercial music and music in advertising share this fetishistic character, through which our sense of hearing regresses in the service of commodities.³⁰

In this context the notable work of Adorno on modern music can be better related to this chapter's topic. In terms of cultural production as a liberating practice, Adorno argues that Schoenberg's music makes great demands on the listener and resists easily assimilable melodies. Resisting the increasingly hegemonic culture industry, this is progressive precisely in its break with reified forms. Modern art's vocation, which in capitalist society appears in the form of the commodity, is precisely to resist and undercut its commodity nature. To take another example, commenting on Baudelaire's artistic technique of "correspondences," Adorno notes that the paradigm of all modern art's subsequent liberating attempts is that of a break with form:

by occluding the division between different realms of sense perception, they simultaneously try to efface the rigid classification of different kinds of objects, as it is brought about under the practical requirements of industrial civilization. They rebel against reification.³¹

Here, as with his comment that "the whole is untrue," Adorno is attacking the administered world of instrumental rationality as totalitarian. Along with Benjamin, he thus sees,

in art as in philosophy, that the fragment, the collage, the particular can be a force for dereification. For Adorno, then, in a world increasingly dominated by instrumental reason, art preserves a moment of resistance to alienation, and offers a vision of the possibility of a different and unalienated future existence.

In sum, Benjamin and Adorno both conclude that the artistic attack on formal rationality can become absorbed as a marketable commodity. Polony and Sanguinetti have both explicated this point to the extreme, arguing that the artwork expresses only the formal negation of commodification. The work of art is only the possibility of critique, it leaves what is criticized untouched. Thus a liberating practice seems to accomplish nothing and therefore lacks any real historical content.³² In this way, the work of art readily becomes a marketable commodity, best exemplified by dada, now found only in the museum.

Yet, in terms of cultural production, this is a false conceptualization. Polony and Sanguinetti lose sight of the fact that the process of commodification and capital is a dilemma facing every liberating activity. Even though liberating acts reproduce the logic of capital, they do so on a different level. A movement that temporarily dislocates language from objects puts the whole problem of socialization for the market in a historically new form--a form that does challenge and resist the very society of which it is a part.

For example, Willener argues that crucial to the French revolt of May 1968 was a particular juncture between politics and culture. Dada, surrealism, free jazz, marxism, and anarchism surfaced in "cultural politicization." Together, they amounted to a total contestation of the established social order.³³

Likewise, Julia Kristeva analyzes the transgressive nature of the avant-garde as it resists the logic of capital. Utilizing elements of semiology, marxism, and structuralism, her object of study is this phenomenon of resistance to conventional forms of rationality in poetic practice.³⁴ The avant-garde text is difficult precisely in its strangeness, in its inability to be thought of within the given conceptual system, and this violation lays bare the limits of that system. Hence Kristeva sees poetry as a practice, a production. In a quest similar to that of Habermas, she derives from Marx a concept of production prior to exchange, instrumentality, or meaning; both point to a pre-communicative activity based on Freud's notion of dreamwork.

Central to my own study is Kristeva's view of the specific production of the avant-garde as political: its practice is the delegitimation of the structure of bourgeois rationality. Her analysis of Mallarmé argues that his poetic practice pulverizes or devalues meaning, and moves towards a language of music.³⁵ And further, she states that the avant-garde's

. . . practice, which, in language, is developed as a text, contests, in their very economy, the

symbolic and/or social finitudes and thus rejoins social revolution, this latter being nothing of the kind if it is not a revolution of the subject.³⁶

Hence the liberating practice of the avant-garde, in producing a text, or writing, that challenges the domination of instrumental rationality, also contests the repression of the subject or individual in society.

Kristeva believes, along with the European avant-garde, that the stable sense of self is repressive and part of the entire system of domination in late capitalism. For example, in America, the ideological strength of the concept of the individual, characterized instrumentally as the "rational" consumer, seems to intensify precisely as the subject is further alienated from historical action. At issue, therefore, is the question: How is it possible to recover a critical interest in the sense of action that embodies human needs, in the face of the increasing domination of the subject?

For my study, then, Kristeva suggests that the unity of the self in late capitalism is a false and repressive unity. And she demonstrates that the political practice of the avant-garde is to negate this repressive and ideological unitary subject, to "disrupt the status of the subject, and consequently the individual, in the bourgeois system."³⁷

In this manner, the avant-garde's practice is to do textual work on the subject, in order to reveal the ideological and reified nature of both sides of the totality of what were the notions of self/society. As Kristeva

puts it:

Through a specific practice which touches upon the very mechanism of language (in Mallarmé, Joyce, Artaud) or the mythic or religious systems of reproduction (Lautreaumont, Bataille), the "literary avant-garde" confronts society--even if only on its fringes--with a subject in process, assailing all of the stases of a unitary subject. The avant-garde thus assails closed ideological systems (religions), but also social structures of domination (the state), and accomplishes a revolution . . . (through) this "schizophrenic" process of avant-garde activity. . . .³⁸

Kristeva's thesis is that this subject in process, or "de-centered subject," can regain a substantive or practical rationality, that is, can seek to gratify human needs beyond a system of means-ends rationality.

Jean Baudrillard also grapples with the problem of what he calls "terrorist rationality" and resistance to it. Baudrillard sees that the trajectory of modern art, from Baudelaire through surrealism to the present, has tried to dereify --to make problematic what the status quo treats as given-- by fragmenting the rationality of the whole. One of the decisive methods of dereification has been to separate words from concepts, signifier from signified. This has entailed as well an attack on the repressive unity of the 19th century bourgeois ego.

The end of the tonal system in music and the dissolution of perspective in painting are, in Baudrillard's terms, the loss of referentials to reality. But this very separation of signifier from signified becomes part of the development of commodification, for language becomes fractured,

autonomous, and beyond stable reference: "The code no longer refers back to any subjective or objective reality, but to its own logic . . . all reality is a place of . . . manipulation."³⁹

Thus, in late capitalism, what should be the final reference of a product, its use value, disappears. Consumption loses its original interest in human need, and becomes manipulated by the demands of the system of production. Instrumental rationalization plans all socialization through manipulation, the most notable example seen in advertising. And further, this manipulation of symbols is systematized into a code. This code, by collapsing the signified into the signifier, attempts to command acceptance by leaving no room for criticism or judgment, seen in the statements, "you are in the pepsi generation," or, "we are in the Free World."⁴⁰

The manipulation of consumption through the "code" is the key to the continuance of capitalism for Baudrillard; the locus of domination shifts from the political economy of production to the political economy of the sign. The code exerts a "terrorist rationality," because it marks off whole groups, producing "the radical distinction of the masculine and the sexual objectification of the feminine," the factory, asylum and the ghetto, and the "racial" domination of social groups.⁴¹

Under these circumstances, the only possibility of emancipation is through the abolition of the code by its

victims. This entails more than a revolt against exploitation, but an attack on the "capitalist social reality principle" itself.⁴²

In terms of a liberating practice, the problem with this solution is that it implies that the cultural code is in fact beyond human production and social relations. But, on the contrary, I stress in this thesis that a critical interest always and recurrently develops to resist instrumental rationality. Therefore, domination in late capitalism can never be total; it always generates oppositional needs and interests. The assertion of desire in the midst of domination is a feature of everyday life that preserves the possibility of critique.

Deleuze and Guattari⁴³ develop this position of desire recurring in the midst of domination. And they share Julia Kristeva's position that the self in late capitalism is a false and repressive unity that serves the interests of rationalization. A liberating practice, therefore, can only occur when human needs are generated beyond the enclosure of the bourgeois self. The self, then, must be "decentered."

The strategy to negate the system of instrumental rationalization follows Benjamin and Adorno's emphasis on the power of the particular or the fragment to attack the domination of the whole. In this case, it is the repressive sense of self which is fragmented, in order to generate what Deleuze and Guattari call "flows of desire."

The model for cultural practice is, then, the schizophrenic, the "guy who, for whatever reasons, has been touched off by a desiring flow which threatens the social order."⁴⁴ This "schizophrenic" flow attacks the hierarchy, system, and uniformity of instrumental rationality, and prizes instead mobility, proliferation, and multiplicity as a means of delegitimizing this rationality. Through these flows of desire, then, a critical interest can be regenerated.

Conclusion

Regardless of the details of the positions of these theorists, each suggests the possibility of cultural production as a liberating practice. Each suggests certain kinds of resistance that recurs in response to the domination of instrumental rationalization. And each argues that a liberating practice arises from a critical interest in ending alienation, reification--in short--capitalist instrumental rationalization.⁴⁵

I would like to conclude by briefly grouping together two main clues these authors give us as to how in cultural practice a liberating critique is accomplished.

For one, they have grappled with the dilemma that avant-garde art exists as a commodity and within the larger commodity world, yet it is one that seems to resist that very commodification of which it is a part.

And finally, in order to delegitimize a total and systemic instrumental rationality, these authors stress the

part, the fragmentation of the whole, and the decentering of the self.

NOTES

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¹²Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972).

¹³Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber," in H. Marcuse, Negations: Essays in Critical Theory, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 223.

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³⁶Julia Kristeva, "The Subject in Signifying Practice," Semiotexte 1 (1975), 3:26.

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³⁹Jean Baudrillard, The Mirror of Production, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1975), pp. 127-28.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 10.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 135.

⁴²Ibid., p. 134.

⁴³Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

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PART ONE

ARTICULATING DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT:
THE AVANT-GARDE'S HISTORICAL RESISTANCE

PROLOGUE

A MODEL OF DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT

In this prologue, I would like to develop a formal model of the features of delegitimation and reenchantment. I have suggested, in Chapter 1, that avant-garde art is one important domain that resists the pervasive rationalization of modern life. These practices of resistance can be shown to form a structure. After I construct a conceptual model, the four following chapters in this section, Part One, will examine each of the four features.

In constructing a model of delegitimation and reenchantment, the question I ask here is: How are these cultural practices of resistance to rationalization carried out by the European avant-garde artists?

Max Weber sets the stage for us in his characterization of radical resistance to the disenchantment of the world as "opposition to all functionality, rationality, and generality."¹ Thus he points to the essential element of delegitimation as resisting the trend toward instrumental rationalization.

Certain artists of the European avant-garde have developed self-conscious stances, programs, and positions that are ideological in the sense that they justify their position,

and attack the generalized rationality that Weber describes.

First, I would like to develop an idea of what any legitimation of an order of instrumental rationality requires. Then, I shall examine what is required to delegitimize that rationality. Lastly, I shall propose that each delegitimizing phase is linked to a consequent reenchantment, since, basically, this is a unitary ideology with two poles.

The following table will assist the reader as I develop these three steps for the model. Table I presents a conceptual model of features of this ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment.

TABLE I
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF FEATURES OF IDEOLOGY
OF DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT

Features	Delegitimizing Phase	Reenchanting Phase
1. Negating hierarchy	Particularization through separation of words and meaning	Synesthesia, becoming "seer," silence
2. Negating directionality in time	Annihilation of time	Presentness, simultaneity
3. Negating means/ends relationships	Randomization, separation of activity from goal	Infinite, acausal synchronicity
4. Negating objectivity	Relativity of all values	Imagination, open possibilities

Features of Legitimation

Ideologies legitimate or attack that legitimation.

"Legitimation within a formally rational order" means that one knows oneself and others within a language of action, that is, goal directed activity. And legitimation also demands an order in time, and an objective structure.

I propose that, for the social world of universalizing rationality to be accepted, the following four features of legitimation must be accomplished:

1. A hierarchization of goals, by its very inclusiveness, disciplines particular interests, and establishes for practice a consensus that denies conflict.

2. Goals are ordered in time as accomplishments or failures. This imposes a dimension of growth or regression, a universalistic scale for evaluating action.

3. Human conduct is seen in terms of concrete goals and goal direction, that is, in terms of a rationality of means and ends.

4. The objectification and universalization of these criteria occur by virtue of and within a language that is independent of particular speakers, that is, an objective and reliable language of reification.

These are the four features necessary for any legitimation of the social order.

Features of Delegitimation

Our question now is: How do these avant-garde artists, whose privileged domains are language and the visual arts,

accomplish a delegitimation of rationality? We recall the art critics who, in the form of an epithet, labeled the new artists of their time "impressionists," "fauves" (wild men), and "cubists." These critics immediately perceived the accomplished delegitimation in what was concretely violated, and the artists eagerly embraced these epithets in recognition of their delegitimizing function.

To delegitimize this rationality, then, is to deny the fundamental dialectical aspect of rationality: the distinction between the particular and the universal. Thus the attack on rationality is to particularize, and the dialectic of the attack is to turn the tables. Particularizing is the negation of rationality.

More specifically, in terms of the above four features of legitimation, to delegitimize is to break with each of these. For these artists to accomplish delegitimation, then, we have found the following four features (in table I, see Features, and Delegitimizing Phase):

1. Particularization. The negation of hierarchy is accomplished by a segregation of elements. Language, thought, and action are broken down into discrete elements. In this way, they cannot be reconstructed into an overall design. I have found particularization effected through a separation of words and language, which distorts or undermines taken-for-granted meaning.

2. Annihilation of time. Delegitimation of directionality in time is accomplished by a negation of time.

3. Randomization. Delegitimation of means/ends rationality is accomplished by the selection of material or events at random. This method goes far to separate activities from set goals.

4. Subjectivity. Objectivity is negated by an intense emphasis on the subjective relativity of all values.

Features of Delegitimation and Reenchantment

Delegitimation and reenchantment are two moments of a unitary ideology. Along with the radically destructive moment of delegitimation, there is a reenchanting moment which emphasizes reconstruction and restoration of a new unity.²

Tracing these linkages in the European avant-garde, I have found the following four features of delegitimation and reenchantment (see table I, Delegitimizing Phase, and Reenchanting Phase):

1. Particularization, through separation of words and "meaning" accomplishes the state of synesthesia, becoming a "seer," and mystical silence--in short, a state of mystical reintegration.

2. Annihilation of time leads to presentness and simultaneity.

3. Randomization accomplishes a perceived "synchronicity" and liberation from "causality."

4. The cumulative and interpenetrating effect of the above features point to intense subjectivity, expressed in

the relativity of all values, which unleash imagination, and allow "everything to be possible."

Having developed a model of features of delegitimation and reenchantment, we can now turn our attention in this section, Part One, to the articulation of each feature in the European avant-garde.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 2

NEGATING HIERARCHY

This chapter, *Negating Hierarchy*, explores the articulation of a first feature of the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment.

To break with instrumental rationalization, these artists negate and thereby demonstrate the coercion of a hierarchy which, by its very inclusiveness, denies conflict and preserves a consensus. Faced with this total system perceived as a dominating force, the European avant-garde attempted to fragment the overall system into particulars. Language, thought and action are broken down into discrete elements, so that they cannot be reconstructed into an overall design.

As a method used by these avant-garde artists, particularization separates words from the meaning they represent and therefore subverts the false unities for which meaning has become a system. This is its delegitimizing function. The reenchanting result, we will note in this chapter, is that the particulars become reintegrated into a new, mystical design. Thus, in the terms of the poets and artists in this chapter, through particularization, one arrives at the reenchanting state; one becomes a "seer."

Some of the major artists who articulate this process are Novalis, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Richter, Breton, Artaud, and Michaux. They are examined in historical order.

Particularization of Language in Novalis

The German romantic poetry of Novalis provides the key to this kind of particularization that leads toward a mystic reintegration. He states.

There is something strange in the acts of writing and speaking . . . the ridiculous and amazing mistake people make is to believe they use words in relation to things. They are unaware of the nature of language--which is to be its own and only concern, making it so fertile and splendid a mystery. When someone talks just for the sake of talking, he is saying the most original and truthful thing he can say.¹

He sees the nature of language, then, in a separate domain from those things it purportably represents. A separation of words from things leads us to the mysterious. Wrenched out of context, the familiar becomes mysterious and enchanting. Or, as Novalis says: "Speaking for the sake of speaking is the formula for deliverance."² By fragmenting language, we are led to the reenchanting state. We will note this formula for our analysis of "rapping" in Part Two. Novalis gives us the prescription for this romanticism:

The world must be romanticized . . . by giving a lofty meaning to the commonplace, a mysterious appearance to the ordinary, the dignity of the unknown to what is known, the semblance of infinity to the finite. . . .³

Or compare with Shelley in The Defence of Poetry: "Poetry . . . makes familiar objects appear as if they were not familiar."⁴ Romanticism, then, particularizes by lifting meaning out of context. Anticipating the concept of the unconscious and automatic writing, Novalis believes that this magic world can be reached only when the conscious is turned off and dreams are allowed to take over. The

domain of dreams is the model for this state of particularization. And so he suggests a new theory of art:

Stories without connection but with association, like dreams; poems merely melodious and full of beautiful-sounding words, but also entirely without meaning and connection, only a few verses comprehensible at most; all these things must be fragments of absolutely different things.⁵

This ideology of particularization becomes the accepted romantic theory of art. In this manner, this feeling of living in a broken world, a world of fragments, this flight from reality into association without sense or connection as a means of apprehending a mystical reality, all these ideas, proclaimed for the first time by the early Romantics, were later to become accepted artistic principles in the bourgeois world.⁶

Thus language, divorced from meaning leads to a total negation of meaning. "Speaking for the sake of speaking" makes us relocate the meaning of linguistic statements. Modern art forces us to abandon meaning, in the sense of references to entities outside of artwork. And if this meaning has been congealed or reified in the sense of becoming only exchange value, then the language of art, in breaking down language hierarchy, restores a sense of use value in referring only to itself.

Novalis' technique of particularization, then, is seminal to the subsequent avant-garde artists we will examine.

Particularization as "Defamiliarization"
in the Russian Formalists

Avant-garde poetry is a poetry of mysticism, which reaches the ineffable by negating the instrument of language, that is, by "particularizing" language. Following Novalis, modern art and its theories point to this process of particularization by making the familiar seem new and wondrous. For example, in modern literature, the Russian Formalist theory of defamiliarization uses this same idea of particularization of language as negating habitual perception to allow the new to break through, and, so to speak, cleanse perception. As Shklovsky quotes from Tolstoy:

I was cleaning a room and meandering about, approached the divan and couldn't remember whether or not I had dusted it. Since these movements are habitual and unconscious, I could not remember and felt that it was impossible to remember--so that if I had dusted it and forgot--that is, had acted unconsciously, then it was the same as if I had not. If some conscious person had been watching, then the fact could be established. If however, no one was looking, or looking on unconsciously, if the whole complex lives of many people to on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been. Art is in this context a way of restoring conscious experience, of breaking through deadening and mechanical habits of conduct, and allowing us to be reborn to the world. . . .⁷

This notion of defamiliarization, according to Jameson, "permits a new concept of literary history . . . one of history as a series of abrupt discontinuities, of ruptures with the past, where each new literary present is seen as a break with the dominant artistic canons of the generation immediately preceding."⁸ On the level of a theory of art, then, the Russian Formalists arrive at a theory of defamiliarization

similar to Novalis and the other major avant-garde figures we examine. The break with the old through defamiliarization allows a renewal of perception. This renewal of perception in modern poetry has been described as a mystical quest. Valery believes that modern poetry strives to

express an experience which is essentially ineffable; using language to express muteness. In contrast to prose writers, poets are engaged in subverting their own instrument and seeking to pass beyond it.⁹

Particularization of Language in Baudelaire's "Correspondences"

Baudelaire's "correspondences" create a state of synesthesia, a state of relating one sense to another. Put another way, they merge the senses and thus break down the given boundaries. And perfumes and odors particularly haunted him, perhaps because of their very intangibility. As he writes:

It is not only in dreams, and in the light delirium which precedes sleep, but also on wakening, that I hear music, that I discover an intimate analogy between colors, sounds and perfumes. The odor of red-brown marigolds produces above all a magic effect on me. It makes me fall into a profound reverie, and then I hear as if from afar the deep and solemn sounds of the oboe.

And in his analysis of the lyricism of Hugo, he wrote in

L'Art romantique:

Swedenborg . . . has taught us that . . . everything, form, movement, number, color, perfume, in the spiritual as in the natural world, is significant, reciprocal, conversely related, and corresponding.¹⁰

What we have here, then, is a practice that breaks down the rigid boundaries of the taken-for-granted world and attempts to make new connections. I interpret this

as a seminal practice of resistance to rationalization. As Adorno, speaking of Baudelaire, has indicated: "By including the division between different realms of sense perception, they simultaneously try to efface the rigid classification of different kinds of objects, as it is brought about under the practical requirements of industrial civilization. They rebel against reification."¹¹ The ineffable quest of correspondences is indicated by Baudelaire as everything related to everything. Thus we have a fundamental negation of form, coupled with a new transcendent unity, which reaches out beyond language.

Wagner also influenced the avant-garde poet's use of synesthesia. His "music dreams" aspired to a syncretism of the arts, where the phonetics of words depended on the chromatic relations of the song tones. In "Voyelles," Rimbaud followed his example, by giving each vowel a certain chromatic value. The impressionistic composer Debussy, on the other hand, structured his music so that it seemed to aspire to the condition of poetry or painting.¹²

Baudelaire's "correspondences" also demonstrate the reenchanting function of this merging of sense perception which he called "synesthesia." A notable example of this is his usage of the term "vast." For Baudelaire, this word expresses the highest degree of synthesis. He writes "the lyrical spirit takes strides that are as vast as synthesis, while the novelist's mind delights in analysis." And in a poem about hashish, Le paradis artificiels, he states "The

moral world opens up vast perspectives, filled with new clarities." Thus, throughout his work, Baudelaire speaks of a vast unity that always unites "dislocated riches." This particularizing of words and sensations enhances awareness and leads to a new unity, in which "the sense of existence is immensely increased."

Describing the resultant reenchanting state, Baudelaire wrote:

I felt free from the powers of gravity, and, through memory, succeeded in recapturing the extraordinary voluptuousness that pervades high places. Involuntarily I pictured to myself the delightful state of a man in the grip of a long daydream, in absolute solitude, but a solitude with an immense horizon and widely diffused light; in other words, immensity with no other setting than itself.¹³

He has given us an intense description of the transcendence so important in the development of avant-garde poetry. His words also demonstrate how the mechanism of particularization leads to that reenchanting state. By breaking down divisions, the "correspondences" intensify and refresh the senses, and, by reconnecting the pieces of the sensory world into a "vast unity," increase the sense of existence as well.

One writer has noted that the word vast is intensely vocal, in that it has "the power of the word," as Poe put it, and demands to be pronounced. In fact, in Baudelaire's system of poetics, the word evokes peace, calm and serenity, and by its power negates turmoil. In so doing, it opens up unlimited space.¹⁴ In this manner, the word "vast," with the reenchanting power it assumes when vocalized parallels

the function of the "mantra," that vocalized sound we will examine in Chapter 6.

In fact, there are similarities between Baudelaire's poems of "correspondences" and his writing on his psychedelic experiences. In an essay on the effects of hashish, he writes of a delegitimizing break with "the heavy darkness of . . . day to day existence." Then Baudelaire writes of the boundless fluidity of imagination and sense it creates. He experienced a torrential rush of words, and the transformative power of the correspondences, turning sounds into colors, color into music, and music into number.¹⁵

But the aim of synesthesia for Baudelaire was not only to reintegrate the senses, but also to delegitimize. One writer has stressed that synesthesia is not so much a mingling of sense perception as a fresh articulation and separation. In this sense synesthesia is an attack on the one-dimensionality of instrumental rationalization, which forestalls critique by establishing a consensus that denies conflict. Thus, the accepted bourgeois art of the day prized the pastel, the consonant, and the sentimental. This is precisely the point of Baudelaire's activities of "the great refusal," in his dandyism, sadomasochism, and blasphemy.¹⁶ As opposed to these reifications, contraries are now mingled or soiled with their dialectical opposite. In so doing the correspondences negate the given cultural hierarchization.

The Technique of "Voyant" in Rimbaud

From Rimbaud onward, avant-garde artists articulate the concept of "voyant," or seer, to express their negation of verbal-rational culture. "Deranging the senses" was Rimbaud's device for becoming a "voyant," or creating the enchanted state of "seer."

The concept of "voyant," in Buadelaire's Artificial Paradises meant the transformation of existing reality by its distortion, the re-creation of time and place, and an intense subjectivity conveyed by hashish.¹⁷ Actually, then, this formulation displays that it expresses virtually all the features of delegitimation and reenchantment.

Rimbaud extends this sense of the term in his famous definition of a visionary whose derangement is reasoned "The poet makes himself a seer by means of a long, immense, and reasoned derangement of all the senses."¹⁸ In other words, Rimbaud's subversion of the senses is an application of a critical reason to break the old forms and express the new. The task of the seer is to "inspect the invisible and to hear the unheard of."¹⁹ The poet as seer, then, tries to reach for a transformation of distorted communication in a manner not dissimilar from Habermas's programmatic intention.

The method of the "voyant" is best expressed in Rimbaud's poem The Drunken Boat. Here he particularizes language by unleashing associative fantasy, giving us a flight of language autonomous to meaning. Therefore, he

no longer "explains" experience in an instrumentally rational manner, but lets words become the reality, not the things they describe.²⁰ He rebels against the reification of language.

This shattering of language form reenchants. Thus Rimbaud said: "I ended up finding the disorder of my spirit sacred." And we are told that "The central metaphor of Le Bateau ivre equates intoxication with liberation: the boat is the drunken body (or mind) which travels on various imaginary fluids."²² Of the ecstasy of inventing and concealing a sensual language of correspondence, too, Rimbaud states:

I invented the color of the vowels. . . . I flattered myself on devising a poetic language accessible, one day or another, to all the senses . . . I withheld the translation . . . recorded the inexpressible . . . wrote down silences, nights, . . . determined vertigoes.²³

Thus the key to the ecstatic state was through this disordering process expressed in language. For Rimbaud, by disordering the senses one's spirit becomes sacred. One can invent inaccessible para-languages, speaking the inexpressible with all the senses. And by withholding the translation, or any other parallel distortive mechanism that Rimbaud utilizes, one reenchants. The Drunken Boat is the key poem expressing this critical unraveling of instrumental reason, which leads to liberation.

The dissolution of boundaries of this state of reenchantment is often expressed as a unity with nature, and as erotic unity. Of this a critic observes: "The poet's 'I' is merged with nature in dream-like instinct with a demonic life

whose voice reverberates in poetic language. The same new unity of man and nature expressed itself in a new unity of feeling and language, magically captured by Wordsworth.²⁴ This holds true as well for erotic union. The abandonment to pure passion of the poet's lonely "I" was often identified with unity with nature. Thus for Rimbaud the erotic is linked to the ecstatic state: "Rimbaud associates the intoxicating with the erotic. In some of this earliest poetry, he links drunkenness with states he craves: happiness, strength, ecstasy, and love."²⁵

We can sum up the importance of Rimbaud's extension of Novalis' and Baudelaire's technique of particularization of language for the development of avant-garde poetry as one that smashed the ordered structure of language and introduced new and startling ways of combining words and groups of words.

Mallarmé and Cezanne: Particularization Leading Towards Silence

Mallarmé and Cezanne further articulate this particularization of words from overarching meaning, or, in the case of Cezanne, of colors from the given painterly context. For both of them, the process of particularization leads to a silence or invisibility of the actor. As Cezanne writes of the impressionistic principle:

The artist is merely the recording device for sensory perceptions. . . . We are a shimmering chaos. I come in front of my theme, I lose myself in it. . . .

Man ought not to be present, but completely absorbed into the landscape. The great Buddhist invention, Nirvana, solace without passion, without anecdotes, colors! . . . Impressionism, what does it mean? It is the optical mixing of colors, do you understand? Disintegrating the colors on the canvas and reuniting them in the eye. . . . A painting represents nothing, should not, at first, represent anything but colors.²⁶

From Cezanne's account we see that impressionism particularizes by dissolving the world in light, breaking it into colors, and recording the results as a sequence of sensory perceptions.

We can compare Cezanne's statement that a painting represents nothing but colors to the parallel ones of Novalis and Rimbaud (notes 1 and 20), and especially to Mallarmé: "A poem consists not of thoughts but of words."²⁷ Mallarmé, as a spokesman for "art for art's sake," puts into practice what Novalis had outlined as a principle of romanticism ". . . only melodious and full of beautiful words . . . a few verses comprehensible, no more. . . ."²⁸

Thus we have a process of radical particularization of words from meaning, which takes the form in Mallarmé of a progressive emptying of content. He wants his poetry to abolish all precise content and definite meaning of words. In this manner the fragment can point to an infinity of possible completions.²⁹

This emptying of content in Mallarmé has been called "white writing" in that evocative fragments are positioned and surrounded by white spaces on the page, the positioning and the spaces being as important as the "words" themselves.

In this process of voiding referential content Mallarmé attempts to negate specificity. He sees his work as an attempt to go to the limits of the indirect statement, to avoid direct references so as to maximize the connotative possibilities of the obscure:

To evoke, in a precise obscurity, the object hushed, by allusive, never direct, words, reducing themselves to uniform silence, tentative behavior close to creating.³⁰

In moving away from content towards the inexpressible, Mallarmé represents the culmination of the Symbolist tendency to use the musical metaphors begun by Baudelaire (see note 12). Withdrawing from language itself to the realm of "pure combinations" is how Mallarmé explains it: "Music is calculation: it offers the intelligence and immense domain of pure combinations--another envious subject for the poet. . . ."³¹ A critic sees the poet's work as an attempt at actual counterpoint.³² And Mallarmé comments on the enchanted state that this brings: "Music is the last human cult, the final vestige of celebration and mystery."³³

Another expression of Mallarmé's negation of meaning and consequent movement towards what he called the "orphic" state is seen in his radical denial of utility. This theme can be seen in other avant-garde artists; Bertrand Russell has noted that the romantics put the aesthetic ahead of utility.³⁴ We can see this in the surrealist Meret Oppenheim's piece entitled "Lunch in Fur,"³⁵ which consists of a teacup, saucer and spoon each lined with fur. A fundamental negation of usefulness is built into the art work,

as the texture of the fur opposes the utilization of the china. And Baudelaire has written of the life style of the dandy in terms that oppose him to the routinized, workaday world, stating that he "does nothing useful."³⁶ The romantics' love of ruins expresses this radical denial of utility but makes it more than simply a love of nature. Flaubert writes:

I love above all the sight of vegetation resting upon old ruins; this embrace of nature coming swiftly to bury the work of man the moment that his hand is no longer there to defend it, fills me with great joy.³⁷

Similarly, Rilke's statement that "the ore is homesick"³⁸ and wants to return to the ground rages against the violence done to the earth by the capitalist rationalization principle. These artists, therefore, attack use in the sense of instrumental utilitarianism. Mallarmé links this radical rejection of utility with the reenchanting state:

In the eyes of others my work is what clouds are in the twilight, and the stars: useless . . . expunge reality from your song, for it is common. . . . The only thing the poet has to do is to work mysteriously with his eye turned upon Never.³⁹

Thus Mallarmé radically rejects the disenchanted world as useless. But he goes further than Rilke. In an instrumentalized world he asserts that only poetry has any substantive or practical use or meaning.⁴⁰

My analysis progresses from Mallarmé's emptying of content to the "pure combinations" of language as music, to his denial of utility, to the point where this process of particularization leads to ineffable silence, a silence

in which the creator becomes absorbed in his creation. To restate this parallel already noted in Cezanne:

The artist is merely the recording device for sensory perceptions. . . . We are a shimmering chaos. I come in front of my theme, I lose myself in it. . . . Man ought not to be present, but completely absorbed into the landscape. The great Buddhist invention, Nirvana, solace without passion, without anecdotes. . . .²⁶

Cezanne has further said that the painter's

only aspiration must be to silence. He must stifle within himself the voices of prejudice, he must forget and keep on forgetting, he must make silence all about him, he must be a perfect echo.⁴¹

As Cezanne puts it, in the quest for transcendence, for Nirvana, the artist is a mere recording device, and loses himself, or better put, dissolves into his work. Flaubert has similarly written that the artist would be, in our terms, "decentered," or would disappear within the reality of his own creation. "Art has nothing to do with the artist," he said; "he must manage to lead posterity to believe that he did not exist at all."⁴² Mallarmé shares this attitude, and towards that end he created silences around words to attack our word-clogged, instrumentalized language. This is what he means by his "white paper logic." Mallarmé tries to barely evoke, in as indirect a manner as possible, through allusive words which "reduce themselves to uniform silence."⁴⁹

The trajectory of particularizing language, then, moves toward silence as an expression of the reenchanting state. The following line expresses this orphic silence in the poet's astonishment at seeing blueness, which, like Baudelaire's invocation of the word "vast," is mantra-like in its repetitiveness:

L'Azur! l'Azur! l'Azur! l'Azur!⁴³

Thus Mallarme's poetic practice is an uncompromising rejection of the "real" as the instrumentally rational real. And the "great refusal" of his "nothingness" and "absence" is truly an affirming practice, an affirmation and a creation of essential and dereified relationships.

Particularization of Language in the Dada Movement

Historically, dada extends this feature of the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment even further to a total negation of language as an instrument of meaning. For, as language was the privileged domain of the dadaist poets, by uprooting "sense" in language, they negated meaning itself. This delegitimizing function is clearly stated by the dadaist Hans Richter:

This dissolution was the ultimate in everything that Dada represented, philosophically and morally; everything must be pulled apart, not a screw left in its customary place, the screw-holes wrenched out of shape, the screw, like man himself, set on its way towards new functions which could only be known after the total negation of everything that had existed before. Until then: riot, destruction, defiance, confusion. The role of chance, not as an extension of the scope of art, but as a principle of dissolution and anarchy. In art, anti-art . . . the process that Walter Serner followed to its logical conclusion in his pamphlet advocating a Letzte Lockerung ("Final Dissolution," 1918).⁴⁴

Further expressing this radical particularization, the dadaist Hugo Ball spoke of "spitting words." Tzara similarly believes that "words must be ploughed up," and: "Thought is produced in the mouth."⁴⁵ Thus we see that speech, in its radical particularization, becomes

disassociated from language itself. In this manner the concept of "chatter" becomes important for the dadaists. Chatter for dada is a form of particularized speech that is immediate and without meaning. From a similar perspective we will later in the study analyze the function of "rapping." Both place the delegitimizing nature of "chatter" in opposition to the legitimating, universalizing nature of "discourse."

Thus in terms used earlier, chatter is liberating because it is inherently useless, and by its feature of uselessness negates what Marcuse has called "the performance principle."⁴⁶ Chatter, then, is the dadaist concept for what will become for the surrealists the principle of stream of consciousness thought expressed in "automatic writing." For the dadaists, in particularizing language, it becomes emptied of its reified implications of cultural domination, and rediscovers its raw intensity and immediateness. In this manner of total negation through dissociation, the dadaists believed that a "truer," less alienated language would be recovered.

In the same sense, speaking of dada as a literary movement, Tristan Tzara advocated: "destroying the taste for literature . . . even while writing," that is, to attack literature "by its own means, and in its own formulas. . . ." He continues in an invocation "to disorder meaning. . . ,"⁴⁷ and indicates that in its attack on art, dada is perfectly willing to also "wither away." Dada does not look for any permanence as another reified "art movement."

The progressive autonomization of a language which no longer refers to the world, is extended to the limits in dada. As the external world is rejected, images hermetically turn inward. In the words of Tzara: "all that one looks at is false," or Aragon: "I have thrown away my eyes to put in new ones."⁴⁸

Thus the avant-garde metaphor, in its resistance to any instrumentalizing function of language, refuses to explain or even refer to a reality other than itself. This practice of radical dissociation of idea from image develops from Rimbaud: "I have habituated myself to a simple hallucination; I have clearly seen a mosque in the place of a gas-works." And Mallarmé states: "I cancel the word 'like' from the dictionary." The image is thus said to be victorious over meaning, and is liberated from instrumental content. And so secret, para-languages are developed.⁴⁹

But dada as a historical manifestation of particularization pushed forward the dissolution of meaning in language so that more than hermetic para-languages are reached. The end result of this process in dada is the expression of total incommunicability. As in Rimbaud, there are no explanations given, but only immediate expression. As Tzara declared: "There are people who explain because there are others who learn. Remove them, and you're left with dada." They reduced expression to incommunicability or senselessness not by saying the opposite, but rather by juxtaposing a thing and its opposite, its negation, in the same line,

or, as Tzara puts it: "in a single fresh breath,"⁵⁰ pushing to the limit the non-interpretable. It is "a way of blowing up 'their' language and therefore of destroying the main bridges between 'them' and 'us,' by incommunicability."⁵¹

These extreme expressions of language particularization gave great joy and positivity to the artists in the dada movement. Their radical activities of delegitimation of meaning in language led to a reintegrated state of reenchantment. Richter, for example, takes pains to emphasize that, for all the negativity, the dadaist movement was one of affirmation and fun. He notes that, after the destruction, they were: "known, to laymen and expert alike, more by our roars of laughter than by the things we were really doing."⁵² Freed from the need to justify their actions, the dadaists "reached that vital level where joy, movement, spontaneity, and metamorphosis have their being; language is no longer a poor means, but a game, a celebration."⁵³

Language Particularization in Surrealism

The transition from dada to surrealism, which occurred under the leadership of Andre Breton, can be seen as a movement towards a systematic investigation of techniques of language distortion.

Earlier, Baudelaire had used the term "surnaturalism," and stated that the objective of art is: "to create a suggestive magic, an enchantment, or even astonishment."⁵⁴ And to arrive at that enchanted state he prescribes the use of

the unusual: "The beautiful is what is bizarre."⁵⁵ Breton echoes these two statements with parallel ones:

Let us resolve, therefore: the Marvellous is always beautiful, everything Marvellous is beautiful. Nothing but the Marvellous is beautiful.⁵⁶

And to reach the marvellous Breton has said: "Beauty will be convulsive or it will not be at all."⁵⁷ And similarly, the early Aragon defined surrealism as: "the unruly and ardent use of the stupefying image. . . ."⁵⁸

Thus, through the systemization of this romantic concept, the surrealists reach the "marvellous, enchanted state through the use of "convulsive" and "stupefying" images. Indeed, we see a further particularization of language in that images are no longer linked by a subject, but gain their power through their dissociation from one another.

Thus Paul Eluard said "Images think for me," and Aragon explained:

In our time there are no longer any ideas; they are as rare as smallpox, but it goes without saying that there are images caught, and for once well caught, real slaps in the face of any kind of good sense.⁵⁹

As models of this dissociated and ecstatic state, the surrealists invoke, variously, vertigo, hallucinogenic exaltation, dreams, madness, and erotic union. For example, we see that for Breton the path to rapture is through that particularization of experience that both vertigo and psychedelic ecstasy bring. And further, Breton's "drug" was his poetic practice; there we find, parallel to these other practices, a terminology of elation, exaltation, and illumination.⁶⁰

The dream state was an important model for the surrealists, who used it as a practice to negate the narrow confines of wakeful rationality. As Eluard and others put it in their early journal La Revolution Surrealiste:

The dream alone entrusts to man all his rights to freedom. . . . Surrealism is at the crossroads of the enchantments of sleep, alcohol, tobacco, ether, opium, cocaine, morphine; but it is also the breaker of chains. We do not sleep, we do not drink, we do not smoke, we do not sniff, we do not puncture ourselves: we dream and the speed of the lamp's needles introduces to our minds the marvellous deflowered sponge of gold.⁶¹

A number of sources cite Robert Desnos as one of the most remarkable of these dreamers, who used to regularly fall asleep after dinner in Breton's apartment, awakening with a rich stream of verbal images coupled with ecstatic pronouncements.⁶² The dream and the wakeful state were seen as connected and dialectically contributing to consciousness:

. . . Tzara states that when the dream becomes accepted as a complementary rather than contrasting experience to the waking part of life, our notions and feelings will be transformed to such an extent that the rules which govern our actions now will become . . . inapplicable.⁶³

And Breton, in his Les Vases Communicants, sees existence composed of two urns, the dream and the wakeful state, which are constantly connected to each other and contribute to each other's intensity.⁶⁴

The surrealists continue the tradition of Rimbaud in abandoning themselves to states of hallucination. As Novalis has notably stated; "There exist great resemblances between madness and enchantment. The enchanter is an artist of madness."⁶⁵ And so to break rationality, Breton and

Eluard tried to tap the resources of states of insanity, trying to:

. . .prove that the mind, poetically conditioned, is in a normal man capable of reproducing in their broad lines the most paradoxical and eccentric verbal manifestations . . . without risk of lasting trouble, and without compromising the faculty of equilibrium.⁶⁶

Breton's novel Nadja is a concrete investigation of the behavior and linguistic communication of a "mentally ill" girl who Breton encountered in random walks in Paris streets, and is presented not as a model of illness, but of the enlarged mental health of surrealist thought. In the same vein, the surrealists redefine hysteria as a positive phenomenon:

. . .we propose a new definition of hysteria: Hysteria is a more or less irreducible mental condition characterized by the subversion of the relations which are established between the subject and the moral world with which he believes himself able to cope, outside every delirious system. . . . Hysteria is not a pathological phenomenon and can be considered in every respect a supreme means of expression.⁶⁷

Thus, in parallel quest to Habermas' ideal speech situation, these artists try to restore a critical rationality that goes beyond any limiting instrumental rationality, by uniting the conscious with the unconscious.

In Breton's erotic mysticism, the relationship between particularization of experience and the resultant mystic state is clear. As he writes:

I have found the secret
Of loving you
Always for the first time.⁶⁸

The particularization effected here by making love always seem new and fresh preserves its transcendent allure. Breton

likens the act to a dissociated trance, the necessary condition for an ecstatic "capture of eternity" that the act of love brings.⁶⁹

But the poetic images themselves are perhaps the sharpest examples of the particularization of language accomplished in surrealist poetry. Often in the poetry, contradictions are presented and left unresolved. Breton presents contradiction by simultaneously using past, present and future tenses, giving the following picture:

Draperies which were never raised
Flutter on the windows of the houses to be built.⁷⁰

Or, contradictory adjectives are presented, as in: "Red like the egg when it is green," or an image from Pierre Reverdy in which: "the sun swells at the tip of a stalk of colored waterfall."⁷¹ Here we see that an intangible force can produce a material effect. Reverdy often presents detached images, without any connections, or produces total distortions of spacial relations.⁷² And when he uses synesthesia,

silence falls heavily on the ground without breaking,
hands ring, minutes sparkle at the tip of branches,
the mountain whistles with its tail lost at the shores
of the humid lashes of the sea.⁷³

And Robert Desnos, known for his dream states, often presents a nondistinction between dream and reality: "I dreamed so much of you that you lost your reality."⁷⁴

In general, then, the surrealists' use of imagery further contributes to a dissociation of language because

they select combinations of words that defy the given logical structures, they invoke the dream, madness, and other models that free us from any verbal inhibitions, and reach the marvellous through the vertigo of language. As Max Ernst put it:

I saw with my own eyes the appearance of things re-treating, and I experienced a calm and ferocious joy.⁷⁵

Thus, the ideological effect of the surrealist particularization of language is that these techniques achieve a triumph of the part over the repressive whole. In this manner, the fragment becomes boundless.

Particularization Leading to Silence in the Work
of Antonin Artaud and Henri Michaux

Antonin Artaud's "theatre of cruelty" demonstrates radical articulation of particularization of language, leading to a magical unity. His work is an appeal to reconsider the communicative process itself, expressed in the desire to free the theatre from dependence on spoken and written language and to replace this with a language of signs.

He considered European language a prison, excluding mysterious, surreal aspects, its narrow register adequate only for expressing the banal anecdotal reality of everyday life. He inveighs against this "articulated language," and extends the same theme of refusal of narration present in earlier avant-garde writers. He believes that the purely descriptive theatrical idiom stifles in that it only "tells stories about psychology!" and acts as Western painting, "an

art of mere descriptive representation."⁷⁶ And so in rejecting language as narration, Artaud demands a new system of signs, which would surpass the "normal, word-dominated level of reality" and make it limitless.⁷⁷

In this manner, Artaud extends the definition of art given in Rimbaud's Lettre du voyant and in the Russian Formalist theory of defamiliarization. All art, in all its forms, must destroy convention and meaning, must dissolve and reorganize them, until "delirium," the negation of meaning through particularization, is reached.⁷⁸

Artaud then prescribes a reenchanting language of incantation to effect this renewal of drama and actually cast a spell:

It does not contain any description or fact. Instead it aims at producing in man a consciousness of the unity of his being and the material world. First it abolishes the distinction between body and intellect within the participant or beholder. . . . Man's perception is hence free from traditional stratification and restrictions. Furthermore magic ignores the usual rationalist distinction between mind and the world of objects.⁷⁹

Thus, incantation particularizes consciousness and dissolves the cultural reification of language, and in so doing effects a constant communication between fragmented entities; this linking up of discrete domains is another expression of the particularizing device seen in Baudelaire's "correspondences," Rimbaud's method of the "voyant," and the surrealist techniques.

For Artaud, language was a separation, and Artaud thinks that:

If my word is not my breath, if my letter is not my word, then my breath was already no longer my body, no longer my gesture, my gesture no longer my life. I must restore in the theatre the wholeness of my flesh torn by all these differences.⁸⁰

To restore this wholeness, Artaud proposes a wordless, unspeakable state, resembling the trance into which Balinese theatre throws the spectator and the participant. To reach these states beyond words, he also used peyote and opium. Words are insufficient in these psychedelic states, and the partaker is led towards the "hieroglyphic." Artaud himself describes:

The state, that state outside of life, to which opium does not do justice but with which it happens to have very similar affinities--there are no words for it, only a vehement hieroglyphic designating the impossible meeting of matter and spirit.⁸¹

And opium, like poetry, similarly melts the boundaries between form and meaning, thereby accomplishing a delegitimation of everyday perception as well as language.⁸² Thus, there are no words for this state of incantatory unity, attained through the separation of the form from its habitual meaning. But for Artaud, as we have seen for Breton, the superior instrument of delegitimation and reenchantment is particularized language itself:

In order to resemble and yet surpass opium this new intoxicant must fragment and reorganize the world while producing a kind of physical unity of man with the world at large.

Thus such a fragmentation, shock, and new integration with the world is the goal of the language of the hieroglyphic, of incantation, of ritual. Language becomes "a way to

madness, to the elimination of thought, to a rupture, the maze of unreason."⁸³ For Artaud, then, this disarticulated language, the language of silence, is a means of breaking with reason and moving towards the enchanted state.

Similarly, we find that the French post-surrealist poet Henri Michaux has articulated this movement toward silence and transcendence involved in experiences of language particularization. Michaux, moreover, has given us valuable reports of the effects of hallucinogenic agents. His work is an attempted expression of the "inexpressible" after mescaline-induced disintegration and, as he puts it, consequent "refound unicity."⁸⁴ Of the particularizing experiences of the accelerated tempo of thought with mescaline, he notes:

Language seemed a huge pretentious clumsy machine which merely blurred all distinctions, and moreover escaped his grasp in a growing disqualification, in indifference.

To the point where he was tempted to enclose himself within an absolute silence. A state familiar to many of those who take mescaline, and to schizophrenics who take nothing. In this singular state one refuses to speak; speaking is experienced as a profanation.

In this state, in fact, it is a sign of intelligence to drop words, and of stupidity to cling to them (thereby missing the possibility of transcendence).⁸⁵

As Michaux elsewhere puts it: "in the region of the primordial the recitalist falls silent."⁸⁶ For this poet, the speed of thought with mescaline particularizes language and leads to that primordial state in which language is experienced as an inefficient reduction and a stupid

violation of the enchanted experience; in speaking, moreover, one might lose touch with this transcendence. And so Michaux makes a conscious decision:

at that moment I found the inward knowledge that I must not, and especially why I must not speak any more.⁸⁷

Thus, the absence of words, which Michaux resolutely maintains, becomes the only possible explication after the ecstatic experience.

Michaux in his poetry has attempted to delegitimize structure through language particularization. Indeed, he only turned to psychedelics at age fifty, and only for a seven year period, after thirty years of a poetry of language dissociation. As he puts it at the end of Miserable miracle:

Dilletantes with a unique perspective could, from now on, succumb to the temptation of judging the ensemble of my writings as the work of an intoxicate. I am sorry.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, there is an "elective affinity" in his use of mescaline in that it is but a borrowed parallel practice of language particularization. These psychedelic agents

can produce an ambience favorable to artistic endeavor. This they do by "releasing the brakes" with which man constantly regulates his thoughts, with the result that there is an uncontrolled change in the rate of speed of the mental processes. Or to employ another image they "derail" man, who, like a train, normally follows a prescribed track. In brief, drugs break down the artificial categories which make it possible for man to live, but which also imprison him.⁸⁹

For Michaux, then, mescaline, like the avant-garde use of language, particularizes experience through its ability to "derail thought." Instead of an automatized consciousness,

this particularization process forces the actor to make new connections of the "derailed" material, and thus releases the imagination to "discover," as Michaux writes, "some astonishing landscapes within the workshop of the brain."⁹⁰ Michaux thus uses this particularization of language to dereify consciousness and allow the actor to alter his destiny, as he puts it:

The enemy which is your structure, force it to reveal itself. If you have been unable to modify your destiny you will have been nothing but a rented apartment.⁹¹

In this chapter we have examined a first feature of the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment, that of particularization of language through separation of words and "meaning." We have traced this process of negating hierarchy from Novalis, Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé to dada and surrealism, and Artaud and Michaux. We have seen this kind of particularization leading to a reenchantment expressed in the state of "correspondences" or synesthesia, in becoming "voyant," or seer, in sexual unity, and in mystical silence.

NOTES

¹Novalis, as quoted in Susan Sontag, Styles of Radical Will (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1969), p. 26.

²*Ibid.*, p. 28.

³Novalis, as quoted in Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art (Baltimore: Penquin Books, 1963), p. 60.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁷Fredric Jameson, The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 50-51.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹Sontag, p. 31.

¹⁰French Symbolist Poetry, trans. C. F. MacIntyre (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), p. 119.

¹¹Theodore W. Adorno, et al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper and Row, 1950), p. 746.

¹²Renato Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde (New York: Icon Editions, Harper and Row, 1971), p. 133.

¹³Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 193.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 196-97.

¹⁵César Graña, Bohemian Versus Bourgeois (New York: Basic Books, 1964), p. 146.

¹⁶Jameson, p. 317.

¹⁷Anna Balakian, "Breton and Drugs," Yale French Studies, 50 (1974):97-98.

¹⁸Arthur Rimbaud, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Pleiade, 1951), p. 254. My translation.

¹⁹Poggioli, pp. 215-16.

²⁰Wallace Fowlie, Age of Surrealism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 53.

²¹Poggioli, p. 56.

²²Enid Rhodes Peschel, "Arthur Rimbaud: The Aesthetics of Intoxication," Yale French Studies 50 (1974):70.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁴Fischer, p. 171.

²⁵Peschel, p. 67.

²⁶Fischer, p. 75.

²⁷*Loc. cit.*

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁹Erich Kahler, The Tower and the Abyss: An Inquiry into the Transformation of Man (New York: The Viking Press, 1967), p. 158.

³⁰Stephane Mallarmé, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 400. My translation.

³¹Robert Gibson, Modern French Poets on Poetry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 185.

³²Calvin S. Brown, "The Musical Analogies in Mallarmé's Un coup de dés," Comparative Literature Studies, 4 (1-2), pp. 76-77.

³³Wallace Fowlie, Mallarmé (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1962), pp. 239-40.

³⁴Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy, p. 675, cited in Graña, p. 148.

³⁵Meret Oppenheim, Lunch in Fur, 1938, illustrated in Patrick Waldberg, Surrealism (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), illustration number 129.

³⁶Charles Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1923), vol. VI, p. 95, quoted in Graña, p. 149.

³⁷Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance (Paris: Louis Conard, 1810), vol. I, p. 224, cited in Graña, p. 137.

³⁸Rainer Maria Rilke, cited in Graña, p. 136.

³⁹Fischer, p. 70.

⁴⁰Anthony Hartley, ed. and trans., Mallarmé (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 111-12.

⁴¹Paul Cézanne, as quoted by Gasquet in Max Raphael, The Demands of Art, trans. Norbert Guterman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 8.

⁴²Graña, p. 144.

⁴³Hartley, p. 28.

⁴⁴Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 48.

⁴⁵Hugo Ball, cited in Alfred Willener, The Action Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 203; Tristan Tzara, cited in Willener, pp. 204-205.

⁴⁶See Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 32.

⁴⁷Tzara, cited in Willener, p. 204.

⁴⁸Poggioli, p. 196.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 196-98.

⁵⁰Tzara, cited in Willener, pp. 206-207.

⁵¹Willener, p. 206.

⁵²Richter, p. 64.

⁵³Willener, p. 207.

⁵⁴Georges Blin, Le Sadisme de Baudelaire (Paris, 1948), p. 99.

⁵⁵Waldberg, p. 25.

⁵⁶First Surrealist Manifesto, 1924, in Waldberg, p. 70.

⁵⁷Waldberg, p. 27.

⁵⁸Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (Dutton Paperback, 1970), p. 216.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 143.

⁶⁰Balakian, "Breton and Drugs," pp. 98-99.

⁶¹La Revolution Surrealiste, 1 (December 1924), quoted in Waldberg, p. 47.

⁶²See Waldberg, p. 34, and Balakian, Surrealism, p. 127.

⁶³Balakian, Surrealism, p. 127.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Novalis, quoted in Waldberg, p. 27.

⁶⁶Breton and Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Editions surrealistes, 1930), p. 28, quoted in Balakian, Surrealism, p. 129.

⁶⁷Louis Aragon and Andre Breton, The Quinquagenary of Hysteria, 1878-1928, from La Revolution Surrealiste, 11 (March 1928), quoted in Waldberg, p. 61.

⁶⁸Andre Breton, Poems (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 148, cited in Balakian, Surrealism, p. 168.

⁶⁹Balakian, "Breton and Drugs," p. 148.

⁷⁰Breton, "Textes Surrealistes," Revolution Surrealiste, VI, p. 6, my translation.

⁷¹Balakian, Surrealism, pp. 112, 152.

⁷²Loc. cit.

⁷³Ibid., p. 113.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 160.

⁷⁵Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting," in Waldberg, p. 100.

⁷⁶John D. Lyons, "Artaud: Intoxication and its Double," in Yale French Studies 50 (1974):121.

⁷⁷Loc. cit.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 122.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 122-23.

⁸⁰Jacques Derrida, "La Parole soufflée," L'Ecriture et la difference (Paris: Le Seuil, 1967), p. 267.

⁸¹Lyons, p. 127.

⁸²Loc cit.

⁸³Ibid., p. 128.

⁸⁴Henri Michaux, Les Grandes Epreuves de l'esprit et les innombrables petites (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 28, cited in Reinhard Kuhn, "The Hermeneutics of Silence: Michaux and Mescaline," Yale French Studies 50 (1974):139.

⁸⁵Henri Michaux, The Major Ordeals of the Mind (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1974), p. 19.

⁸⁶Henri Michaux, Paix dans les brisements (Paris: Flinker, 1959), p. 47, cited in Kuhn, p. 140.

⁸⁷Henri Michaux, L'Infini turbulent (Paris: Mercure de France, 1957), p. 23, cited in Kuhn, p. 140.

⁸⁸Michaux, cited in Kuhn, pp. 132-33.

⁸⁹Kuhn, pp. 136-37.

⁹⁰Michaux, cited in Kuhn, p. 137.

⁹¹Henri Michaux, Potiaux d'angle (Paris, L'Herne, 1971), p. 12.

CHAPTER 3

NEGATING DIRECTIONALITY IN TIME

The second feature of the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment can be conceptualized as the negation of time. This examination of historical practices in the avant-garde had found that the negation of time leads to presentness and simultaneity. For example, Edgar Allan Poe, whose "Philosophy of Composition" influenced Baudelaire, believed in the primacy of the short story as a device for negating time, thus leading to a perceived simultaneity of events.

Historically, Baudelaire develops this same attitude of the negation of time in his stance of the "flaneur," or stroller in the city, in which he pays attention to many disparate elements of consciousness simultaneously in the present. Walter Benjamin, in his "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," states that he equates the "flaneur" with the man of the crowd, who observed the random movement of people, is unexpectedly jostled, and who connects these juxtaposed and varied experiences together in consciousness.² Benjamin notes of Baudelaire's city:

To move through the latter involves a whole series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, impulses crisscross the pedestrian like charges in a battery. Baudelaire describes the man who plunges into the crowd as a reservoir of electrical energy. Thereupon he calls him, thus singling out the experience of shock, "a kaleidoscope endowed with a consciousness."³

Consciousness is seen as a kaleidoscope, taking in momentary and disparate patterns and rearranging them to make new meaning out of these pieces. The element of shock here is important in that it delegitimizes taken-for-granted temporal sequences of experience. In this light gambling is important for Baudelaire, as Benjamin continues:

Gambling invalidates the standards of experience. . . . On the boulevards it was customary to attribute everything to chance. This disposition is promoted by betting, which is a device giving events the character of a shock, detaching them from the context of experience.⁴

Remembrance for Baudelaire is thus not historical data, but the recollection of elements to be juxtaposed in the present.⁵ This principle is extended historically, from Bergson's concept of "durée," to Proust's emphasis on remembrance in the present, to the later surrealist techniques of juxtaposition of elements in the present.

In this development in modern poetry simultaneity "arranges" or makes sense out of the particulars of consciousness.⁶ More generally, the techniques of modern art culminating in the film age involve a fundamental negation of time. And this negation of time leads to simultaneity and presentness. Thus, all the techniques of modern art, as the abandonment of plot, the "automatic" method of writing, and especially the montage effect of the film, stress the simultaneity of consciousness in the present. Most notably in Proust and Joyce, chronologically organized time

is broken up, and ideas, memories, images stand side by side with a sudden abruptness, and without regard to their origins.⁷

There is a historical continuity to these artistic techniques, then, which all act to devalue time and lead to an emphasis on the simultaneity of contents of consciousness. The ideological function of this feature of the negation of time is to recover an enchanted inwardness, to reassemble the fragments of consciousness into a unity in the present. One of the most intense and programmatic articulations of this feature has been expressed in the surrealist movement. For example, the surrealist poet Robert Desnos comments that the tense the surrealists most often use is the present.⁸ And Breton's idea that all elements are or can be brought into relation with each other implies a juxtaposition of these elements by the writer in a present that thereby becomes "paradisiacal."

Relying on the alchemistic philosophy that all is in all, and that the arrangement of objects, and subsequently of the relation of their images to each other is an arbitrary one, he expends his creative ability on the act of subjective selection; in this way he puts his own personal ontological imprint upon the universe. An expression such as "Monde dans un baiser" is not simply an affective expression of love for Breton as it might be for Lamartine or Musset. It is a basis of reconstruction of disparate elements that his senses regroup into the chosen focus of the immediate moment. His philosophy of immanence is in fact possible because of this power to shuffle an ever wider scale of physical stimuli into a personal synthesis which constitutes the paradise of the moment.⁹

In this manner, time in avant-garde writing is collapsed

to simultaneous activity in the present. In this immediate moment the senses regroup elements into new combinations and effect a reenchantment. From Baudelaire's attitude of the "flaneur," through Breton's further systemization, this simultaneity involves the juxtaposition of disparate elements in the present. Later in our study we will see the importance of this feature for our informants, who express the attitude of "digging everything" in the present, and we will see the parallel utilization of psychedelics for the same effect.

Juxtaposing these particularized and disparate elements implies that this feature is linked to that of the particularization of language which we have already examined. And in linking disparate elements we find the key to the next feature under examination, that of randomization: particularization through separation of activity and goal. For that randomization of consciousness in the present becomes developed as an avant-garde technique to radically delegitimize and reenchant.

NOTES

¹Fredric Jameson, The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 74.

²Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), p. 174.

³Ibid., p. 177.

⁴Ibid., p. 200.

⁵Ibid., p. 184.

⁶Erich Kahler, The Tower and the Abyss: An Inquiry into the Transformation of Man (New York: The Viking Press, 1967), p. 110.

⁷Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, 4 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), 4:239, 243-45.

⁸Robert Desnos, cited in Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (Dutton paperback, 1970), p. 164.

⁹Anna Balakian, "Breton and Drugs," Yale French Studies 50 (1974):103.

CHAPTER 4

NEGATING MEANS-ENDS RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter examines the historic practices of the avant-garde in negating means-ends relationships. Instrumental rationality prescribes that there be concrete goals and goal direction, or, in other words, a coordination of means and ends. To negate this, the avant-garde has developed what I call the practice of randomization, or chance. Thus delegitimation of means-ends rationality is accomplished by the selection of material or events at random. This method goes far to separate activities from set goals.

Novalis has written: "All the accidents of our life are materials out of which we can make what we like; everything is a link in an unending chain."¹ And Mallarmé follows this viewpoint: "Every thought sets forth a toss of the dice," and not one of them abolishes chance.² These two statements can be seen as a key to the process of separation of activity from goal, of means from ends, that we see in the chance techniques of much avant-garde art, especially in dada and surrealism. The woman climbing and reascending the stairs in Leger's "Ballet Mecanique," for example, suspends the logic of action as we know it. After the fifth ascent or so, realizing that the woman will never reach the top, the audience

finds it must take the action only at its present worth--the style and performance of the movement in and of itself, and no more.³

And Henry Miller notes how the separation of activity from goal operates in his writing:

I begin in absolute chaos and darkness, in a bog or swamp of ideas and emotions and experiences. . . . It is a turning inside out, a voyaging through X dimensions with the result that somewhere along the way one discovers that what one has to tell is not nearly so important as the telling itself. It is this quality about all art which gives it a metaphysical hue, which lifts it out of time and space and centers or integrates it into the whole cosmic process. It is this about art which is "therapeutic": significance, purposeless, infinitude.

From the very beginning almost I was deeply aware that there is no goal. I never hope to embrace the whole, but merely give in to each separate fragment. . . .⁴

Similarly, Jackson Pollack utilizes the separation of activity from goal in his "chance" technique of painting:

When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after . . . that I see what I have been about.⁵

Or as Mark Rothko states:

Neither the action or the actors can be anticipated, or described in advance. They begin as an unknown adventure in an unknown space.⁶

And John Cage elevates this to a program of art:

I found through Oriental philosophy, my work with Suzuki, that what we are doing is living, and that we are not moving toward a goal, but are, so to speak, at the goal constantly and changing with it, and that art, if it is going to do anything useful, should open our eyes to this fact.⁷

By dissociating the activity from the goal of completing the sequence of action, Leger focuses on the

particularity of movement itself. And this process delegitimizes the taken-for-granted logic of means-ends relationships. For Miller the process of telling, rather than the ordered tale, leads to the reenchantment he finds in art which is "cosmic," "integrated," "metaphysical." And so the writer gives in to the "fragments," in order to achieve this state. Similarly, Pollack and Rothko stay in the realm of activity for its own sake, integrating the random "accidents" into their work, and refuse to anticipate so as to keep the work exciting, its end unknown and its process an adventure. And Cage invokes Zen Buddhism to deny rational purpose or goal-oriented behavior and affirm the process of activity for itself. The ideological function of this dissolution of activity from goal is to free the actor from the reified rationality of means and ends.

Randomization in Dada and Surrealism

Historically, dada and surrealism display for us this feature which becomes refined into an artistic principle of chance, or randomization. The early dadaists first developed the technique. The dadaist Hans Richter relates for us two examples in his autobiography. He stresses that the following anecdote has become apocryphal, and could therefore be attributed to Tzara, Arp, or anyone else:

Dissatisfied with a drawing he had been working on for some time, Arp finally tore it up, and let the pieces flutter to the floor of his studio on the Zeltweg. Some time later he happened to notice these same scraps of paper as they lay on the floor, and was struck by the

pattern they formed. It had all the expressive power that he had tried in vain to achieve. How meaningful! How telling! Chance movements of his hand and of the fluttering scraps of paper had achieved what all his efforts had failed to achieve, namely expression. He accepted this challenge from chance as a decision of fate and carefully pasted the scraps down in the pattern which chance had determined.⁸

And further, of Tristan Tzara's "paper-bag" poem:

It was left to Tzara to follow the principle of chance to its logical conclusion in literature. Sounds are relatively easy to put together, rhythmically and melodically in chance combinations; words are more difficult. Words bear a burden of meaning designed for practical use, and do not readily submit to a process of random arrangement. It was, however, exactly this that Tzara wanted. He cut newspaper articles up into tiny pieces, none of them longer than a word, put the words in a bag, shook them well, and allowed them to flutter on to a table. The arrangement (or lack of it) in which they fell constituted a "poem," a Tzara poem.⁹

For the surrealists, Andre Breton writes of their experiments in collective writing:

Exquisite Corpse: Game of folded paper played by several people, who compose a sentence or drawing without anyone else seeing the preceding collaborations or collaborations. The now classic example, which gave the game its name, was drawn from the first sentence obtained this way: The-exquisite corpse-will-drink-new-wine. . . . What excited us about these productions was . . . that they were endowed with much greater leeway, which cannot be too highly valued by poetry. Finally, with the Exquisite Corpse we had at our command an infallible way of holding the critical intellect in abeyance, and of fully liberating the mind's metaphorical activity. . . . This encounter not only provoked a vigorous play of often extreme discordances, but also supported the idea of communication between participants--tacit, but in waves . . . in the final analysis we believe that this communication tends to be confirmed as fact. . . . Drawing complying with the Exquisite Corpse technique . . . accentuates tremendously the life of correspondences that unites the outer and inner worlds.¹⁰

For Breton, then, this randomization both held back the rational mind from acting as a censor over the material, and

also created more "leeway," that is to say, language was de-reified from its straitjacket of rationality. In this way a "liberation" is effected and the mind produces striking images from the discordant material.

Thus, the surrealists develop the practice of randomization, one that produces images that collide against each other. This theory of chance has been articulated by Ernst and Breton as the random juxtapositioning of dissimilar elements to produce the "marvelous" out of the resultant shock to our rationality. The principle of randomization for Andre Breton, meant the cultivation of the systematic putting out of place of objects and their frame of reference, as he wrote:

It is the marvellous capacity to grasp two mutually distant realities without going beyond the field of our experience and to draw the spark from their juxtaposition; to bring within reach of our senses abstract forms capable of the same intensity and enhancement as any others; and, depriving us of any system of reference, to set us at odds with our own memories.¹¹

And Max Ernst, exploring the mechanism of collage writes:

I think I would say that it amounts to the exploitation of the chance meeting on a non-suitable plane of two mutually distant realities (a paraphrase and generalization of the well-known quotation from Lautreamont, "Beautiful as the chance meeting upon a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella)". . . .

A complete, real thing, with a simple function apparently fixed once and for all (an umbrella), coming suddenly into the presence of another real thing, very different and no less incongruous (a sewing machine) in surroundings where both must feel out of place (on a dissecting table), escapes by this very fact from its simple function and its own identity; through a new relationship its false absolute will be transformed into a different absolute, at once true and poetic: the umbrella and the sewing machine will make love. The

mechanism of the process seems to me to be laid bare by this very simple example. Complete transmutation followed by a pure act such as the act of love must necessarily occur every time the given facts make conditions favorable: the pairing of two realities which apparently cannot be paired on a plane apparently not suited to them.¹²

Randomization, then, is a systematic technique that produces a delegitimation of the rationality of means-end relationships by totally putting things out of place, or dislocating the given system of reference. This randomization is both a fundamental negation of the wider rationality that Max Weber refers to by "disenchantment," and the narrower sense of bourgeois reality kept within the confines of the commodity system.¹³ In this manner the reified logic is negated by diverting the object from its taken-for-granted ends. And by this juxtaposition of contraries, the surrealists accomplish an ecstatic transformation; Ernst sees the disparate items "making love," Breton sees creative "sparks" resulting. Let us examine further this reenchanting result.

Expressions of Reenchantment through Randomization:
The Infinite and the Magical

In our examination of randomization we have already displayed the general trajectory of systematic delegitimation leading to that reenchanting state described by Ernst, Breton, Leger, Miller, Pollack, Rothko, and Cage. We turn now to a major expression of reenchantment, articulated by the following artists as contact with the infinite and the magical. For example, in the early

Aragon chance encounters are the means of reaching the infinite.¹⁴ And as the dadaist Hans Richter notes, chance restores the magical, numinous, incantory aspect of art.

The adoption of chance had yet another purpose, a secret one. This was to restore to the work of art its primeval magic power, and to find the way back to the immediacy it had lost. . . . By appealing directly to the unconscious, which is part and parcel of chance, we sought to restore to the work of art something of the numinous quality of which art has been the vehicle since time immemorial, the incantory power that we seek in this age of general unbelief, more than ever before. . . . Absolute acceptance of chance brought us into the realm of magic, conjuration, oracles, and divination "from the entrails of lambs and birds."¹⁵

Similarly, John Cage utilizes chance to short-circuit human intention, in order to arrive at the magical:

. . . I think that when non-intention underlies it . . . that "when" is when our intentions go down to zero. Then suddenly you notice that the world is magical.¹⁶

Finally, we note the parallel between randomized consciousness and the Buddhist concept of enlightenment, as Tristan Tzara relates in his "Lecture on Dada":

Dada is not all modern. It is more in the nature of a return to an almost Buddhist religion of indifference.¹⁷

Indifference implies paying attention to everything, and thereby denies a hierarchy of goals, and means-end relations of reaching them. Our informants will later speak of this attitude as "staying in the present, with the same ideological effect of negating means-end causation.

Reenchantment as Non-Causal Synchronicity

For the dadaists and surrealists, a major resultant of chance was to effect a perceived freedom from causal

relationships, coupled with a feeling of synchronicity with each other and with "higher laws of the universe." Richter, first speaking here of Jung, discusses in his autobiography this dadaist belief in freedom from causality:

He includes chance in his concept of synchronicity, which he describes as "acausal orderedness." This order independent of causality is . . . the momentary pattern formed by a continually changing order. . . . Chance appeared to us as a magical procedure by which one could transcend the barriers of causality and of conscious volition. . . . The official belief in the infallibility of reason, logic, and causality seemed to us senseless. . . . We had adopted chance, the voice of the unconscious--the soul, if you like, as a protest against the rigidity of straight-line thinking.¹⁸

Thus, through randomization, one reaches a higher "order" not linked to the linear thinking of means-end logic, and is thereby free from causality. For Richter, the mystical nature of this randomization is apparent, for what follows is a call for man to synchronize with the cosmos:

The duty of man . . . would thus be to be conscious of this order, to become aware of this continuous act of creation, and to achieve, through meditation, intuition, and concentration, complete identity with the orderedness which has no cause.¹⁹

Later on in this study, we will observe that other random practices tried to effect this same non-causal synchronicity. The well-known dadaist Hans Arp confirms the above statements of Richter in that he characterizes chance as a "higher law":

Chance opened up perceptions to me, immediate spiritual insights. Intuition led me to revere the law of chance as the highest and deepest of laws, and the law that rises from the fundamental. An insignificant word might become a deadly thunderbolt. One little sound might destroy the earth. One little sound might create a new universe.²⁰

And Breton believes that, in the random arrangement of words, they somehow, miraculously, arrange themselves:

Words, groups of words which follow one another, manifest among themselves the greatest solidarity. It is not up to me to favor one group over the other. It is up to a miraculous equivalent to intervene--and intervene it does.²¹

Synchronicity also implies that, in experiments of collective chance writing like *The Exquisite Corpse*, the actors perceive that they are more in touch with each other. Here we recite completely Breton's statement that these experiments:

. . .supported the idea of communication between the participants--tacit, but in waves; this would have to be reduced to its rightful limits by control of the estimate of probabilities, but in the final analysis we believe that this communication tends to be confirmed as a fact.²²

We will later note affinities to the collective writing experiments of our informants.

A final expression of this non-causal synchronicity is that these writers often held the belief that they were simply transcribing cosmic messages, a belief also held by some in our study. We see this in Max Ernst's description of himself as an indifferent spectator to his works. In doing so, he states, following Rimbaud, he has become a "seer":

The author is present at the birth of his work as an indifferent or passionate spectator and observes the phases of its development. Just as the role of the poet, ever since the celebrated "Letter of a Clairvoyant," consists of taking down, as though under dictation, all that is articulated within him, so the painter's role is to outline and project what is visible within him. By devoting myself more and more

to this activity (passivity) . . . and by increasingly trying to restrain my own active participation in the development of the painting so as to enlarge the active part of the mind's hallucinatory faculties, I succeeded in simply attending as a spectator the birth of all my works. . . . Being a man of "ordinary constitution" (to use Rimbaud's term), I have done everything to make my soul monstrous. Blind swimmer, I have made myself a seer.²³

This citation is drawn from a discussion by Ernst of his process of frottage, or random rubbings, in which the self is "decentered" by reducing to a minimum the authorship of the work. Thus, in both frottage and automatic writing, the actors accomplish a minimalization of their role, and thereby perceive synchronicity with some universal principle beyond the rationality of causality.

Our examination of this feature of randomization has seen it as a further systematization of the process of particularization. Through randomization, or separating the activity from the goal, these artists have effected the delegitimation of a rationality of means and ends. The reenchanting result is the restoration of the domain of the infinite and the magical in art, and the accomplishment of a perceived liberation from causality and synchronicity with the "cosmos."

NOTES

¹Novalis, quoted in Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, 4 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), 3:183.

²Stephane Mallarmé, quoted in Anthony Hartley, ed. and trans., Mallarmé (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 207-33.

³Annette Michelson, "Bodies in Space: Film as 'Carnal Knowledge,'" in The Discontinuous Universe: Selected Writings in Contemporary Consciousness, ed. Sallie Sears and Georgianna W. Lord. (New York and London: Basic Books, 1972), p. 324.

⁴Henry Miller, "Reflections on Writing," in The Creative Process: A Symposium, ed. Brewster Ghiselin (New York and Toronto: A Mentor Book), p. 178.

⁵Jackson Pollack, "My Painting," Possibilities, 1 (Winter 1947-48), 79:83.

⁶Mark Rothko, in H. B. Chipp, ed. Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 484.

⁷John Cage, interviewed in Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Winter 1965), 2:60.

⁸Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 51.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁰Andre Breton, "The Exquisite Corpse," in Patrick Waldberg, Surrealism (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), pp. 93-95.

¹¹Andre Breton, in Ernst, "Inspiration to Order," Ghiselin, pp. 66-67.

¹²Max Ernst, *Ibid.*

¹³Fredric Jameson, Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1974), pp. 96-97.

¹⁴Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (Dutton paperback, 1970), p. 136.

¹⁵Richter, pp. 59-60.

¹⁶Cage, p. 65.

¹⁷Tristan Tzara, "Lecture on Dada," in The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1951), p. 247.

¹⁸Richter, pp. 57-58.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57.

²⁰Jean (Hans) Arp, "Dada Was Not a Farce," in Motherwell, p. 294.

²¹Andre Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism (1924)," in Manifestoes of Surrealism (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 49.

²²Andre Breton, "The Exquisite Corpse," in Waldberg, p. 95.

²³Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting," in Waldberg, p. 98.

CHAPTER 5

NEGATING OBJECTIVITY

The cumulative and interpenetrating effect of the above three features point to an intense subjectivity which dissolves objective values. We conceptualize this as the relativity of all values, which unleashes the imagination and allows "everything to be possible." The resultant of particularization of language, negation of time, and randomization all add up to this opening up of the horizon in which everything can be possible.

We have already touched upon this point in the context of earlier features. For example, Baudelaire's "correspondences" lead him to state that everything is significant and related in a vast unity, as he writes:

Swedenborg has taught us that everything is significant, reciprocal, conversely relating, and corresponding.¹

And for Mallarmé, relativity was accomplished by doing away with precise content or meaning of words. Similarly, the surrealist utilization of the particular leads to an unlimited whole. And Artaud believed that the destruction of an instrumental language would lead to limitless possibilities for mankind. Thus the above three features all create the conditions for this relativity of values in which

everything becomes possible, and imagination is given free rein.

In this manner Baudelaire has stated: "Imagination is the queen of truth, and the possible is one of the provinces of truth."² The seminal technique of Baudelaire and Poe that we see extended to the subsequent avant-garde was to dissolve reality into subjectivity, and then imaginatively rearrange the fragments.³ And so in early romanticism the emphasis is on the relativity of values which dereifies the absolute.

Hauser points out that "Romanticism was the ideology of the new society and the expression of the world-view of a generation which no longer believed in absolute values, could no longer believe in any values without thinking of their relativity."⁴ And this relativity results in a breakthrough of passion and imagination for key figures such as Keats, Shelley, and Gericault.⁵

We can say that this relativity of values becomes displayed in all subsequent modern art. This continuity extended through German expressionism and beyond. Even the most conventional and academic of forms--the novel, for example--employed dreamlike, poetic, cinematographic, styles. "Stream of consciousness" and "interior monologues" became integral parts of prose narrative.⁶

And in the dada movement, randomization opens up the possibilities of imagination; as Richter writes

Even without going to extremes, the use of chance had opened up an important new dimension in art: the

techniques of free association, fragmentary trains of thought, unexpected juxtapositions of words and sounds. In the field of visual art this new freedom has consequences that were possibly even more far-reaching.⁷

And further, he speaks of the liberation of the imagination effected by the breakdown of boundaries between the arts. Painters turned to poetry, and poets to painting.⁸ We note parallels here with out discussion of synesthesia; in particular the subordination of art to music discussed in Chapter 2.

The unleashing of the possible is most vividly expressed in surrealism. Breton states that: "The imaginary is that which tends to become real."⁹ And elsewhere, "The poet of the future will surmount the depressing notion of the irreparable divorce of action and dream."¹⁰ Thus the power of imagination and the dream state have liberatory qualities if allowed to dialectically interpenetrate with the disenchanted realm of "action," of reified objectivity. The surrealist principle of randomness re-sensitizes consciousness and leads to the declaration of the relatedness of all things, allowing all possibilities.¹¹ If all things can be related, then the horizon opens and everything becomes possible. We see this exemplified in the poetry of Eluard, of whom a number of sources cite as typifying this surrealist development of imagery from a total freedom of universal interrelationship.¹² And the work of the surrealist Picabia has been characterized as one that juxtaposes contraries until the point is reached when everything can be allowed:

With that comical majesty to which he holds the secret, Picabia will espouse every style, including the worst, thereby demonstrating that everything is possible and that everything is worthwhile. Pushing desacralization to its extreme, he will be occupied with the unheard of and the trivial, will testify that, from a certain point of view, there is no basic difference between a rather commonplace Spanish portrait and "one of the most exceptional paintings in the world."¹³

In this manner the ideological function of allowing "everything to be possible" produces a new enchanted totality, through piecing together the fragments in the imagination.

The same enchanted totality is expressed more recently by John Cage. For him, as we have seen in previous examples, randomization first opens our awareness by leading us to the new possibilities of the unfamiliar:

The whole idea of chance operations is that the field of awareness that's now open to us is so big that if we are not careful we'll just go to certain points in it, points with which we're already familiar. By using chance operations, we can get to points with which we are unfamiliar.¹⁴

Thus a world of random events is enchanted in that it seems to Cage that something is always happening. In this sense he believes that there is no need to make music, for if we listen there are constantly fascinating random combinations of sound around us. As he puts it, there is:

no thing as silence, because something is always happening that makes a sound. . . .¹⁵

In conclusion, we have seen this feature operating in the avant-garde from the romanticism of Baudelaire, through dada, surrealism, and more recently in John Cage. The cumulative effect of the first three features create the condition for the relativity of all values in which

everything becomes possible, and imagination is given free rein. In the process, the given reality is delegitimated, and a limitless enchantment is effected.

NOTES

¹Baudelaire, L'Art romantique, in French Symbolist Poetry, trans. and ed. C. F. MacIntyre (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U. of California Press, 1961), p. 119.

²Baudelaire, cited in Maynard Solomon, ed., Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 506.

³Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 95.

⁴Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, 4 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), 3:172-73.

⁵Fischer, p. 55.

⁶Renato Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde (New York: Icon Editions, Harper and Row, 1971), p. 229.

⁷Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 55.

⁸Ibid., p. 57.

⁹Breton, Preface to Le revolver a cheveux blancs, cited in Solomon, p. 503.

¹⁰Breton, Ibid., p. 510.

¹¹Alfred Willener, The Action Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 214.

¹²See Ibid., p. 216; Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (Dutton paperback, 1970), p. 125.

¹³R. Lebel, "Picabia and Duchamp or the Pro and Con," Patrick Waldberg, Surrealism (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 30.

¹⁴Calvin Tompkins, Ahead of the Game: Four Versions of the Avant-garde (London: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 129.

¹⁵John Cage, cited in Susan Sontag, Styles of Radical Will (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1969), p. 10.

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

In this section, Part One, we have developed a model of features of delegitimation and reenchantment by examining the articulation of this ideology in the European avant-garde. We have found the following four features of this ideology:

1. Particularization through separation of words and "meaning" accomplishes the state of synesthesia, becoming "voyant," or "seer," and mystical silence.
2. Negation of time leads to presentness and simultaneity.
3. Randomization, or particularization through separation of activity from goal, restores the magical and infinite in art and accomplishes a perceived acausal synchronicity.
4. The weight of these cumulative features point to intense subjectivity expressed in the relativity of all values, which unleash imagination and allow everything to be possible.

We have suggestion here of a process. Thus, each feature has its dynamic of delegitimation moving towards reenchantment, and the features are seen as cumulative and interpenetrating. Moreover, there is generally a historical development which we traced with each feature, from early romanticism through surrealism. To sum up, this section

has demonstrated that the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment, as a practice accomplished by the avant-garde, coheres as a structure of resistance to rationalization.

PART TWO

DELEGITIMATION AND REENCHANTMENT:

EAST VILLAGE POETS

PROLOGUE

PROJECT AND OBSERVER

Delegitimation and Reenchantment as Project

The purpose of Part One was to develop a model of features of delegitimation and reenchantment, using the material of the European avant-garde.

This section, Part Two, differs in that I want to show the growth and development of delegitimation and reenchantment as an ideological project. I mean by the term "project" that this process of struggling against instrumental rationality takes the form of a life history with concrete stages. To examine this kind of development, then, I need to study a particular collectivity that evolves over time.

I have found such a collective formation, who, by the accident of self-selection of their association, coalesced as an avant-garde group of poets, artists, and early psychedelic users, and constructed an ideological project of delegitimation and reenchantment that extends over a number of stages. With a sense of project, we can see here the construction and playing out of this ideology through its developing stages and contradictions. Our study focuses on an examination of the forms and expressions this ideological project takes in its various stages.

Relation of Observer to Project

What constraints does the observer face in studying this kind of project? This study grew out of my presence and experience over a five year period with this group of East Village poets, from 1965 through 1969. As I observed the unfolding of the concerns and endeavors of this group, and as their project developed through concrete stages, I conceptualized their activities as a resistance to rationalization. Thus early on, I conceived of this study as an interpretive one with theoretic importance.

My relation with the group began when I moved into a tenement in the East Village, where three people lived who became key members. In turn, this entree let me observe the group's initial formative and psychedelic practices. Later, during the group's poetry stage, I observed many of their activities. Finally, during the commune stage, I lived with the participants for the two formative months.

I thus was involved seriously with the group, but I participated as one of several marginal figures. At the same time, from the beginning, there was a major element of self-consciousness in my participation and observation. I saw myself as a sociologist concerned with searching for features of resistance to rationalization in the group's activities, programmatic statements, and poetry. This element of self-reflection allowed me a critical distance so necessary for analysis.

Because of my theoretic interest and the peculiar

nature of the group, this is not a formal but a loose ethnography. Observing this group required, even more than usual, that the observation not disturb the process but fit in. A number of other researchers confirm this problem I faced in my study: even more than most marginal groups, groups in the counter-culture suspect outsiders, insulate themselves, and don't give standard interview responses.¹

Because of these problems, which I touch upon further in Chapter 6, I did not acknowledge my aim of making this particular study, and they did not ask. While some members knew I had a general theoretic interest in counter-cultural activities, they were unaware that I was doing a concrete study.

Both this closeness and critical distance allowed me to observe over an extended period of time a set of ongoing activities that became their project. My relation of observer to their project consisted of collecting observations of a variety of their activities, recording personal impressions of group processes, conducting formal and informal interviews, both in process and retrospective, and gathering poetic texts for analysis.

¹Thomas Robbins, "The Limits of Symbolic Realism: Problems of Empathic Field Observation in a Sectarian Context," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. XII (December 1973):3; Brian Samuel Sherman, "The East Village: The Social Structure of an Alternative Urban Community" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976), pp. 11-12.

CHAPTER 6

FIRST STEPS: BREAKS WITH THE PAST
AND PSYCHEDELIC PRACTICESIntroduction

This chapter turns to an examination of the emerging "underground" of artists and psychedelic users in the East Village of New York City from 1964 to 1966, before this phenomenon was popularized by widespread media coverage. The East Village provided a place for personnel to collect and develop a total alternative to disenchanted forms of life. Thus this area existed as an ecological niche which provided a space with social supports for the participants in this study. In this manner it allowed for the initial delegitimizing movement in which a project of delegitimation and reenchantment can take place.

These poets thus set the stage for their project by selecting an environment that encourages delegitimizing practices, in art and in life, which can aid their break with their past.

The East Village as Collection Site

I want to suggest that the East Village was a site in which forms of total opposition to American society became possible. Most of the poets in this study were literally

driven to the East Village as a refuge from the perceived oppressiveness of the larger society. As Todd, of the group I observed, characterized American society:

I felt threatened by the things they believed in . . . they threatened the very idea of ideals, and I felt antithetical to their entire mentality. When I was brought up I became aware of the general bigotry of the population, the incredible racism. I began in those days to be conscious, God knows why because there was nobody in my family to reinforce it. You begin to be conscious of this crude, insensitive, cruel and unjust aspect. . . . When I went to college, as soon as I could, I hooked up with some civil rights group, and got into art and poetry. It was a way out, a way to put into practice what I had definitely been conscious of, that there were definite antagonisms. . . .

They saw the East Village as a site of resistance to this repressiveness. Both site, dress, and facial hair marked off bohemia from the society they objected to. East Villagers used to talk about "going above 14th Street" as if it was the demarcation zone or "DMZ" during the Vietnam War. Stephen, also a member of the group studied, notes that above it or outside of New York "You would definitely get hassled for having a beard as a member of an alien, subversive sub-culture." He characterizes American society as:

. . . an acquisitive society, a society afraid to take chances, . . . sexually repressed, alcoholic. It had a violence that was contained and then expressed itself psychosomatically, and against minorities either in America or in other countries . . . by imperializing and subjecting them. It is smugly pleased with itself that it had made "progress" . . . it would accept a war, an undeclared war in Indochina, in a bland sort of way, believing that "the President is always right."

In this manner, the East Village poets express a complete rejection of American society seen as a total system of domination. They believed that those who participate in

it were unfeeling "robots," "programmed" by "bureaucracy," who had lost the power of reflection in yielding to this routinization. They characterized most Americans as "plastic" in the double sense of being bought off by consumer commodities, and treating themselves as a product to be bought and sold in the marketplace.

Their objection had to be total in that they saw no possibility of accommodation. In a retrospective interview he gave me, Tuli Kupferberg, an important East Village poet, suggests:

There was no real ideology to oppose, therefore it had to be a total refusal. Nothing but the slap of a parent or the club of a cop. There is no reactionary ideology. It's salt, you touch it and it melts away and "reforms," but without changing it all.

The East Village was known to these poets as a site in which they could join with others in a culture of opposition, and learn the craft of poetry. Richard recalls:

In college I was an English major, heavily into Beckett and the theatre of the absurd. It was clear to me that I was going to be a writer. There was a whole crew of us early on at my college in the late 50s and early 60s who refused to join fraternities, and used to talk art and haunt the coffeehouses of the old Village. We saw ourselves as the new bohemians. We wanted to write like Alan Ginsberg and Burroughs. As soon as I graduated I moved to New York City, got this apartment on the Lower East Side, and enrolled in the St. Mark's Poetry Project where I met that old beat Seymour Krim, and Alan Ginsberg and Leroi Jones. In fact Jones was living in the same tenement house with Diane Wakowski. So I met him and took a course in writing at the New School with him that summer.

Mark also came to the Lower East Side, as it was then called, in search of cheap rent and a bohemia life-style. As he relates the early scene in 1964:

Friends of mine were living there . . . there were only

one or two boutiques, wild outposts of some esthetic. The first time I saw it it looked like a bombed-out city, just rubble and I couldn't imagine living there. There were a few things happening, like the Dom on St. Marks Place, and there was dancing. I knew Alan Ginsberg was living there, that was an attraction. There was a feeling it was a hip place, way before the head shops and hippies arrived. The rents were cheap, and there were artists and poets around. It was real and authentic. There was Ornette Coleman the jazz musician living in his loft, Leroi Jones, a lot of working poets and artists using cheap accommodations. . . . I was living with a woman and she had a lot of painter and poet friends. We would go to Wednesday night poetry readings at St. Marks Poetry Project, go to openings at 10th St., and visit the lofts of painters. We would catch the latest jazz at the Annex or at Slug's on 3rd St.

For Mark, the expressive nature of both the site of the East Village and the expected counter-cultural role of poet was at first a jolt from his more traditional background, as he relates:

I has been brought up on the classic American writers and never lived in a slum in my life. All of a sudden I met so many people that were miles beyond me, like, not paying any attention to Eliot, Wallace Stevens, or John Crowe Ransom, but thinking of poetry in terms of jazz rhythms and so on. I would meet a poet and he would say "Oh, you're a poet. Hope you are screaming, baby, hope you are screaming."

Another account of the attraction of the site is given by Steven:

What started the push was the development of the West Village. Rents got more expensive and so I looked at the Lower East Side where rents were always cheap. I moved to 5th St. and Avenue B in 1963. The block was a mixture of Ukranian and Polish families, interracial couples, and bohemian artists and poets moving in. Then it sort of fed on itself, more people coming, the place called successively "the underground," "the combine generation," "the new bohemia," and finally the East Village. . . . It was centrally located, right near all the plays, near everything that you wanted to do. Then the Metro

opened, and became very popular. Everybody went down there--that's where I met Ed Sanders and Carol Berge. I started reading there. Every poet read there sooner or later, out of town poets would come and read.

And this new environment was, above all, seen as a place where a project of moving towards a non-alienated society could be possible. Here I am speaking not of the project of this specific group of poets in the narrow sense, but of a movement of society or within society that this early moment of the counter-culture seemed to promise. Specific outlines were not available, but as Susan put it:

It was exciting. I thought that the end would be revolution, whatever that meant. I had long ago given up a simple marxist or Stalinist idea of what revolution was. I was closer to the anarchist idea--the people around WIN magazine. To me it would be a definite and real change in your daily life and your spiritual life, for want of a better term. And the new art we were doing would have a role in all this. As to relations between people, what that would be we didn't know, but we were working on it, in that they had to be freer. Like Marcuse's Eros and Civilization, and especially Norman Brown's Life Against Death. But it all seemed possible because a lot of things were happening, there was a lot of movement.

I would like to round out these accounts of the East Village as a collection point for the poets' project by further describing the East Village and the scenes and models available to the poets.

It is important to note that there was a conscious continuity between the ideology of the European avant-garde and the counter-culture of the East Village. The beat generation of poets were known and read by the 1960s poets. Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder pick up the line that Rimbaud and the surrealists had stressed--that of the poet as "seer,"

and the circle of poets as "illuminati," seeking "cosmic" wisdom that opposed a disenchanted world.

A description of the contents of the many poetry magazines illustrates this continuity. Thus, the Insect Trust Gazette¹ has poetry from the contemporaries William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Carol Berge, Jackson MacLow, and the European surrealists Max Ernst and Paul Eluard, Paul Klee, Hans Arp, and Antonin Artaud. Similarly, Big Table #2² publishes Allen Ginsberg, Burroughs, Paul Bowles, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, side by side with the European Antonin Artaud and Andre Breton.

Aside from these magazines, others were available and constantly springing up as models: Mother, Nadada, Elephant, Floating Bear, Black Mask, C Magazine. There were also many bookstores specializing in small press poetry; the East Side Bookstore on St. Marks Place, and, most notably, Ed Sander's Peace Eye Bookship.

Ed also published and was hounded by the police for his Rabelasian Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts. The magazine was subtitled "A Total Assault on Culture," and specialized in poetry which espoused an unfettered sexuality and attacked all forms of repression. Ed as a model displayed the unity of cultural and political practice: he was a leader of the pacifist sit-in at the nuclear submarine plant in New London, Connecticut. And later, at the height of the Vietnam war, he was a member of the rock group, "the Fugs," known for their caustic song "Kill, Kill, Kill for Peace."

The key mediator of the beat scene to our group was the Moroccan painter Yousef. He lived in the same tenement as Richard and had an avuncular relationship with the poets, being much older. He was "discovered" by Paul Bowles in the late 1940s in Tangier, and later exhibited at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York City in 1948. In the late 1950s he lived in Tangier with the beat crowd of Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Tennessee Williams, and Brion Gysin. His biography also displays a link to dada; he appeared in a movie made in the early 1960s by the dadaist Hans Richter. Yousef not only mediated this entire scene to the sixties poets through his firsthand stories, but also introduced the poets to Ginsberg and others.

Initial Delegitimizing Practices in Art and Life

The model of particularization of meaning and randomization, that I have developed in Part One, was perhaps the strand of the avant-garde that was most clearly prized and developed in the early 1960s. A host of artists and poets were influenced by John Cage's random methods. Thus the East Village became a site in which this delegitimizing and reenchanting activity became possible, both as art as a practice available to these counter-cultural poets.

The major performance places for poetry readings, happenings, performance pieces, and music, were the Judson Memorial Church, the St. Marks Church, and the Bridge Theatre. At the Judson Church John Cage performed his Music of Changes,

composed for the I Ching, or Book of Changes. This Chinese book of wisdom was consulted by random flips of a coin, and was popular in the East Village. In this piece, each element Cage could discern in a piece of music (for example, choice of notes, choice of tempo, duration) was subjected to a chance operation.

Ann Halprin's Judson Dance Group, with Terry Riley and La Monte Young, performed Five Legged Stool. Each person had different tasks to do, but they could be done in any combination, and all the tasks were non-functional. She notes:

There was an enormous amount of juxtaposition in Five Legged Stool and it was done deliberately. There was an attempt to really break down cause and effect. . . . I didn't want anything to look as if it had meaning, or continuity.³

Another Judson dance performance recalled by Peter had the dancers handing each other glasses of water. But they were moving so slowly that the temporal aspect was dislocated and all one saw was a series of tableaux of people holding glasses of water. In this manner the piece made one become acutely aware of the discrete frozen moment, separate from any total process.

There were many other artists and poets using random and dissociating techniques in their art. To name just a few, the Fluxus Group, with George Brecht and Yoko Ono, focused on repetitive particulars separate from any goal. In Brecht's Drip Piece, the audience watches water slowly dripping in a huge pot. The pot is so big that it never becomes even partly filled; thus one can not attend to any means/end

process or goal of filling the pot. Similarly, in Ono's Dawn Piece, one is instructed to take the first word that comes to mind and repeat it till dawn. This is really the same technique as the soon to be popular Hindu and Buddhist idea of the "mantra," a word repeated over and over in order to gain enlightenment. In a manifesto declaring its delegitimizing intent, the Fluxus Group specifically denies any distinction between art and non-art, any pretension towards significance, complexity, skill, and "institutional and commodity value."⁴

In all these techniques, liberation from meaning is for these East Village artists a meaning that is part of a system of domination. This is why they stress activity without goal. It is a quest for a use value that negates exchange value. "Meaning" is seen as repressive, ideological, and reductive. A few examples display this.

William Burroughs used the cut-up technique on some of his novels. Yousef once related Burroughs' intent in cutting up and shuffling and re-paging what he had written:

Burroughs once said, if you take a public document, like a law, and you cut it up, then you will get some of the meaning behind it without the confusion and the hypnotism of the formalized language.

In this manner randomization can delegitimize the taken-for-granted ideology. Bureaucratic domination was believed to have made people virtual robots. Therefore, any method in art or in life, that can break down taken-for-granted patterns and habits was seen as liberating in that it forced

people to reflect on the iron cage.

And this also implies that the thing in itself must be appreciated as it is, without any reduction or explanation, which would reduce it. I once heard a poem read and asked the poet to explain or expand upon what he meant. He instead reread the poem, from beginning to end. He later expressed that any explanation would be in his terms a reduction of meaning of the poem.

This also exhibited a constraint on the researcher, in that it was difficult or almost taboo to get people to explain what they meant. You were there, and everybody assumed that everything was perfectly clear, that everybody "dug it," that all assumptions were shared. One could participate in or appreciate their activities of breaking with rationality. But to ask for an explanation was seen as a falling back or recuperation of the very rationality they opposed.

Since life was not seen as something separate from art, these techniques of particularization and randomization were equally prized in the everyday scenes the East Village poets were involved in. In practice, this involved what might be viewed by the "straight" world as purposeless activity, wandering or non-goal related activity.

One most notable example is the kind of talk that was called "rapping." Most speech is purposeful, instrumental activity. Rapping, in contrast, is speech not for a purpose, but for its own sake. The better the rap, the more the sensuousness of the talk, without any goal. Thus conversation

was never "about" any topic, but was elliptical, "spaced out," and each subsequent speaker would pick up an obscure corner of the previous speaker's rap and begin there. Conversation in this manner would branch out, denigrating form, denying any exchange value. Also, long silences were tolerated, along with the use of "like," "oh wow," and extended laughter, all of which aided the destruction of form. Words were used not to convey meaning, but to make sounds. Talking became music, and any sense of time present in normal conversation became totally lost.

Similarly, the idealized relationship was the random and spontaneous meeting of two or more people for friendship, sex, or whatever. In this regard, there was almost a taboo on instrumentalizing the relationship. It was bad form to ask a person's last name, or even to exchange phone numbers. One rarely asked what one did for a living, or anything about the past, and never about one's family. In their quest to break with their past, the privileged topic of conversation was what was happening now, in the immediate present. Therefore, to deny instrumentalizing relationships meant that the actors chose not a relationship of exchange, but of ecstasy.

Typical of this prizing of randomization, or what the poets sometimes called "letting things happen," was the time Peter went to the store for some milk and didn't come back for two days. He met some people and went up to Tompkins Square Park, a major meeting place. There he met other people who invited him somewhere upstate. This was always

happening, and it was therefore impossible and even frowned upon to plan ahead or routinize any future activity. Thus, random activities created a life-world that was totally open to the possibilities of the future.

And each particular perception or event was valued for itself. One expression used by the actors was "it's all the same," or, "it's all the same thing." This meant that every event is equal to any other occurring events. Each is privileged, and it is wrong to rank them in a hierarchy of values. We have here an expression of pure use value and the denigration of all exchange value or instrumentalization. One should "not be attached," but "let things flow," or "let things happen." In this context the terms "groovy," or "grooving on things," or "digging things" were used, in that they connote appreciating the flow of particulars, or whatever is "happening," without judgment or value. This mode of thinking comes not only from the avant-garde, but from the counter-culture interest in Buddhist enlightenment, defined as detachment from causal relations and from judgment.

Once Todd was "digging" or meditating on a brick wall. He did it because "It induces a mystery. Each mystery is equal to any other mystery. . . . I used them because they liberate you from standard forms . . . it creates breakdowns." And Larry comments on the reenchanting effect of this process of particularization after hearing a La Monte Young concert:

It's a complete head trip, I mean, to go to one of his

concerts, which were largely vocal . . . to hear that unwavering tone which they would produce, that tone which they could hold for an unendurable amount of time and hardly change. . . .

It was ecstatic, you were transported, it was a mystical experience, but as an analogue without a drug . . . it was pure pleasure, you felt sucked up into it and changed, in the sense that, while you would focus on it, it became you, it took you out of everything you were in, and it became itself, so that you and it joined together to become something else entirely. But it didn't have any of the formal dimensions of beauty, joy, or love, it was too concrete for that . . . it established a totality and that was it, you were inside of it, and that was the world.

Practical Breaks With the Past

As these poets settled into their new milieu, they made a series of practical breaks with their past. Each of these breaks further defined their project of resistance to rationalization.

A crucial break for most was a movement from bureaucratic work to less routinized, more manual work. Most of the participants were college graduates and had earlier in their lives assumed that they would have some kind of white collar job. An important model here was Paul Goodman. Both Richard and Steven were influenced by his book, Empire City. There he writes of artists living in cheap lofts in Jersey City. He suggests the possibility of breaking with routinized work patterns by living cheaply, doing periodic physical work, and doing one's art the rest of the time.

Many of the participants found this an attractive possibility. Janis, after arriving from Baltimore, soon was able to leave her job as a physical therapist in a hospital,

and teach belly dancing. And Richard relates:

When I first moved to New York City, I got a job as a reporter for Woman's Wear Daily. It was a ridiculous job, covering society events, and then going home to the Lower East Side. But then, it was my first, and, I hope, my only "straight" job, and I was learning how to write, like Hemingway, on a newspaper. After about six months, I realized that, since my rent was very cheap, I could live on much less. We furnished the apartment from the street, and on principle were against the money economy. Arthur from Third Street got me a job on the docks, unloading fruit. I only worked one night a week, that's all I needed to survive. The rest of the time I could work on my novel and poetry.

Similarly, Steven was going to graduate school in psychology, and was doing substitute teaching and therapy for a living.

He notes:

I wanted to do a dissertation on Abraham Maslow's ideas of "peak experience," while they wanted me to run rats or do something more traditional. So I decided to quit graduate school. Around the same time I realized that I was not teaching, but was rather a monitor of these kids. Moving from school to school as a sub was in one sense more interesting, but I was still controlled by this bureaucracy.

So Phillip Glass and I began doing plumbing, fixing up people's lofts and installing the pipes. We could make our own hours, work a lot at a stretch, and then take off. Bureaucratic work is like selling your soul, or rather your mind and body.

But a minority preferred working with their heads.

Don complains of the pressure to quit his straight job:

I met people who were working on the docks, who became carpenters, people who definitely wanted to work with their hands because they didn't dig the kinds of people with whom they would have to associate with, and the kinds of manners they would have to put on, and the kinds of lies they would have to tell if they worked at straight jobs. They just didn't want to do that. There was enough money floating around . . . there were construction jobs.

I didn't feel that way, because I have always tried to avoid working with my hands if at all possible, which are largely useless, anyhow. I'd rather work with my

brain, so to speak, than my hands, so I never thought twice about giving up a teaching job. Although there was pressure on me from friends, like, you should quit your job, or, make sure you always work part-time, never full-time. Or, look at these people, they don't have jobs, they are on welfare, and so on.

It's like the reverse of what your mother tells you. Your mother tells you "For God sakes, get a job, or you are just fucked up." There would be people here who would say to me "For God sakes, quit your job or you are just fucked up."

This conflict displays a tension which develops further in this study. Don raises the problem of whether the reverse of rationalization is a new form of life, or simply another side or expression of the same rationalization. As their project develops this tension will unfold further.

Another indicator of the break with their past was the extremely high rate of religious, racial, and class intermarriage (see table 2).

I interpret this as a choice made by the actors to build forms of life that object to the taken-for-granted ethnic, class, religious, racial and sexual definitions common in America in the early 1960s.

As table 2 shows, 13 out of 14 intermarriages are interreligious, 4 out of 14 interracial, 10 out of 14 interclass.

It was difficult to get responses on this subject. One informant stated that "the idea of marrying a Jewish girl was like falling back in the same pit." He went on to note that there was a liberatory aspect to marrying outside. But most informants, while not defining themselves along these traditional lines, claimed a basis of love for their marriage.

TABLE 2

DEGREE OF INTERMARRIAGE AMONG
EAST VILLAGE POETS

Couples	Religion	Race	Class	Other "Violation"
1	yes		yes	
2	yes	yes	yes	
3	yes		yes	
4	yes		yes	
5	yes		yes	
6	yes	yes	yes	Age Difference
7	yes			
8	yes			
9	yes	yes	yes	
10	yes			
11		yes	yes	Gay males
12	yes		yes	Age difference
13	yes		yes	
14	yes			

1. Each of the 14 couples accomplish one form of intermarriage = 100%
2. 13 out of 14 intermarriages are interreligious = 93%
3. 4 out of 14 are interracial = 29%
4. 10 out of 14 are interclass = 71%
5. 7 out of 14 accomplish 2 or more forms of intermarriage = 50%

But "love" may not exclude other choices. One thing was clear to this observer: each of the couples had a very close and intimate relationship. I believe that it was necessary to have a close comrade to share such an intense project of resisting the main trend of our culture. In this manner, they were committed to sharing together a remaking of themselves in their quest for cultural liberation. And by having a partner of another religion, race, or class, they could begin their self-definition as objecting to the very reification of these prevailing categories.

The East Village was also the site for a host of delegitimizing practices which I will call material violations. These consist of antagonism to the cash nexus economy through barter, "liberating material," dealing, and begging. And they violate conventional eating, sleeping, and living habits.

A major material violation for these East Village poets was a rejection of the traditional cash-nexus relationships of exchange. There was a general feeling that an alternate economy of barter, based on need rather than income, was possible and desirable in the 1960s. These poets had read Marcuse, who wrote that scarcity was artificially imposed by capitalism. Thus, in reality, there was a material base for abundance, but one outside of capitalism. This notion converged with the strong anarchist current in the East Village.

Sometimes free circulation of goods was carried out on a more symbolic level. Thus Mark notes:

For about nine months I was crashing at friends' houses before I got my place. I'd carry my toothbrush, and not much else, but I would make it a point to always bring something, like a geode, and I would always be given something, or would take something, which I would leave at the next apartment. I was circulating the goods without money.

And Janis relates that, in a mountain shack in Woodstock, at a time when the original occupant was gone for months, things were left, and things were taken, but no one touched an obviously valuable oud, an oriental string instrument, that was hanging in one corner.

Thus, circulation of goods based on need and desire was common and was encouraged. In this manner, the poets envisioned an ideal society as an extension of a network of sharing friends:

If you try to deal with other people the way you deal with your intimate friends, if you can really do this, and if you are an averagely nice person, then you don't need money, and you've got a good society.

This notion of a barter economy was more formalized by the people around the anarchist magazine WIN, by setting up a "free store." Larry Meyers, with his anarchist group "Black Mask," later called "Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers," also set up a free store. Anyone could pick up any clothes he or she needed, and many people would drop off clothes they no longer wanted. And every so often there would be feasts. Larry relates:

They would go up to the Hunts Point market and bring back

food that was going to be thrown out anyhow. Once the Motherfuckers had a feast at the Old Courthouse on First Avenue and Second Street, the Millenium Filmmakers building. Handbills were passed out, and everybody ate communally and free.

And the Motherfuckers were also active, among others, in setting up a large network of vacant apartments that served as "crashpads," where one could sleep free.

Their antagonism to the monetary economy also took stronger forms that violated the law. They believed, with the anarchist theorist, Proudhon, that property is theft.

As Michael put it:

There's Woody Guthrie's line "some steal with a gun, and some with a fountain pen." There's no difference between ripping off and the way a lot of respectable Americans make their living. For instance, a landlord is always stealing, and a merchant is always stealing.

Stealing, then, usually called "liberating material," "re-appropriating," or "ripping off," was held up on the ideological level. To steal from the rich was moral, and no one but the rich would steal from the poor. To take from the state was good, unless you take from a program which does particular good.

In practice, the group of East Village poets that I observed were more cautious than, for example, the Motherfuckers. They would jam parking meters and punch holes in telephone bills. And "phennigs from Germany were passed out in large numbers to be used in the subway turnstiles." They would later refuse to pay the "telephone war tax," the new telephone tax which was designed to pay for the Vietnam War.

And Susan, who was close to the people around WIN magazine,

notes:

It was proposed once to send 500 people into a super-market and take out as much food as they needed. Keith Lampe also tried to organize something like this at Macy's.

Thus, there was a growing awareness that one should take things not on an individual, but on a mass and public basis, as a political statement of resistance to the capitalist commodity form.

Another material violation that put participants outside of "straight" society was "dealing," or selling marijuana. Serge, for a very brief time, got into dealing "in weight." He notes that the risk induced a "high" of its own:

It was quite an experience to be sitting on 100 pounds of grass in the apartment. You never knew what would happen. I was never exactly . . . sort of . . . paranoid. But it seemed to heighten experience . . . you were always waiting . . . aware.

Serge also liked dealing because he felt he was helping to circulate a scarce and "holy" substance that was needed. In fact, more than clothes or food, marijuana was the chief substance that was circulated free among friends or strangers in the East Village milieu. And this was no accident, for it itself symbolized an ecstasy that broke the bonds of a world of instrumental exchange.

Similarly, "begging" was an entirely new relationship to the circulation of money experienced in the East Village. Don related:

People took care of each other around here. Sometimes when we were low on funds we would ask for change on corners occasionally, but we would never make a living out of it. Other times we would give.

Begging thus renders a pure rejection of the commercial world. All relationships of exchange are rejected. Rather, people are seen as natural resources, like the trees and vines that one might pick fruit from. The cry of "spare change" suggests that one can easily dispense with the excess one has, and circulate it to one with need, rather than squander it on a candy bar, and thus enrich a system of profits for industry.

The constant conflict with the police also served to define the group in their break with their past. The police were despised as the agent of repression of an unjust society. If this was an abstract conception earlier in their lives, it became very concrete once they moved to the East Village. For the police were constantly involved in incidents of repression of the counter-cultural community.

Carol related this incident:

One day a theatre group put on a street play on Second Avenue and St. Marks, consisting of two or four actors. It happened to be in criticism of the police for busting a crashpad. The police decided to break up the performance, they said you have to have a license to do such a thing. But there were enough people in the audience watching to resist the police, which they did, forcibly, and there was a riot, or mini-riot, and the people were busted.

This was typical; there were constant explosions with the police occurring all over the East Village.

Another practical break with their past was a constant

violation of normal sleeping, eating and living habits. People often would stay up very late, and sleep into the morning. But more pronounced was that there were no consistent patterns of sleep at all. For example, no one in the group could figure out when Yousef slept, or, even if he ever slept. For people often would visit him, arriving from around 10 P.M. until 2 A.M., and leaving from 3 A.M. until 5 A.M. Yousef would then go to paint. But others would arrive very early in the morning, and he would still be up. And Michael relates this incident:

When I came to New York City in the early 60s, La Monte Young put me up. He asked me if I wanted some grass. I said no, I was very tired, since at the time I had been up for 20 hours straight. And he said, "Oh, I've been up for four days." I felt very humble. He would stay up and play and play saxophone for days.

And, since there was no sense of a structured day in time, there were no mealtimes. People ate when hungry, or, when they could find the time to eat.

A minority, like Peter, were "into" special diets. He would periodically fast, and would constantly change his diet. Sometimes he would eat macrobiotically, other times he ate only fruits and nuts. He was trying to reach a certain meditative "purity" with these diets. He believed that the western diet of meat and sugar was a source of the violence of our culture. Thus his break with the past was also developed through a break in eating patterns.

Traditional living habits were violated in that this group did not view their apartments as their own property,

but as a communal resource. There was a conscious attempt to break down any sense of privacy, in that visitors were constantly arriving. And often people would "fall out" if tired, at someone else's place, at any time of day or night. Often at the end of a long evening a good number of people would elect to sleep there and go home the next day. And as most of the poets were not working in any traditional bureaucratic pattern, one could visit for many days at a time.

One particularly troublesome incident helped to clarify their commitment to breaking with traditional living habits. Eugene frequently came over to play chess with Steven. He often would stay over for a few days at a time. But after a while, when he lost his apartment, he stayed over permanently. This was O.K. for Steven. But after about three months, Janis could not stand to have him around. But Steven felt strongly that people should be able to come and go as they please. And in particular, Eugene needed a place to stay at that time. Eugene finally left on his own, without being told to go. This conflict thus clarified and, in this case, reinforced their commitment to more spontaneous and less traditional household arrangements.

Group Formation and Sketch of Participants

Alan Watts was not only an important model for the group, he was inadvertantly instrumental in the initial coming together of the poets. In the spring of 1964, he

gave a lecture on Taoism which Mark attended. At that lecture Mark met Steven, Janis, and Don. A friendship developed, and each person introduced each other to an ever widening circle of friends. Janis was from Baltimore and knew a whole group of artists, poets and musicians from there that were then living in New York. Today the best known is the composer Phillip Glass. Mark and Richard knew many East Village poets. As an outgrowth of this meeting, then, an ongoing network of people began to know each other.

As a model, Alan Watts was a mediator in the early 1960s of information on oriental mysticism, particularly on the enlightened state in Zen Buddhism called "satori." He was author of The Way of Zen, and "Beat Zen, Square Zen."⁵ This last essay interpreted the avant-garde tradition in terms of oriental enlightenment; he speaks of zen in the random practices of John Cage and Mark Tobey, and of the forceful social criticism and "digging of the universe" in the poetry of Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg.

When I met most of the protagonists in this study I had no idea where their collective project would take them in their quest to resist the pervasive rationalization which they felt imposed on them. The common interests of the actors developed over the five-year time span of their involvement with each other. The setting begins in New York in 1965; their ages range mainly from the early to the late 20's. All the actors were trying to find roles outside of the routinized, bureaucratic society. All were developing

artistic or bohemian lifestyles; all identified with one variety or another of the then-called "underground." Most were poets and/or novelists, some were painters; all sought personal fulfillment through their art. Those few that did not define themselves as artists self-consciously developed their lifestyles as an art form. Most interpreted their life in esthetic, psychological, or philosophical constructs. Later, mystical self-definitions would be added.

The group had in common not only their artistic self-definition, but a growing interest in "altered states of consciousness." Most had smoked marijuana, and most would have "tripped" by the end of the study. The poets regularly visited each other in various apartments throughout Manhattan, spending long evenings together; tripping, developing intense relationships with each other, reading new poems. And they shared an intense feeling of friendship and sense of community with each other.

I would now like to give a brief sketch in order to introduce the major participants in this study.

Steven, 28, a graduate student in psychology, had just left graduate school. He has a number of clients to whom he gives therapy. He has recently been acting more as a psychedelic "guide," than traditional therapist with his clients. He himself uses psychedelics as a tool for psychological self- and interpersonal understanding. He finds himself turning to poetry for the same kind of self-understanding. He is more and more repulsed by the bourgeois game of professional

psychology, which for him fosters conformity rather than "peak experience" of growth. Disliking the idea of constant bureaucratic work, he works irregularly and uses his time creatively. He is in the process of building his body to adapt to a more physical lifestyle. Besides psychotherapy, he has been a per diem substitute teacher, dealt marihuana in "weight" for a brief time, does plumbing. He will shortly begin practicing yoga. Steven was a very strong figure in the group. Although all had great admiration for each other, for a time Steven played a role akin to "father figure" for the group. He has been very influenced by Paul Goodman's work, and will become influenced by Leary and Alpert.

Janis is 32 and married to Steven. She was a "head" in the 50's, is a dancer and poet. She teaches dance, dance movement, and self-expression. Dance for her is an expression of ecstasy. She has developed a lifestyle of cultivation of ecstatic states through dance, sex, mysticism, interpersonal relations, and psychedelics. She characterized herself as always living in the present, always "digging" what is happening, always open to the other, turned on. Janis comes from a midwest Protestant background and Steven is of Jewish descent.

Richard, 22, recently arrived in New York City from an out-of-town college. He is a poet and novelist, and is working on a novel about the psychedelic scene of the "East Village." He has developed a lifestyle around writing and literature, and has been influenced by Beckett, Joyce,

Durell, and Paul Bowles. He sees in "new thing" jazz and hegelian philosophy the "leaps" his mind loves to take in his writing. Marihuana is equally important, for it facilitates these "jumps" of his mind, and makes new imaginative connections. He takes great esthetic pleasure in this, and it fuels his writing, which later will become a self-conscious description of the movement of his stoned mind. He is taking graduate courses in philosophy not for a degree, but to assist his writing. Richard worked for a brief time as a reporter, and is now focusing on his writing full-time. To survive minimally, he works one night a week on the docks unloading fruit. Politically he is a cultural anarchist. He comes from an upper middle class old-line Protestant family, and is married to Susan, from first generation Catholic parentage. Susan was always on the periphery of the group, although her excellent poetry was well-represented in the poetry readings and magazine.

Todd, 28, of Jewish parentage, recently arrived in New York with his wife, Carol, 28, of middle-class black parents. They had recently spent a year hitch-hiking through Europe. Todd was working with retarded children in a private school, and his wife was a nurse. Both defined their world in terms of interpersonal psychological insights. They had just begun to trip with LSD, having never smoked marihuana before. Both will later develop an intensely religious and mystical world view.

Peter, 29, from a working class Catholic background, is a playwright, poet, and painter. He would later become a therapist. His plays focus on the act of play as a form of communion, community, ecstasy. His therapy and poetry develop in this direction. Very concerned about diet and fasting, he would later develop a more explicitly mystical world-view and begin to practice Kundalini Yoga, as well as give yoga therapy.

Mark, 25, a graduate student in philosophy, was attracted to phenomenology because for him it negated the taken-for-granted bourgeois world. He saw certain analogies between phenomenology and psychedelics, which seem to melt preconceived cultural definitions and project one into the present. Influenced by Taoism and Mircea Eliade, he was leaning toward a mystical philosophy that denied history, unfroze reified roles, looked at the world as "illusion," and changed the very notion of western time, which was seen as oppressive. He was looking for an unfettered lifestyle in which everything was possible.

These are the main protagonists, although over the five-year period to follow at each stage some are more important than others. There are about 15 minor characters, some important at various stages of the group. They generally share the common group interests, with the possible exception of the craft of poetry.

Psychedelic Practices

These poets were embarked on a project of delegitimation and reenchantment of the fundamental structures of rationalization which they found constraining. The psychedelic practices I describe here are but another form of expression of their attack on the disenchanted world.

They were attracted to cultural and psychedelic practices because they saw in both a fundamentally subversive activity. They believed, with the poet Jerome Rothenberg, that revolutions are often preceded and accompanied by a breakdown in communication, and this breakdown is first articulated by poets and visionaries. They saw in this breakdown a condition of health, an opening up of the closed world dominated by instrumental rationality. Rothenberg expresses their quest:

1. I will change your mind.
2. Any means (= methods) to that end.
3. To oppose the "devourers" = bureaucrats, system makers, priests, etc. (W. Blake).⁶

Thus their interest in psychedelic practices stemmed from the aid they perceived it gave to radically undermine the iron cage.

The chief models for their psychedelic activities were Timothy Leary and Alan Watts. When Leary began experimenting with psychedelics at Harvard, he gave some to Allen Ginsberg, Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts and other poets and artists. This was consonant with the tradition in the avant-garde beginning

with Rimbaud of the artist as visionary. For example, Artaud had written about his peyote experiences, and Ginsberg had written about both marijuana and his search for the South American herb Ayahuasca.

After his mescaline trips, Alan Watts wrote The Joyous Cosmology,⁷ where he shows that the mystical quest for enlightenment is aided by the psychedelic experience. And Leary wrote The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead.⁸

This latter book, especially, was used as a program or blueprint for the psychedelic trips the poets took. It detailed what to expect in the stages of each trip. It gave a language to the participants that deprecated routine "game" reality, and valued the complete transcendence of self that can be reached in the psychedelic experience. And it expressed delegitimation and reenchantment in the Buddhist framework of a fundamental death-rebirth experience. In this sense, the psychedelic experience is a cessation of the "self" seen as the routinized and repressive societal roles. One stops playing the "plastic" games of society, and out of this comes a rebirth or enlightenment.

The following summarizes how the actors report their psychedelic experience: The experience of being stoned makes one feel that all senses are open and alive. Sense perception seems like arrows pointing out to the world, connecting one to what is out there. From one's own sense perception of being "together," integrated, one feels the

wholeness of the world. A more extreme expansion of this same feeling is synesthesia, in which the senses correspond and fuse together, so that one smells a touch, tastes a sound. Further along this continuum, the self and other objects merge, or at least are seen in harmonious balance and rhythm. One feels re-integrated into the world, experienced as a cosmic world and not as current historical social structures. This cosmic re-integration of self is the key to the psychedelic experience.

The actors in this study all tried to remake themselves through this cosmic experience. There was an attempt to melt down the old ego self, and develop a new self which was reintegrated with the cosmos.

Steven, for example, has set his goal in tripping in a melting down of the old ego and a merging with the "white light," which is the same as nirvana in eastern systems of thought. But, instead of melting and merging, for a series of 7-8 trips he found himself frozen to a sense of self that he would like to lose but was afraid to.

This expresses a major contradiction in their efforts to change themselves. Steven wanted to retain a sense of himself as not only an affective person, but one endowed with reason. He was aware that many modern poet-mystics had intense reenchanted experiences without being later reduced to a "catatonic" state. Moreover, these poets had later written about this experience supposedly beyond words. But this did not allay the fear that, in the psychedelic

experience, one may "never come back."

For some members of the group, then, the psychedelic experience was too intense. Stanley would get lost in "endless time-warps" on his trips, and had difficulty "re-entering" reality. So he stopped tripping altogether, and began doing yoga, a delegitimizing practice he could better control.

Janis' LSD experiences brought her to a full-blown mystical state. Again, the key here is ego loss. In each trip she felt her body melting, and instead of fighting it as Steven did, she went along with the flow of it to find herself melting and merging with all things. For her all things became connected; all is one. Janis found a new emotional grounding in this subjectively reached discovery which allowed her to express her ecstatic side practically all the time, whether high or not. This ecstatic experience led to her interest in dance and body techniques. Important for her was living in the present, beyond bureaucratic time. She described the LSD experience as a stopping of time, allowing her contemplation and reflection. Time became like taffy, stretched out. The psychedelic trip was just that for her because one discovery seemed to follow another. She began to call just about everything a "trip," whether high or not. The metaphor of successions of marvelous discoveries became a lens for her entire life. Anything that happened to her was not seen as a good or bad event, but as part of the trip, as part of the flow, and as such profitable. What was

important was not to "judge," but to go with it, to let things happen.

She assumed an important role as trip "guide" for most of the participants. Her world-view initiated most of the voyagers to the LSD experience. Some key terms that were used were "set" and "games." The group was always trying to "break the set," that is, get out of what they were doing and move onto something else. Breaking the "set" also implied that the participants were more in contact with their unconscious, and therefore their spontaneity. Formal and routinized conversations were avoided, the emphasis placed on extraordinary states, connections, conversations. The old set implied the dreary bureaucratic ways of consuming and relating. Anything that would assist in breaking the set was used. No one set was held. Acid was the tool par excellence for breaking one's old set and moving on to a new conception of reality. Similarly, "games" usually implied "low-level games," that is ordinary bureaucratic reality of job, careerism, etc. The admonition was to end all games, especially low-level ones, to look into oneself, to tear off the shell of socialized reality, which was seen as coercive, and relate openly with others. LSD removed one from world of ordinary games. As Todd put it:

It takes the blinkers off vision. At the beginning of my trips, the structure of reality is shattered. At this point I can really see again, as if for the first time.

And Susan relates:

After about a half an hour upon ingestion of LSD, the whole learned symbol system seems to drop away. Then, it's up to you to make new connections, to regroup symbols at will.

Thus one peels off layers of the old self, one detaches oneself from the old games, until one is reborn, if only for a few moments, new. As one comes down from the trip, the old self may come back to a greater or lesser extent. But having once seen oneself differently acts as a benchmark of comparison. The old games are seen as relativized; new possibilities open up.

Richard's use of psychedelics was more confined to hashish and marijuana. The world-view induced here was one of fanciful changes, constant jumps of the mind. Psychedelics gave primacy to the imagination, so that anything is possible. As he wrote:

Sixth Grass Meditation: that which is thinkable is real. . . . Acts become sacred, endowed with a meaning that transcends the mere facticity with which they had been characterized. One no longer does something merely to get it done. And it is possible to choose the level on which you wish to do it. Pot is transcendental, a bridge between different levels of reality, as it exists in the mind.

Thus psychedelic practices opened up an imagination that could dereify frozen social patterns. Eugene makes a similar comment:

We become attached to finite realities which we believe are absolute. Acid allows me to break out of these imprisoning models which my own mind creates.

Richard was a great lover of "new thing jazz" and was often found at Slug's, a jazz place on the Lower East Side.

New thing jazz operated as psychedelics for him, for by breaking the old forms, and making leaps, it created a kind of freedom. Besides Ornette Colman, Archie Shepp, and Eric Dolphy, he listened to the classical composers Stockhausen and the early Boulez for the same reasons, because here is an art which is struggling to "get out," to break its own norms. Imagination, then, was the key to breaking out of the routine ways of perceiving. Richard would use all these practices to create new imaginative connections in his quest to reenchant the world.

Mark's model of the psychedelic experience uses images from Tibetan Buddhism, phenomenology, and John Cage. The Tibetan Buddhist model posits an experience of going "out of body," and a melting and merging with all things. There are no separations; a pantheism and total empathy with people and things are now possible. Hence anything is possible, one can even be anything. And there is no one real self but a constant flux. Like Shiva the Hindu goddess, with her 1000 aspects, so the new unity of self was precisely in its changing aspects. Mark would express this notion of change in Taoist terms as a flowing with all things, of going with the flow. One learns to "flow with it" from the LSD experience itself. You can let uncomfortable waves of feelings wash over you and leave you, and float on to something pleasurable, without fighting the feelings, and in this way one can work these feelings out smoothly and leave them behind. Thus for Mark the LSD experience overflows the self

beyond its ego boundaries to everything. Important for him is the feeling that everything is new, like seeing for the first time. Everything is fascinating. One can't even name things. One is thereby freed of the old definitions of reality, seen as coercive. Reality can be perceived in a different way. For him this relativizes the "ordinary" reality and devalues it. From this new vantage point everyday social forms seem trivial and repressive conventions. The admonition here is to avoid the routinized, "plastic" reality and stay in a "high" state of fascination. And his goal was to break down the old coercive forms in language and in life. Indeed, he felt that both history and time were illusions that could be transcended. Bureaucratic nine to five time could be short-circuited. Mark preferred to live in the present, and not to relate that present to any past events or future plans. If he had any sense of time, it was from John Cage's model of randomness. Randomness allowed things to happen, and the actor is free to make the connections in terms of meanings. Meaning is not imposed. Allowing indeterminacy to "let things happen" keeps things always "fascinating." Phenomenology was invoked for its revitalizing function. We perceive adumbrations of reality, never the thing in itself. This is akin to Shiva's 1000 aspects. And so the world out there was relativized and devalued, while these new reenchanting features became the paramount reality.

What images does Peter use to interpret his LSD experiences? The basic theme of losing one's ego is there.

But beyond that, Peter focuses on the liberating function of play. We can discover ourselves by becoming unattached to what we are doing in the sense of instrumental functions; playfulness means just this, "grooving" on things without goal attainment. In this manner we can recapture childhood innocence. It is also a tool for bringing one into the present; play by its very nature is present and pleasure oriented. This is one of the keys to liberation. Connected to this theme is the discovery of the body as liberating instrument. As Janis discovered dance and movement as an opening to the ecstatic, so Peter utilizes physical techniques to stay constantly high. He has developed a series of techniques first derived from Reichian therapy, then later from Kundalini yoga (the yoga of meditation on the chakras, or energy centers in the spine). He was also constantly experimenting with different diets and fasting techniques, as well as sexual techniques derived from Kundalini yoga to change his consciousness. To use a phrase he used to quote from Gurdjeiff, Peter was constantly "working on himself," transforming himself to reach ecstatic forms of consciousness.

Todd originally used LSD with his wife to explore their relationship. Acid was an interpersonal tool for gaining psychological insight into whatever hangups still existed, and going beyond them. Later, the out of body mystical model became more dominant in their acid use. As another tool to get to the center, Todd would meditate. He

was particularly interested in the mandala, the Tibetan meditation pictures which led one's eye to the center, and thus unfolded the basic unity of all. Todd began a series of mandalic drawings which he used as a centering device.

All the participants talked about "centering the mind," through acid, mandalic concentration, meditation, and yoga. As opposed to the dreaming and wandering of normal consciousness, one can "center" on anything, and thereby achieve a certain balance, perspective, and integration of things. Instead of the chaos of ordinary reality, things seem in their place, ordered, meaningful. Steven used to use the phrase "pay attention," meaning to develop a tension of consciousness in which one watches oneself. This centers the mind, is a high. Often in the acid experience one has the feeling of watching oneself. Steven derived this technique from both acid and Gurdjeiff, a writer who tried to introduce Sufi mysticism to the West.

And these poets developed new techniques for expressing this almost inexpressible non-ordinary reality. A radical break with language was conceived as part of the project to break the hold of ordinary consciousness. As Richard put it:

Acid brings you beyond language. You can relate directly with the other without any shit in between. You don't have to play games. Words are a straitjacket. Gestures are more organic, more connected with my body feeling.

And Todd notes:

What I learned from being stoned is that to be honest, I must shortcircuit words. Language is contaminated, while gestures are magical, sacred, and get you to the root of things.

Steven adds:

The direct experience with LSD brings you in touch with such awesome power, it is impossible to explain. You go to a more serious level beyond the chatter of everyday consciousness. The only way I can express this is to stop the chatter of my mouth and new brain, which tends to always daydream anyway, and instead try to measure what I say, that is, experience directly, and be authentic about the experience. And that means slow down.

And so, in breaking with a language deemed to be inadequate and disenchanted, the participants developed highly individual mannerisms. All smiled a lot, nodding one's head to express agreement with the other without any preconditions, and with the cosmos. They embraced each other, and developed sweeping gestures and looks of trust. Janis speaks of this:

During acid tripping it's hard to talk because your conceptualization seems melted down. So many things are happening that you don't have the conceptual machinery to express what you are seeing. There is also the speed factor. Thoughts and intuitions are whizzing by so fast that it's hard to hold on to what you see. You have to just go with it. When you come down, you still are limited by the existing language categories to describe what happened. You need to think about how to use language to express this ecstasy. But others who trip with you know exactly where you were at, it's so intense, so we can smile together, laugh, touch, because we've been through the needle's eye together, and seen the white light.

And Steven, who often acted as a psychedelic guide for others, confirms this:

When a person goes very far in his trip, often the only way to relate with him is on a non-verbal level. A reassuring touch, a confirming look is basic communication.

Through their common endeavor, bonds of trust and solidarity developed. The participants felt like explorers together in a great and important discovery. There was almost a missionary quality to the experience in that the

participants felt they were finding keys to the re-integration of man on the planet. "Putting LSD in the water supply," was more than a joke, for it expressed the belief that it was most important to wrench ourselves out of the everyday coercive patterns of reality.

Indeed the very setting of the LSD experience was one in which caring for each other was important. As one floated out of body, the new ecstatic reality could be awe inspiring or very frightening. All members were experienced at guiding the others' trips. If one was "caught in an infinitely frightening repeating reality," methods were developed of "leaving that load on the other side of the stream and moving on to something else." Sometimes the method of direct confrontation was used. One memorable example that achieved the level of group myth was when Steven was having a "bad trip." Janis relates:

It was an extraordinary event. Steven was angry or frustrated or something, and was acting it out by swinging a stick in a menacing manner around in the air, entirely out of character for him. He paralyzed most people, including me, who was his "guide" that night. All of a sudden Mark came dancing into his space, playfully jumping around, almost mocking Steven, to move his head into another place. Steve got mad at first, and expressed this by pretending to hit or menace Mark with this stick. But Mark, not put off one bit, carried it through like a real trouper. He acted as if he was hit by the stick and fell down in mocking pain. Everybody laughed, and what he really did was to undercut Steven's mood by transforming the situation. Finally Steven broke out of his macho game and laughed, too, and the two of them hugged each other. It's as if Mark was a shaman and allowed himself to be beaten by Steven, and in the process purged Steve of his karma.

Thus, the aid that one could get from another was

important at times, for one would be "going through many changes." Often the other that one relied on would be officially designated "guide," and would take a lower dosage so as to experience what the tripper was going through but in a less overwhelming way. Other times the group would all trip together. Music, very often eastern or oriental modes, was played. Besides the esthetic pleasure involved in listening to the music, it served another important function. One could be free to go as far "out" of ordinary reality, and still ride the beam of music which put you in touch with the fact that you were still "here," the record is being changed in the room, etc. This one reference point actually allowed one to feel free to go further in exploring new modes of consciousness.

The bonds thus developed between the actors in the process of changing their consciousness were very strong. They had aided each other in discovering and changing themselves. The images in the LSD experience sound metaphorical, but experimentally they are very powerful and "real in their consequences." Once Todd felt he was drowning and could not extricate himself from this situation. Janis taught him how to "float," to his eternal gratitude, a technique which he carried over to ordinary reality. In the LSD experience there is often a needle's eye, a crisis before the calm, and here the participants, who had all been through it one time or another, aided each other. Expressed in the terms of images of dying and being reborn anew, one has to learn to

let go, to leave all one's cultural baggage behind, and experience oneself as if for the first time. The definition of the situation, then, stressed leaving behind ordinary reality, seen as coercive, and creation or discovery of a new liberating reality, often projected onto the cosmic order.

To summarize the collective psychedelic practices, these counter-culture poets used psychedelics to break the bond of the disenchanted world. For all of the participants, psychedelics have the power to mentally melt the realities of the social structure. All described LSD as a tool for jolting one's taken-for-granted perceptions. Physically there is a feeling of melting and merging. Old perspectives dissolve, and are perceived as illusions, distortions, "maya," performances in the sense of a "plastic," coerced consciousness. Implicit in this re-definition of reality is the call to end all "games," to break the old "set," to relate more openly, or to put one's actions in harmony with the "cosmos." Feelings of being in the present, a focusing of reality on intense sense perception, and a merging of the senses or synesthesia were described, as were the redefining of life as a "trip," a process, a flow, a fascination. Positive moods coupled with certainty about stoned experiences were perceived.

The importance of psychedelics for the group and the rationale for its use, then, is that it radically delegitimizes by breaking through the taken-for-granted framework of

perception which is seen as coercive. Seeing the world as "all illusion," or a "low-level game" allows one to debunk that reality by relativizing it. New possibilities seem to open up, giving belief that "everything is possible." All this has the ideological function of freeing one mentally from the given social structure. The chemical fact that psychedelics project one into attending to "presentness" acts to radically break the past-present-future causal time perspective. What is happening now becomes the paramount reality; bureaucratic time structures are negated. Seeing life as a Taoist flow, a goalless process, therefore, undermines the former perspective of life as an upwardly mobile career line. The strong feelings of certainty of new subjectively perceived "truths" acts to dissolve the certainties of the routinized world.

Psychedelics function, therefore, as a radical delegitimater. But, the substance was not only used to dissolve old realities perceived as oppressive by the participants. New ways of seeing were seen as the key to a new reality. The mystical and esthetic experiences I have described are the key to this new consciousness. The esthetic experience of a merging of sense perception or synesthesia can powerfully redefine the world as an arena of esthetic playfulness. The feeling of melting and merging with the "cosmos" gives an intense experience of emotional unity. When one dissolves into the cosmic order one's self or ego is revalued and seen as unimportant. Instead, one identifies with the rhythm of

the cosmos and one is at once part of a larger, more meaningful entity.

Thus, the delegitimizing function of psychedelic use aided the group in breaking with their past. And the mystical reenchantment that they found gave them a new vision of unity.

From Experiencing to Producing

After over a year of tripping experiences, certain problems arose in their quest to reenchant the world. For one, they complained of the repetitive nature of tripping. After a good many trips, one could gain no more "insight." And for many of the participants, the experience became even boring. For others, the high could not be sustained, as Steven notes:

Originally I wanted to stay high all the time. Once I experimented with taking mescaline every morning. But what I found is that I slowly got accustomed to it, even if I continually raised the dosage. After a while I wasn't high at all.

Thus the actors experienced a routinization of this kind of ecstatic practice. Further, tripping was not only routinized, but its symbolic nature of changing oneself became more and more apparent.

During an evening's discussion it came out that a number of these poets were beginning to use as poetic themes the ecstasy that they were experiencing. This was an exciting revelation. Earlier they were more reticent to share their work. But now they resolved to read to each other, to

write more, and perhaps to put out a poetry magazine of their collected work.

At this point their project of delegitimation and re-enchantment moves from an initial breaking with their past, and an initial deep experiencing of reenchanted states. Their project, then, moves from experiencing to producing their ideology.

This chapter has described the poets' setting in the East Village in which initial breaks with their past became possible, and practices of delegitimation and re-enchantment could be experienced. Now the participants, by writing their poetry, further objectify their project in their art.

NOTES

- ¹The Insect Trust Gazette 1 (Summer 1964).
- ²Big Table 2 (Summer 1959).
- ³Ann Halprin Interview, Tulane Drama Review 10 (Winter 1965), 2:49.
- ⁴Fluxus, Tulane Drama Review 10 (Winter 1965), 2:100a.
- ⁵Alan W. Watts, The Way of Zen (New York: Mentor Books, 1957); Watts, This Is It (New York: Collier Books, 1960), pp. 77-110.
- ⁶Jerome Rothenberg, "(Third Series) A Personal Manifesto," I-Kon: Art and Revolution 7 (January-February, 1969), p. 37.
- ⁷Watts, The Joyous Cosmology: Adventures in the Chemistry of Consciousness (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).
- ⁸Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, Richard Alpert, The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Press, 1964).

CHAPTER 7

THE POETRY GROUP: IDEOLOGY
CONCRETIZED IN ART

Experimenting with the psychedelic techniques described in the last chapter as attempts at delegitimation and reenchantment gave rise to the next moment of the group's career, a sense of project. The poetry stage of the project implies a self-conscious development and extension of this psychedelic ideology of disaffiliation and mystic reintegration. At this new stage we can say there is reflection, that the project becomes defined by the actors as such, as a project in Sartre's sense. That is, their activities are reflexively produced by the actors' intent to change themselves. In re-making themselves they have decided to record and make "art" out of their new experiences of delegitimation and reenchantment. They are creating their own culture. The importance of the systematically produced and recorded poetry, therefore, is that these same subjective ideological techniques are objectified, extended, concretized and developed.

This chapter first turns to examining the practices of delegitimation and reenchantment as concretized in the poetry of the group. Here we find use of imagination, randomization, and language distortion as delegitimizing techniques, and

psychedelic and sexual reintegration expressing reenchantment. And parallel to our examination of the European avant-garde in Part One, collective writing and "automatic" writing are used as randomizing activities that separate the activity from the goal.

We then examine how the elective affinity of "new thing" jazz reinforces their ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment. Finally, the tension between the search for continuous reenchantment versus the possibility of its routinization is a problem the group encounters in carrying out their project. They confront this problem in producing and distributing their magazine, in the fact that they decide to produce only one issue, and in the final breakup of the poetry group. The resolution of this problem pushes the group to the next stage of their project, the commune.

Delegitimizing Techniques of Relativity,
Phenomenology, and Imagination

In the preceding chapter, we have explored the power of imagination as a delegitimator invoked by the actors to change the given reality perceived as coercive. We turn to an examination of how the poets used this delegitimizing mode in their works.

In Richard's novelistic writing and poetry we find an esthetic founded upon the power of the mind to change reality.

"The void is formless; one may speak in any mode which gives meaning."

"Events are dream sequences, a net in which levels of interpretations are caught as the waves pass through."

"Put on sunglasses, these should help, she said."

"Our reality is one of sliding masks."

"An antinomian trident that can puncture any set of meanings."¹

"Can we play like musicians with the concepts of time and space?"²

In discussing his novelistic techniques, he has stated, "We need icons that will be up to the reader to interpret. . . . The whole edifice crumbles when one sees that one is mythical. The transition to the rule of love begins with the knowledge that it is possible for one to believe what he wants to believe."³

Thus we see that meaning is entirely up to the writer and reader. The author has been influenced by phenomenology and has invoked it for its relativizing function; he sees the world as "adumbrations of reality." What is important here is the deinstitutionalizing function of language, which can "puncture any set of meanings" in an antinomian fashion, and thus free one of sets of meanings viewed as coercive.

Poetry is thus invoked for its power to dereify the frozen structures of thought. "Nor is isolation implied, merely the night-long flow of meanings and conceivable interpretations that they manufactured. . . ."⁴

In reading Richard's work, then, one constantly sees attempts to relativize meaning. He often affixes to sentences

phrases such as: "in theory only," thereby annihilating what was said before.

Leonard's poem in A Passion of Stones, evokes the same theme of the power of the imagination.

To put the greater into the lesser is not
the feat it seems to be, it is merely
an adjustment of reality, which, is. . .

. . . reality suffers no reprisals for shifting;
the senses readjust. . .

The focus of reality
is the paranoia of this age, . . .

I lie on an army surplus mattress
looking at a cardboard ceiling
water marked, seams by newspapers, sealed. . .

make what you are
into what you will become: . . .

The illusion of reality lies
in the reality of illusion. . .

There is no front, back or side,
direction is only where you turn,
your own relation is your sole
connection to any direction at all: . . .

Do not panic! do not panic, you have merely to open
a door.

That is reality.

But jump to no conclusions;
a presentiment of certain facts
is not necessarily a factual
condition, at this moment, misery, like a
gelatinous phantom is ready to congeal in
minds other than my own; you see, I have
presented, unlikely as it may seem, these
ingredients, as harbingers of pleasure."⁵

Thus the author revalues reality, and shows the power of human will to redefine ourselves. Through redefining consciousness, the actors have declaimed their intent to change the world. Everything is declared possible, the given is no

longer viewed as an obstacle but as a reification which can be surmounted. Reality is debunked, and other possibilities are declared. The ideological effect of this is to free one mentally from the dominant definitions of reality which are viewed as oppressive.

The focus of reality is the paranoia of this age,
the solving of problems by rage
hidden in the periwinkle of patriotic
passion. . . ."

All primacy is given to the imagination; anything is possible in poetry. Phenomenology is invoked as an ideology in that reality is reduced to perceived meanings which can be changed in the mind. The corollary is that the horizon is open in that we can reprogram ourselves. Psychedelics and poetry become tools to deinstitutionalize models of reality viewed as oppressive by the participants.

Yousef, the North African painter, published some of his drawings in the poetry magazine. Yousef was a friend of Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, Alan Ginsberg, and Tennessee Williams, from the late 50's in Tangiers, Morrocco.

Imagination was the key for Yousef to break out of routine ways of seeing. Richard has described his paintings as "pushing abstraction to its logical conclusion. Forms constantly merge and change. In looking at his paintings, if one meditates for a length of time, one sees complete and very precise landscapes and then suddenly, as figure and ground shift, one will come across an entirely different configuration. The paintings, like fog, constantly retake

shape on many different levels."

Reality, then, is created by imagination. Yousef's art, turning dreams into reality, then, reinforced the primacy to the imagination that our participants were interested in developing in their own consciousness, allowing new connections to break through and thus deinstitutionalize patterns of thought.

Mark notes, "Yousef, when showing his paintings, would not give them names. He would let the viewer project into it, like a Rorschach ink blot, and when the observer would begin to see things, he would give it a name akin to what the observer saw. I watched him do this with the same painting with different people, each time giving a different name."

Yousef's stories were like his paintings, phantasmas giving primacy to the imagination because they usually had no climax in the western sense of theatre or sex, but went on and on. One such heard abbreviated story:

An opium smoker, an alcoholic and a hashish smoker were locked outside the gates of the city at sundown. On considering their plight, the opium smoker counselled, "Let us sleep here until morning." The alcoholic belatedly, "Let's smash down the gates." Finally, after reflection the hashish smoker advised, "Let us pass through the keyhole."

Thus the actors believe that there is a connection between the use of hashish and enlargement of the power of imagination. They are willing to borrow any mode, form and culture which, in the sense of Weber's idea of "elective

affinity," aids them in creating new possibilities, and at the same time delegitimizing the given.

Random Techniques

In preceding parts of this study, we have examined the use of randomness. The technique was used in that it relativized the world, and allowed new juxtapositions to break through, thus delegitimizing the old casual connections. On the level of artistic production, this method was important for the actors, in their attempts to delegitimize old linkages of thought.

Yousef relates, "One evening in Tangiers I was sitting around with Brian Gysin, Alan Ginsberg, and Bill Burroughs. Bill had finished a manuscript, but wanted to evoke the flow of Arabic stories, the feeling of flashback and sudden associations, like jump cuts in movies. I suggested cutting the manuscript up with a pair of scissors. We did it together, and shuffled the pages like a deck of cards, then renumbered them. We had created the 'cut up' technique that Bill would use subsequently in all of his works."

Some of the other participants appreciated the technique of randomness as a method of relativizing the world. Richard used to listen to the music of the modern German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, who, in the early 60's, used techniques for composing not only the melody but also the rhythm.

We will discuss later the "automatic writing" that the

group practiced individually and collectively. John Cage's use of randomness was known to most of the participants. For Cage the function of art "isn't to sanction any specific experience, except the state of being open to the multiplicity of experience--which ends in practice by a decided stress on things usually considered trivial or unimportant."⁶

The ideological effect of this on consciousness is to devalue the given priorities of events, and to decondition the mind by letting a lot more "material" in. Note the parallel between the random technique and our descriptions of the deconditioning effects of psychedelics on consciousness. We turn to a poem which presents some of those features:

Everything id more (REPORTAGE)
 When the beer chasers whoosh away the mind,
 already juncturing on decisions
 of branchwater and decisions,
 the fork wending its way to the parallax.

Concluding beyond the facts,
 Snap the time whip

Yield the (CLACK) thru green gables of doubtless,
 All sentences diving back in undescriptive history,
 We point for precision as it has been
 since neolithic times, ⁷
 Chanting the signposts.

In this poem we have a description of the opening up of consciousness as it is deconditioned by psychedelics. The author has reported to the investigator that in the first paragraph he was trying to catch the expansion to discrete particulars which randomly seem to branch out in many possible directions as meaning becomes fractured,

discrete, but at the same time loaded with possibilities.

In the second paragraph routinized meaning is described as murky. The possibilities and freedom given to a consciousness broken down into small perceptual units which can be hooked up at will by the author seems better than the banal search for "precision." Utility is rejected. "Chanting the signposts" implies a low level of consciousness, in that one ritualistically "chants" the taken-for-granted institutionalized language without really reflecting on the meaning. We can say, then, that the author utilizes this randomization of consciousness by moving to the level of discrete particulars to delegitimize institutionalized reality.

Delegitimizing Techniques of Radical "Distortion"

In Part One we examined the various techniques used by the symbolists, dadaists, and surrealists to delegitimize language. As the participants have used psychedelics to decondition their consciousness, they now project these techniques into their art. As an extension and representation of the psychedelic techniques of melting down of consciousness, the following series of poems displays techniques of delegitimation of language seen as oppressive.

BUDDHA

Fist groping,
balanced as cool jade against the cheek,
we strike, then jabber all about it,
a muddled run of rivers.
Behind the clock of stubble,

on the grief of crabs from the sea
 wet paint can incinerate
 Buddha trailing lard from the bathtub.⁸

The first sentence seems to refer to the problems of "rational" communication. Meaning seems to trail off into post-facto interpretation. ("We strike, then jabber all about it, a muddled run of rivers.") Following that, we get an incredible series of images piled up upon one another. How to get out? How to solve the problem of meaning? The images resolve the problem by leaping out in a manner that logically seems not to resolve the poem. Yet the solution is neatly there. The poet transcends by breaking the form. The logical process is constantly transformed as the images leap to new heights. Each image amazes, destroys or raises the ante, the logic, of the proceeding one until we finally see that the meaning of the poem is to go beyond the taken-for-granted meaning of ordinary language. The old logical structures are seen as inadequate. The project of the group is to break down these old ways of programming. We see the connection between breaking the old form and ecstatic reintegration in the line from the group's collective poetry.

Fragments of beautiful disconnected meaning
 is a bridge that crosses
 a lush green river throb
 that flows through
 imaginary minor scales
 where a golden non-logic rules.

By deinstitutionalizing consciousness, seen as coercive, one can break out to a gnostic "golden non-logic" which is

seen as reenchanting. Or,

Breaking out slowly
let's waltz on a naked star. . .

Or,

Watching the word-salad words
interlocking our ears--dominion again?⁹

Here the author is not displaying an example of particularizing language, as in the previous poem, but is talking about the importance of "word salads" for reaching "dominion again," the reenchanting state.

As it dribbles, lurches, swathed in the
movement of soapy presentment,
we are the shiny tube with reamed rags,
these hand held blue grey flames
impressed on flesh the color
of the inturning searing
road to the bridge between them,
the rippling of crumpling moisture,
dangling in the heat of
crushed dewy penetration,
this arc hooking the moon;
dervish drumming in the clasp of synaptic smear.¹⁰

This poem attempts to break form and so deinstitutionalize language in that its subject is a fast changing process, expressed in moving, wet, smeared language. The images turn in and envelop and smear each other and in this manner, we have a unity expressed. This is a poem of intense energy; the theme is about the constant movement of a process, a series of pictures turning in on themselves. The images merge and overlap, and we are left with a blur of energy. The images are sexual in that they are wet and inturning; they are both male and female. But this is really a metaphor for the energy of pure presentness. This description of the

energy of process is similar to the kinds of fast moving images of process that are seen in the psychedelic process itself. A new language is demanded to express this kind of movement of images. In doing so, the author rejects older forms concerned with narration. Through its emphasis on movement, then, the poem manages to express the idea of constant presentness. There is no past or future here, just the constant flow in the present, which mirrors all re-enchanting intense experiences, psychedelic, sexual or other.

The images defy logic except if one accepts the flow of one moving into the next thought through a synesthesia or merging of the senses. Indeed the field is entirely a focusing on intense sense perceptions, which act to bring one's attention to the flow of perception in the present.

Psychedelic Mysticism

We have examined in the previous chapter the ideological functions, for the actors, of these expanded states of consciousness. We turn to an analysis of a series of poems that present some of the main features of psychedelic mysticism that are now projected by the actors into their work. We note expressions of complete integration, of non-attachment or ego loss, often using models from various eastern schools of mysticism. Many of the described states seem ones of perfect synchronization in the sense of expressions of merging or oneness with the world, through magic, or in an animistic sense that everything is alive

A poem that exhibits these features follow:

A day of high trees,
 perched on skipping ponds of pebbles,
 and you,
 lapping it lovingly with strokes of your eyes,
 as moist earth floats over dewy drifting, coupling
 clouds. . .
 The image in the water of the leafy splash,
 the surging froth of blackbirds,
 framing the gnat's phosphor dance,
 is soaring over the lap of the foam on the breeze,
 is echoed in the depth of the clear to the ripples
 of the waves,
 is mirrored in the crispness of the new day dawn,
 As we tumble down the trees in the smooth of the grass,
 down the hill to the bottom of the froth in our ponds.¹¹

This poem presents the reenchanting state for the actors as ecstatic joy in cosmic, sexual unity. The poet attempts to express this state by a number of devices. There is an inversion of language, a mirroring effect which leads to a merging of images. The macrocosmic images are enveloped and transformed by the microcosm as trees are perched on skipping ponds of pebbles, earth floats over clouds, the image in the water of the leafy splash or in blackbirds framing the gnats' phosphor dances.

The images are ecstatic, sexual, and energetic. High trees is both high as in multiple meanings of the psychedelic consciousness, and an animistic salute to the trees. The lover/reader laps or absorbs the poem. Sexual ecstatic images abound: moist earth, dewy, coupling clouds, froth, and foam. Ecstatic merging proceeds from inversion of images to the reader/lapper to energetic joyous images as the process of the poem; is soaring, is echoed, is mirrored--in crispness, foam, breeze and in new day dawn. The final reenchanting

merging is signaled by the word tumble, now everything is jumbled up, no longer simply inverted or even lapped, and then echoed three times, but we tumble down the trees, our original subject, and we do it in the smooth of the grass, psychedelics smoothing the path, and from here the poem effortlessly rolls down the hill to the sexual froth in our ponds. In the rush of images everything seems fused, animistically alive, tumbling together, playfully peaceful, integrated, ecstatic.

As tumbleweeds blow,
Relax into the clues,
tributaries replying in weight,
revealing fuses from the age of melodies.

He's sporing 3-dimensional tictactoe,
clefted in between devices,
prodded after the fall,

We know you, enthralled cataclysm,
drinking mint julep.

The teller, a precursor, sweating in his lair
designs enveloping elixers,
seal to stamp on rocks before they melt.

Riveting tapdancers all, lasers giftwrapped,
bent lancers laughing on the bloom of rosebuds,
You must endure as you charge through the door,
subsequent to the quick of the broad stroke examined.

As shadows sweep without stirring.¹²
Vestibule arises on leavened bread.

The poem is modeled in its beginning and end after
Taoist imagery:

As tumbleweeds blow,
Relax into the clues. . .
As shadows sweep without stirring,
Vestibule arises on leavened bread.

No strain is the reenchanting secret here, you get repaid

tributaries replying in weight) not by struggle but by relaxing "into the clues," by going with the flow.

After the quiescent beginning which is a clue from the reenchanting "age of melodies," the second and third paragraphs present a kind of zen jester doing a series of amusing, creative, sexual, playful things: "we know you, enthralled cataclysm, drinking mint julep . . . designs enveloping elixirs," "sporing three-dimensional tictactoe," "sporing," "clefted," "prodged."

The next paragraph breaks out into energetic and contradictory patterns. Images are presented in juxtaposition and the contradictions are not explained, as in "lasers gift-wrapped," "bent lancers." The reader is thus brought into many cul-de-sacs which are finally resolved by both the energetic dance of language and in the opening and closing of Taoist quiescence. The poem, then, is something like a zen koan, a baffler, as in "What is the sound of one hand clapping?", in which the reader is frustrated and tricked until he leaves the track of institutionalized thought and is ready to make leaps.

Energetic, charging images increase in intensity and end with: "Subsequent to the quick of the broad stroke examined." Here delegitimation of language is expressed by the retrospective nature of the line. Subsequent to the quick of something which is again examined indicates that meaning for the author is after the fact, that is, always a retrospective examination, a statement which seems to

parallel some recent ethnomethodological analyses.¹³ This effectively nihilates the meaning of the sequence and reduces it all to an energy dance. The contradictions are not solved through logical explanation, but in the last two lines:

As shadows sweep without stirring,
Vestibule arises on leavened bread.

We could say, therefore, that the poem presents a series of images that transcend each other, mystically and inexplicably. The attempt is to transcend words and logic, just "relax into the clues," the clue is to relax, there is no mystery to solve. The energetic and fast changing sense of imagery must be seen as an attempt at the deinstitutionalization of language. The reader is blocked from grasping images logically, as that trail is carefully erased, and so must grasp it by the energetic dance of the language and by final effortless imagery.

We turn to a long poem called "The Centered Dance."¹⁴ The author sees the poem as a guide to the death-rebirth sequence of the psychedelic experience. Commenting on the poem and on the melting and reconstituting of the acid trip, she felt that people need guidance in this uncharted zone. She is trying to supply a new model to interpret the experience for others, so as to avoid having people falling back on the old programming. The poem then is a model of the psychedelic trip, is informed by stoned experiences, and tries to use these as a guide for others to interpret their experiences.

The poem shows a strong Taoist and Buddhist influence in that it stresses the importance of changing one's concept of self in the mystical experience. This is mirrored in the psychedelic experience in that one must be able to "let go" of old concepts, experience what is happening, flow. Thus, she writes:

The world is within me
I am the one and the many
All ecstasies are part of the greater ecstasy
All are one. . .

You are not mere you
You are a holy intersection
A seam in time's liquid weave. . .

The unity of all things expresses itself
Through our joy in one another
All flesh is one; our joining together is reuniting.

The writing reflects the ego loss experience of the psychedelic experience. The body melts or extends to include the whole universe. There is a basic undifferentiated unity, and this ideology gives a feeling of integration. The last quotation shows the modified tantric theme which is the core of the poem. Sexual ecstatic merging, without attachment or desire, expresses the oneness of the universe. She writes, "At the moment of unity, be joined to the universe."

This unity is practiced in many ways, as a model for daily action, as a guide to tripping, but especially here as a guide to using tantric sexual practices to arrive at this mystical unity. Janis saw herself as "shakti," the female consort in Tibetan tantric Buddhism. The poem should

be seen as a guide to coming together, experiencing and separating, all without attachment or desire, all with awareness of the present.

In joining together,
enter timelessness. . .

Yield over utterly
to each moment
that each moment
be eternal. . .

Try not to compare one
experience with another
or any one person with another,
or your feeling at any one time with
any other time: know only NOW.

Let each moment be as the
only one
thus unity is
continually expressed.

The author's ideology here is that if one lives in the present, without judgment or desire, with all things equally valued, everything will be fascinating and wondrous. We note parallels here with the Novalis' attempt to make everything fascinating. Note how the technique of being in the present revalues experience in that it breaks the past-present-future time continuum. Ecstasy, as presentness, is a tool to get beyond the boundaries of the self, seen by the author as coercive.

In losing yourselves
in one another,
be recreated

At the moment of unity
yield as to death
and thus be reborn

In moments of greatest ecstasy
feel beyond.

A reconstitution of self is effected, as the old programs melt. This reflects the peak of the psychedelic experience, when a feeling of merging with the cosmos gives a feeling of regrounding. Sexual or other ecstatic experiences are analogous.

Coming apart is not a real separation for the ideology expressed here is that the everyday sorrow of ending is transcended by the belief that these moments are all in a basic unity. One transcends time by being goalless, without attachments or desire. This technique derives from Buddhist and Taoist thought.

Goalless, without desire. . .
let flesh come together. . .

Let drawing apart
at the end .
be as the beginning

Let going apart
be with the same joy
as in joining;
thus each time
join anew.

When separated
keep awareness.

Thus in coming together, in moments of greatest ecstasy, and in parting, one remains ecstatic by staying in the present, experiencing a cosmic unity.

Have you seen an ooze of resin
extruded from a tree, hugging
the trunk like a huge amber tear?
Look how it holds and traps the light
like a fly caught in waves of honey;
but the light doesn't struggle, nor should
you, if your mind is caught in a pentaprism
of amber thoughts that englobe you in the radiance

of universal energy whose source you sought but never
 hoped to find; and be not afraid as you
 whirl through the world in the burning void
 that explodes into greatness as stars collide.¹⁵

The poem can be read as an instruction for the psychedelic voyager. Do not struggle, go with the flow when you are swept away, engulfed, or merged with the feeling of universal energy, as the analogy of light indicates. Do not be afraid when you participate in cosmic wonders, feeling both the awareness, the ecstasy and the terror. As a map of the psychedelic experience, the participants have described the necessity of following this poem's instructions. However, the poem advances to the level of generalized ideology in espousing this neo-buddhist concept of letting go of the ego, of going with the flow, and of seeing events and emotions in this non-attached manner as fascinating.

Diamond. Diamond. Diamond. Diamond
 turning slowly, turning slowly on a spider thread
 on a spider thread in the enforested moonlight
 enforested moonlight
 Diamond turning slowly on a spider thread
 in the enforested moonlight

YOU ARE. . . I AM. . .

 when ceasing the marginal encrustation
 marginal encrustation

by no means any longer necessary.

Diamond
 turning slowly
 on a spider thread
 in the enforested moonlight. . .
 You Are. . .¹⁶

The poet has presented a moment of reenchantment expressed as being. The jewel shimmers and the poet does not

need to say much more. It begins with the repetition of the word diamond and that is almost enough. Another poet in the group, in discussing his work and the aesthetic of the group, has said, "Take language out of its context, if you distort it or if you present it alone, it takes on a transcendent magic. It dangles, pulsates, glows with a power of its own." Note the parallel here to our discussion in the historical chapter of Novalis' work, where language glows like light or is presented as music. In this magical moment there is pure being (you are, I am). All roles which are viewed as necessary to play "low-level" games that prevent us from being; "when ceasing the marginal encrustation . . . by no means any longer necessary."

The poem returns cyclically to the ecstatic present. It exists in a state of time that emphasized those perfect moments of transcendence that devalue our sense of past and future.

Sexual Mysticism

I have noted that Max Weber has examined the power of art and sex as one of the few areas not yet completely touched by the disenchantment of the world. As he states, "The erotic relation seems to offer the unsurpassable peak of the fulfillment of the request of love in the direct fusion of the souls of one another. The boundless giving of oneself is as radical as possible in its opposition to all functionality, rationality, and generality."¹⁷

We present some examples of poetry of sexual mysticism
published in A Passion of Stones.

Our prayers of spring are answered in a kiss
that lingers till it becomes a universe
of lips tasting the bud of every season
and as in a freshness of old legends
wherein lovers magnetized by silvery waters
of biblical wells saw unicorns most aphrodisiac
splash globules of mercurial moons
to foams of ecstatic nymphs
songfully praising nacreous wounds
we flood in dreams of roses infinitely mirrored
in briney rivers of silken mist
concealed within crystallized eyes
drown in sacred swamps of lush heat
steaming the bolting blood to bouquets of steaming roses
that gush infinite rivers of ruby mirrors
between crystal mists of silken eyes
until simmering within one another's raveling arms
fusing skin and sinew and heart to molten ecstasies
we blaze blind night's dark dream to fragrant mist
which whirls the bright uncluttered air
where candles flame and flare emerald light
and goblets gong silvery sounds that seem
robe and cloak of our glowing origin
and then O the sperm and spit and sweat and perfumed
gore of it
the down deep unending depths of infinitely unexpendable
of it
the permeating inextricably mingled of it
the endlessly beginning and end of it.¹⁸

Sexuality is the most natural mystical experience
available to people, since it involves a fusion, an ecstatic
merging and partial loss of self as isolated ego. This poem
extends the feeling of union. The images are those of syn-
esthesia, and we are engulfed in the process of merging,
emphasized by the images: tasting, we flood, drown, steaming,
streaming, gush, simmering, fusing, molten blaze, whirl,
permeating, mingled.

This poem expresses the ecstasy of sexual union, which
approaches a union beyond two bodies, and acts as a sort of

mimesis of a larger mystical union. The poem presents this extension in metaphor, "a kiss that lingers until it becomes a universe of lips tasting the bud of every season." The feeling of total loss of self is expressed: "we flood in dreams of roses infinitely mirrored in briney rivers of silken mist . . . drowned in swamps of lushheat," etc. As is the style of a number of these psychedelic poets, note the flood of images piling up one upon the other; there is a parallel between this and the rush of fusing images of psychedelic experience itself as described by the actors. (We would like to note that we do not want to abstract the sexual from anything else, this and other poems express in more concentrated form sexual ecstasy, and are therefore presented here. However, there is at least a metaphoric hint of ecstatic sexuality expressed in most of the writing, and this has already been pointed out earlier.) The poem ends on a mystical note that revalues time and extends it to the universal,

and then O the sperm and spit and sweat and perfumed
 gore of it
 the down deep unending depths of infinitely unexpendable
 of it
 the permeating inextricably mingled of it
 the endlessly beginning and end of it.

Ten moons ago a passion of seeds
 drew our flaming flesh
 to an embrace of transubstantiation.
 We touched each other
 in a mingle of unborn and
 lingering symphonies.
 The blood of her womb ceased to flow
 its waste of running roses,
 used its monthly bloom to grow a flower of flesh.
 Her taut belly swells to ivory watermelon.

Her eyes softened to does
 hiding in the deep forest of her hair.
 She became the sea
 wherein our wed seed recapitulated
 the eternally recurring ritual of generation.
 Today, sun, and moon and earth align in vernal equinox.
 Spring's first morning spools soft glimmers
 through windows of the delivery room
 I hold her head while she labors
 to bring forth the lingering consummation,
 and mumble psalms alongside melifluous moans:

O Lord of the Universe
 Dweller of seed
 Dweller of dung
 Dweller of vastness

Grandfather, Father, Son and Grandson
 And all the generations that come
 And shall continue to come
 Unto you O Lord
 Of earth, fire, water, air and emptiness

Those within you and with-out you
 of you and unborn to you
 Praise exalt glorify
 All things
 In your name.

Heaving, as a vessel asway in storms of moaning sea
 filled with a laughter pure as chiming icicles of opal
 and amethyst,
 she tosses forth a fontenelle and then,
 as a sudden plop of plums,
 an infant head pops past the fountaining womb,
 and is pushed, and is pulled,
 a silvery magenta mass uttering
 in a sound that clings to silence still,
 an uncapturable not-wail, not-crow, not-cry
 of the supreme amaze and loss and bliss of birth.

Once again the world begins anew
 Into a dewdrop slips the shining sea.

This poem, published in the anthology, celebrates the
 ecstasy and magic of conception and birth, as both a personal
 and universal happening.

She became the sea
 wherein our wed seed recapitulated
 the eternally recurring ritual of generation.¹⁹

This places the event as a mimesis of nature. The reenchantment is expressed in that we experience ourselves as situated in the cosmos, a microcosm within the macrocosm.

There is a feeling of magic throughout the poem, and the writer celebrates a personal event through understanding its ecstatic nature. By way of contrast, we must note that sex and birth have been and can be presented as routinized, tiring, painful, something to be quickly finished. Although experientially available, this writer has made the choice to emphasize precisely the ecstatic and the wondrous.

The invocation of the deity is not religious in a sectarian way, but rather in a mystical way, expressing a deity that embraces the unity "Dweller of seed, Dweller of dung, Dweller of vastness . . . of earth, fire, water, air and emptiness, Those within you and with-out you, of you and unborn to you. . . ."

The experience of birth itself is expressed as a transcendent, numinous experience of wonder: "of supreme amaze and loss and bliss of birth."

The poem ends by relating the sexual with a quiet feeling of mystical renewal, and presents a striking reversal of microcosmic, macrocosmic images which we have seen before:

Once again the world begins anew.
Into a dewdrop slips the shining sea.

Note the parallel reversal technique in the line "the surging froth of blackbirds/ framing the gnat's phosphor dance."

This is the Dean of Crystal:
 Baked acolytes twisting on the ringed,
 as they rug.
 Wet weld, blend commingled meld.
 nexus of whose.
 Furred from her garter a snatch,
 undulating spice of it
 sniffed and adorned;
 Twin shoulders breathe chocolate streams,
 coming and going, rubbing the corners smooth
 in mobius delight.²⁰

In this poem expressing sexual ecstasy, we see the energy imparted in twisting, undiluting images. Again there is inversion of images (ringed, rug). The sexual fusion is expressed in the merging fusion of words (wet weld, blend, commingled meld, nexus of whose) merging with the other and consequent loss of self. Beyond the sexual theme, note that the language is one of process and transformation. Thus sexual mysticism, as psychedelic mysticism, is expressed in the actor's poetry and acts as a reenchanted ideology. Sexual and mystical ecstasy dissolve the old boundaries of self seen by the actors as repressive, and ground one in a larger unity. Routinized consciousness is broken and everything becomes fascinating and timeless.

Creative Techniques Which Particularize and Reintegrate

We maintain that the creative techniques used by the group are delegitimizing in that they break down consciousness to minimal, fragmented perceptual units with a loss of the goal. The activity of writing was done for its own sake. The techniques are reenchanted in that simultaneously the immediate is heightened and the actors feel in touch with

a larger reality described variously as the unconscious or as ego loss.

Mark states:

I always write while high. One, because I conceive of my poetry as an attempt to record the stoned experience itself. So if I put myself in that state of mind, I start making non-logical connections, I can let myself be carried away with the flow of language and thereby capture these kind of associations. I would never explain or analyze my poetry; I want to capture a certain irreducible magical event or process that by its nature cannot be explained.

Steven:

Psychedelics help my writing in that you can make unconscious connections, which have more of a ring of truth. I want to write from the depths of me.

Janis:

I don't consider that I am the one doing the writing. I feel that I'm just recording messages, sort of taking notes. I am a receiver, an empty vessel through which messages are transmitted. I am not ego involved; it's beyond me, and I consider that I am part of a larger process.

We note the parallels between the beliefs of the actors in terms of the creative process and the surrealist methods discussed in Part One. Like psychedelics itself, the aim is to be in touch with an inner flow of associations defined by the actors as somehow more true, closer to the bedrock of who they are. Some in the group express this in a personal ego manner, others define their "true self" as somehow beyond the ego itself and part of a larger reenchanting framework.

Richard states:

Stoned or not, when I write, I try to let the flow of associations continue unencumbered. I just let it all

out. Sometimes I edit it later, sometimes not. Editing can distort the truth of the unconscious. It is more honest to leave what my mind says on the page.

Susan:

Sometimes I create a collage of words by opening any book lying around for unexpected or random images. I have written in a more prosaic, matter of fact manner and then cut up the poem or switched words and parts of speech around. Also, I write for the momentary pleasure of writing, I don't really care what comes out.

We see that the poet's activity was to lose the goal, and thereby heighten the immediate particular moment. The activity itself was delegitimizing in that it was separated from the goal. The larger design was dissolved.

During the poetry group, the members did occasionally attempt to produce spontaneous poetry collectively. One evening large cards were distributed, and everyone began quickly writing or drawing something on the card. The card would be passed and the writer would continue writing on the card passed to him/her. The thought was that he or she would continue to develop the initial train of thought and at the same time react partially to the received writings. Peter reflected, "There was a lot of cross-fertilization. It was a lot of fun. We did it to do it, not to produce a commodity to be consumed. Sometimes in a flash we would synchronize, our thoughts would mesh. More times than not, it just wouldn't flow, it would be stale, uninspired cliches. But even then, it helped us to become one mind."

Thus, the goal of the poetry group was perfect synchronization with each other. Group poetry was one device

to try to encourage that synchronization. Another technique developed to engender this kind of flowing together was collective music. Members of the group would pick up flutes, recorders, drums or anything that could be knocked together to make a percussion instrument. Chanting, grunting, dancing, all might be added. The group would do a musical set, the key to the experience being the attempt to flow together.

Todd:

The feedback in making music together was incredible. We would really click, anticipate the other, add counterpoint or contrast. When cooking, we could go on for hours.

There was a fusion of techniques, then, the aim being to facilitate a kind of unity or oneness or perfect flowing together of the participants. The attempt was not to design a new artistic multimedia form, but to engender interpersonal and transpersonal (cosmic) awareness. Merging together was a parallel of the psychedelic experience of synesthesia. Walls were painted collectively with poetry and pictures. Mark once proposed, "that we cover the floor with white paper, and invite people to come in, to take off their clothes, rub themselves with paint, and roll, play and/or make love on the floor. The ecstasy of togetherness would produce its own aesthetic patterns." This was not carried out, but shows the direction of the group aesthetic of ecstatic synchronization.

Again, delegitimation and reenchancement occur as moments in continuum. Collective writing and action break

down meaning into the smallest disconnected perceptual units, yet at the same time, this is seen by the actors as liberating and reenchanting in that the sense of self is lost and one is merged into a collective conscious.

And so we note the parallel method of reenchantment used here. Psychedelics were examined in the previous chapter as an aid in reintegration. Here the collective methods of the group all have the same function as psychedelics: to ecstatically merge with each other and beyond the self as defined by the actors.

Further, the collective activities of the group gave a sense of solidarity and purpose to the project which could not have been successful if done alone, as isolated individuals. Although the East Village did provide some communal supports described in the introductory chapter, only through the form of an affinity group could these people remake themselves and offset the pressures of the dominant society.

The Elective Affinity of Free Form Jazz

Here we are analyzing how free-form jazz was used as an ideology in a parallel sense to the use of psychedelics and the production of a delegitimizing world view through poetry. "New thing" jazz was not produced by the actors, although they did make music in a similar vein with each other. We will turn to this later. However, in the sense of Weber's concept of "elective affinity," "new thing" jazz

was listened to regularly by the participants, "borrowed," so to speak, because of its delegitimizing function. Just as we have explored the use of language as rhythm, breaking with old sets of meaning, and the expression of explosive, exploratory energetic modes, so free-form jazz was picked up by the actors for the same ideological function.

Most of the actors would go to Slug's in the Lower East Side, and listen to "new thing" musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, and John Coltrane. The observer has noted that at least half the audience was made up of "hip," stoned, white youth, the rest were black. We will show why this music was the first "head" music, from 1965-67, because of its deinstitutionalizing and reenchanting functions, before rock music developed in this direction beginning with the Beatlers and the west coast groups.

We conceptualize the main thrust of free-form jazz as the attempt to deinstitutionalize, that is, to break through the given normative structure. "Metrical regularity was now abandoned, and with it the interiorized metronome. Rhythmic unity is broken up into rhythm sounds and long periods, for example, of great calm, then of excitement, or extreme rapidity, through decelerations and accelerations, procedures that were traditionally excluded from jazz. Rhythm was regarded as constrictive and was totally abandoned, leaving the musician to "fly."²¹

Eric Dolphy was listened to on records and was one of

the favorites of the group because of his attempt to decondition and break away from the old harmonic grammar. Thus, Willener notes that "The clarinetist and flutist, E. Dolphy, is among those who constantly give the impression of a 'struggle to get out,' through sound, but also in the actual choice of notes, he tries constantly to destroy the norms that he transgresses with ever greater frequency. The breaking point is reached both in terms of the rules of musical procedure and with regard to the socio-political content expressed in this struggle in the music."²²

As in the energetic use of language discussed above, so we have the use of explosive energy developed in new thing jazz as an ideological technique to decondition, or blast away the old structures. "Coltrane's introduction of 'modes,' inspired by traditional music of other cultures, allowed the intense expression of 'movement,' upon which the improviser, freed from the constraints of a grid of chords, was able to concentrate. The 'Energetic' school, as it was called, concentrated its attention on the intensity to be found along a particular path; in a sense, there is a great deal of freedom, the musician may enunciate notes, in a series of varying lengths, rising or descending, he may 'liberate' energy."²³

Like some of the poetry that attempts to decondition language in a totally uncompromising way, challenging or redefining the very concept of meaning itself, so we see musical parallels that refuse to "tell a story," in the

sense of playing a tune.

Ornette Coleman, for example, instead of beginning with a pre-established melody and then presenting variations, invents "melodic itineraries without a pre-existing harmonic schema. . . . The improvisation takes place entirely in action, in melodic action, but without following a theme, being obliged neither to keep to nor to depart from any a priori reference."²⁴

All the jazz techniques we are describing share in common the desire to abandon any a priori structures, and, thus have a deconditioning function. As we have shown the use of language to break old forms, to distort, or fuse, so we note here the parallel jazz techniques of the development of pure sound itself. Richard relates:

When Archie Shepp played, he stood up there alone and did one long set for about two hours and then collapsed. He would alternate frantic bursts of raw energy with lyrical, sensual, quiet sounds. He had his own sound, especially when he played the mouthpiece alone and made whimpering, soft or intense noises.

Willener notes, "Whereas the players of reed instruments use growling and high-pitched whistling to reach a climax, the bass clarinetist, E. Dolphy, goes so far as to use almost permanently squeaking, strident, whistling sounds."²⁵

We see this as another example of delegitimation by particularization, here expressed by separating the "sound" from the "goal," which is ordered sound, that is, music.

Thus we note the elective affinity between new thing

jazz and the actors in our study. Jazz was "picked up" because of its ideological function. Like psychedelics and the poetry the group was producing, it helped to decondition the actors from the old structures seen as coercive.

We have examined the delegitimizing functions of free-form jazz for the group. Let us now turn to its reenchanting, integrative mode. For the listeners, it was an ecstatic experience of synchronization on the non-game, non-verbal level.

Mark notes:

There were always some slack periods, but this was to be expected, because when they were together, they were really together. We all waited for those transcendent moments of sound. You could tell from the "wows" in the audience; like a fundamentalist church, when they broke through you heard assents and encouragements. The audience and musicians were one.

Many of the musicians themselves have expressed mystical feelings in their lives and their music. John Coltrane speaks of love in the sense of love of God and fellowman, "religion is everything for me, my music is a thanksgiving to God."²⁶ And of Coltrane Willener states: "One must, it seems, interpret the combination of static elements (the use of modes and establishment of a 'sound') and dynamic elements (movement, both physical and emotional) as the meeting of a religious search and a social pursuit."²⁷

Similarly, Steve Lacey, popular both at Slug's and in Paris, states that he has adopted the Tao Teh Ching (The way of life) by Lao-Tsu as a guide for everyday living.

(We have discussed this in the previous chapter; the chief modes here are letting things happen, going with the flow, being in tune, as our actors have interpreted Taoism.)

Sun Ra, who used to play at Slug's every Monday night, expressed both the delegitimizing and reenchanting mode.

Sun Ra is an extravagant character whose exotico-mystic theatricality goes well beyond anything else of that kind one has ever seen. . . . This training is primarily a deconditioning, and secondarily, an awakening to new sounds; Sun Ra dresses his musicians in exotic clothes and arranges them semi-circle, each complementing his modern instrument with fundamentally different, traditional ones (African, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern).²⁸

Ornette Coleman, known for his use of the saxophone, very often uses different instruments to deroutinize his playing and keep a state of innocence on his instrument. He consciously tries to be a non-professional, in this manner. He regularly goes into retirement and reappears after two or three years with a new sound.²⁹

Marion Brown has expressed the mystic-like synchronization of person and instrument: "When I become one with my instrument, it's then that I lose myself and really start playing. Music is my real drug."³⁰

We have seen how free-form jazz has both delegitimizing and reenchanting functions, and because of this resonance was ideologically the music par excellence for the actors.

The Production and Distribution of the Magazine as Continuous Reenchanted Activity

The poetry group continued meeting for a year and a half. Towards the end enough work was produced by the

members, and they decided to put together a poetry magazine, eventually entitled A Passion of Stones. In this section, we are interested in the social relations of constructing and distributing the magazine.

We conceptualize the activity of the group as a further attempt to concretize reenchantment by projecting ideology into acts. We find the following features attempted:

- (1) minimal separation of work and play;
- (2) minimal division of labor;
- (3) continuous vs. episodic reenchantment.

The actors, after creating an ideology of disaffiliation and mystic reintegration with the aid of the "trigger effect" of psychedelics, and then projecting their ideology into art, attempted further to practice their world view continuously. They decided to do the entire production and distribution of the magazine themselves, and do it consciously as playful activity with minimal division of labor. Richard related, "I had some friends at Liberation magazine and they offered to let us use their place on Sundays. So we went down there, got high, and did the whole thing ourselves, from typing, to offsetting and binding."

Mark noted, "It may have taken longer to do, because we would be doing typing, then rapping, offsetting, then screwing, drawing the endpapers, then jamming. We don't want any divisions any more. We want to be 'on' all the time. . . . We made the whole thing a festival."

Similarly, in distribution, the participants placed

the magazine in all the East Village bookshops, especially in Ed Sander's Peace Eye bookstore. Sanders, the best known East Village poet, published Fuck You Magazine: A Total Assault on Culture.

In the main, though, the actors spent much time giving away or selling the magazine in Tompkins Square Park, on the streets of the East Village, and in Washington Square Park. Steven said, "We stood around the parks rapping with people who came about the high scene, about our poetry. We would read stuff to people, show them the drawings in the magazine, let them read like a lending library, or give it away if they were interested, or accept whatever they could afford or what they thought it was worth to them. Just being there was fun."

We note here that the activity itself, separate from the goal, was reenchanting. Susan commented, "We were not only interested in giving away our poetry to an audience, this form of distribution allowed us to talk to a wide range of people. Making connections with people and letting whatever happens to flow from that was what we were doing."

Mark notes, "Some of the people we met became friends, lovers, visitors to the country. But it was a ball to be out there with all the musicians and other stoned folks in the park. There was this one guy really doing what we were, except that he was giving out miniature pieces of cloth with patterns like oriental rugs." Thus both activities of production and distribution of the magazine were attempts to

end routinized divisions of work and play and create an environment of continuous reenchantment.

Why Only One Issue of the Magazine: An Example
of the Project that Does Not Allow
Routinization of Consciousness

After completion of the first issue of the magazine, the poetry group continued its meetings and continued collecting material for another issue. It was easy to collect poems, since they were being written by the participants at that time. But the members of the group never seriously considered putting out another edition. Richard states, "If it happens, it happens. We did the magazine. It was fun. Now it's time to do something else. We don't want to fall into the trap of making a 'successful magazine.'"

Steven: "We were not committed to this magazine. It was a spontaneous outgrowth of our poetry activities. We don't have to hold ourselves down to it. We don't want to become an institution, an East Village fixture like Ed Sanders' Fuck You Magazine."

We see here, the reader should note, that the real "project" of the group is not any particular phase of their activity. It is the moving through or development from one phase to another. For the group's sense of project to survive, activities must be seen as ecstatic. Any routinization of consciousness is not part of the project. The group does not carry through a second edition because they are moving on to other activities, so as to not routinize

their behavior. Their consciousness is particularized--there is only one issue. Later the group leaves their definition of self as "poet" for "communard" for the same reasons.

Thus Mark states, "Doing the magazine was fun and important to us, at least at the time. The end result is not important." We see here that in their particularization of consciousness, the process is important, not what comes out of the process. Note the parallel between this and our analysis of automatic writing, where the activity of writing was important, not what was written. At the moment of the act, the actors define themselves as "free." What is negated is relating the activity to a goal.

The Routinization of Episodic Reenchantment

We have analyzed the various attempts made by the group in the poetry sessions to concretize in action and in poetry the psychedelic ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment. After a year and a half of activity, however, the group began to perceive that the ecstatic ideology was not being fulfilled. I interpret this contradiction as due to the routinization of reenchantment, and because the activity was episodic rather than continuous.³¹

Thus, Janis relates, "We used to get together to trip, and go deep in each other. The poetry group was so exciting at its inception. We were magical, one body. But we were increasingly relating on a stylized, artificial and theatrical level."

Carol notes, "What was an ecstatic heightening of sensation became towards the end simply a weekly meeting. And even when we clicked, the ecstasy was disembodied, not connected with ourselves."

Richard states, "The meetings were great but not enough. Who were we outside the meetings? Were we like that the rest of the week? We didn't want to be ecstatic once a week, but all the time."

Susan relates, "Our activity was no longer transcendent, but reduced to empty gestures devoid of our real lives. We were losing the connections and substituting an acted-out ecstasy for living it out."

Thus activity originally seen as reenchanting by the actors became routinized, reduced to a weekly meeting discontinuous with the rest of life. There is a contradiction between reenchantment and any form of routinization. Indeed, the project of reenchantment is precisely one that breaks any routinized patterns. The poetry group becomes reduced to a routinization of the ecstatic project.

The awareness of this fact pushed the group to consider the next stage of the project, an attempt at continuous reenchantment. The poetry group allowed the members to project their psychedelic ideology into art. Now the limitations of a not totally lived experience, the surrogate or sublimated experience of art, was seen by the actors as not enough. The participants now decided to live their art, nonstop, to

settle for nothing less than continuous reenchanting activity.
This took the form of a move to set up a commune in the
country.

NOTES

- ¹Unpublished prose, 1965.
- ²A Passion of Stones (New York: 1967):37. (Single-issue magazine of the East Village poets studied.)
- ³Ibid., p. 38.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 38.
- ⁵Ibid., p. 51.
- ⁶Susan Sontag, Styles of Radical Will (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1969), p. 25.
- ⁷Unpublished poem, 1966.
- ⁸A Passion of Stones, p. 13.
- ⁹Unpublished collective poem, 1967.
- ¹⁰Unpublished poem, 1966.
- ¹¹Unpublished poem, 1967.
- ¹²A Passion of Stones, p. 57.
- ¹³See Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967).
- ¹⁴Ibid., pp. 5, 19, 25, 33, 47, 59, 73.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 11.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 7.
- ¹⁷Max Weber, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, eds. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Galaxy Books, 1958), p. 347.
- ¹⁸A Passion of Stones, p. 21.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 70.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 31.

²¹A. Willener, The Action Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 236.

²²Ibid., p. 238.

²³Ibid., p. 238.

²⁴Ibid., p. 239.

²⁵Ibid., p. 241

²⁶Jazz Hot 212 (1965).

²⁷Willener, p. 248.

²⁸Ibid., p. 250.

²⁹Ibid., p. 252.

³⁰Jazz Magazine 133 (1966).

³¹We adapt this formulation from Garfinkel who, in the case of Agnes, distinguishes between the episodic analyses of Goffman and his own account of continuous passing.

CHAPTER 8

THE COMMUNE STAGE: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF
LIVING OUT CONTINUOUS REENCHANTMENT

This chapter examines the poet's attempt to live out a continuous reenchantment in the form of intense new patterns of collective living in the country. Aside from their resolve to put their ideology into practice continuously, the deterioration of the East Village as a congenial environment helped push them on to their commune. There they attempted to live out their reenchantment through experimenting with reciprocity, in order to abolish commodity relations. And they tried to negate the abstract division of labor and achieve a unity of work and play.

Contradictions began to develop in the areas of sexism in the division of labor, anarchic versus authoritarian styles of work, and sexual conflicts. These contradictions express the problems and limits of their living out their reenchantment, and lead to the breakup of their commune.

The Deterioration of the East Village

By late 1968 the East Village had deteriorated as a congenial environment for these poets. Earlier the feeling was quite the reverse, but a number of events created an oppressive environment.

Tension with the police was the major negative factor. For one, there was a definite anti-runaway campaign conducted by the police. They would stop people on Second Avenue and other side streets and pull them in for being "runaways," if they could not show papers indicating that they were over sixteen, or if they looked particularly young. In practice this meant that the police harrassed the East Village community as a whole.

And the tension between the police and the more organized anarchist groups, like Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers, was particularly strong. As Richard relates:

The Motherfuckers were being hassled by the police . . . not that they didn't provoke it to a large extent . . . but, what they did was to institute a patrol that they would go out every night, five or six or seven of them at a time. They would wear red headbands to identify them as patsies, and they were attempting to follow the course of the police and find any things that were going wrong in which they thought hippies were being persecuted, and then intervene, not with muscle but, you know, be witnesses and also offer telephone numbers to anyone hurt. Everybody was clear on the fact that the cops didn't like this. The cops were more opposed than ever to the continued existence of the Motherfuckers. It was worse than ever. And the Motherfuckers firmly believed that they were literally slated for annihilation that summer, that the cops were going to kill them. As it did turn out, most of them did split that summer.

But the major confrontation between the police and the hippies was the Tompkins Square Police Riot, as it became known. Don, who witnessed the event, commented:

This was the first event that came to my notice that showed that there was an implicit antagonism between the police and the hippies. I mean, one knew that these two groups didn't exactly dig each other, but it seems to me that they hadn't exactly clashed before. This particular clash was so ridiculous. I mean

You wanted to sit on the grass, and someone tells you to move off the grass, and you say, you know, fuck you, and before you know it, you are in a fight, you know, absurd. It didn't seem to be over any momentous issue. But what happened, a large group of people were sitting on the grass, 25 to 50 or so, and, they were playing music, quiet enough, maybe passing a joint but I don't think so, and not bothering anyone else in the park, like the elderly Ukrainians. The cops came over and told them to get off the grass and move along, and they refused to do it. They just sat there. One of the cops tried to break into the group and tried to scatter them, prodding them about with his nightstick, trying to scatter them. They pulled him down into their midst, and manhandled him a bit. That brought the other cops, and before you knew it, they were arrested and taken to the 9th Precinct on 5th Street.

Everyone was kind of expecting a blowup between the cops and the hippies, but this was the first time it happened.

From that event on, there was an epidemic of clashes between the police and the locals.

Even the Free Store, which used to be a popular gathering place, had deteriorated, as Larry notes:

In 68 the Free Store on 10th Street and Avenue B, they had old clothes in, and anybody could come in and stick around. Tom Neumann was responsible for funding from Washington Square Methodist Church. The Motherfuckers were billed as a "self-help" organization. A lot of people used to come into the store, mainly winos. There was a group of alcoholics called "Winos for Freedom" that used to hang around the storefront. The fact was that they were decrepit, louse-ridden, wasted people. That kind of messed up the store by discouraging others to even enter.

And probably the worst kind of deterioration for these poets was the sudden and alarming increase in heroin use in the area. Cheap heroin flooded the East Village from Vietnam. The going price for a bag on Avenue C in 1968 was one dollar and fifty cents. The mugging and robbery rate increased. Junkies would hang around the bank on Third Street

and Avenue C, and follow home people who cashed checks. And Susan and Richard were frightened when a man was stabbed in the hallway of the adjacent apartment house.

The Commune as a Model of Social Change

At the same time many parallel "affinity groups," like this one, were moving to the country. And such moves won vocal support from influentials in and around the East Village. The Diggers in San Francisco had just left for the country. Paul Goodman, known to some of the group personally through Win and Liberation magazines, and an influential for other members, had just written an article in Liberation Magazine called "The Diggers in Vermont." In the article he envisions more and more people moving to the country, setting up a whole interdependent network of self-sufficient collectives.¹ Richard used to call this "the swiss cheese theory of social change. The hole gets bigger and bigger, and pretty soon there isn't any more cheese." Todd felt that "if more and more communes spread around the country, there will be nobody left to man the war machine."

Within the group studied here, the commune was seen as the mode of social change necessary for America at this stage. The form was important because it undermines the dominant ideology. It did so by delegitimizing the work ethic, and setting up an integrated form of social life.

The members were increasingly critical of confrontational forms of social change. Steven argued:

The latest turn in the so-called counter-cultural movement is depressing. Instead of working on personal resources, they are reacting to the other and labelling police "pigs." The drug phase was first; they went in, this was positive. Now they are going "out" but the politics is not completely authentic because they have created an "enemy" outside to which their energies are directed to. By objectifying and dehumanizing the other they have "counter-identified," and therefore they are no longer on their own trip.

Steven and Richard, like the other members of the group, are rejecting traditional and even confrontational "new left" modes of social change. The commune was seen as the delegitimizing and reintegrating mode of change for the country and for them. We can see that they felt less isolated at this stage in their career. They were part of a whole movement with many supports. They were the vanguard; they would pave the way for others.

At this point the members were living marginally in the city, so it was not that difficult to leave jobs to be ready for the move. Or rather, those that did have marginal jobs were the ones that left. Peter for example, was doing yoga therapy, and would not leave. The other members who did leave were unloading fruit on the docks at night, substitute-teaching, teaching belly dancing, in short, working sporadically or not working at all.

The Setting in the "North Country"

In early spring Richard, Steven and Don went on an exploratory trip to find some land to buy in northern Vermont. Some of the group had little money, others had saved some. Steven had saved one thousand dollars from his loft plumbing

work. And Richard knew he could get about a thousand dollars in "key-money" for the work he had put into his five-room, low-rent East Village apartment.

They found some land, made a down payment on it, and returned to New York City. In late spring a core group left for the country. This consisted of three couples: Richard and Susan, Steven and Janis, and Todd and Carol, with their five young children, ages six months to four years. The group in the country never was as large as the network of people in the East Village, but these three couples were the central figures of the East Village group. In late May they would be joined by Mark, Don, Miriam, and about five other new people, who would come and go for a few weeks at a time.

Upon arrival, they found that the price of the land had been raised. They retrieved their down payment, crossed the Connecticut River into northern New Hampshire, and rented a large, rambling white house on the edge of the town of Colebrook. This was the northernmost town in New Hampshire, about 10 miles from the Canadian border. The area is called the Upper Coos or North Country of New Hampshire, and once was part of the "Indian Stream Republic," which tried to secede from the United States in the early 1800s.

While there might have been some "romance" in being far away settlers, this location isolated the group from relating with the other new communards further to the south.

For the main location of other communes was where they originally looked for land, in mid to northern Vermont, at least two hours to the south. Thus, these six to twelve people did not have the resource of visiting many other communes.

After Colebrook there was nothing but farms, fields, and wilderness up to the Canadian border. All supplies, including gas, had to be purchased in Colebrook. When they finally found a plot of land to farm on, it was located fifteen miles north and east, close to Stewartstown, pronounced by the local "down east" accent "Stutston." This was not a town but a bar at a crossroads, frequented by the local farmers. Farming has been declining in the area for the last twenty years, with many fields lying fallow or going back to woodland. The farmers who were left were in the main dairy farmers, who also used their land for timber.

A typical day in the first few months began with an early breakfast together. The men would then pick up supplies, including gas for the tractor, in town, and drive to the field, about twenty minutes from the house. They would work till around noon, when the women and the children would arrive with a picnic lunch. After the lunch break everyone would work in the fields, taking breaks when needed. Someone would play or watch the children at the edge of the field. And a break would often be in the form of one or two people taking the truck back into town for supplies, usually being more gas for the tractor.

Working in the "garden" was thus the central activity of the group. The garden was, in retrospect, a bit too large for a first undertaking by neophytes, being two and a half acres in size. It was planted with summer vegetables, herbs, and winter vegetables for storing. It was thus intended to be a major source of food for the summer and winter, and a cash crop to be sold upon harvest at an organic food cooperative in Boston.

As the land had lay fallow for about 10 years, it was suitable for organic gardening. But much work of harrowing, manuring, planting, and weeding had to be done.

And it was difficult to talk while working, because four to eight people would be scattered over two and a half acres. Waves and gestures were more common with the only conversation being possible when two people would pass each other as they each worked down a different row. And the strenuous manner of the work itself seemed to discourage talk.

What would bring people together was the arrival of the truck with supplies, or the breakdown of the tractor, or the lunch break.

In late afternoon people would stop work, collect tools, and drive back to the house. They often would stop at the local falls and swimming hole to cool off in the water. Or they would explore the back roads, find unguarded crossings into Canada, and drive around Quebec for a while.

After returning to the house, they would have dinner

together, and then, usually exhausted, would split up into couples and go to bed early enough.

Abolishing Commodity Relationships:
Reciprocity and Barter

After getting to know some of the local farmers, they were offered a field to use for their garden in exchange for manuring it. And then they were offered a loan of the local dairy farmer's tractors in exchange for helping him out during the haying season.

The "north country" farmers often reciprocated with each other in this manner, for each needed the others' help. Thus the group found actualized a rural principle of reciprocity that fit in with their notion of abolishing commodity relationships.

They also found that instead of being treated as "alien hippies," they were generally welcomed by the populace and helped out. The local dairy farmer invited them over for beer a lot, and was always helpful with advice and material. Janis states:

We were amazed at being accepted, well treated. We were helped to find places and told about local ways, how to secure for the winter, what wild plants were edible, and more--we were the New People--we were given venison.

The youth of the town began to drive past the house and would flash the peace sign. They were seen as new homesteaders in a poor area of the country in which people were historically always leaving for the city to make a living, as farming became more and more marginal.

Thus in living out the abolishment of commodity or cash-nexus relations, things became useful again. And work became useful. Once Paul Goodman, who lived about 30 miles to the south, hitched up and was found by the group sitting on the porch when they arrived from work. They drove him home, and arranged to cut down some of his dead trees. In return they could take some of the wood. What they mainly discussed with Goodman was the practical task of gardening. Goodman was in the process of writing that summer what later appeared as New Reformation.² He was arguing for the viability of a committed professionalism; here the group differed with him in that they saw their commune as an attempt to abolish the abstract division of labor, and to establish the unity of work and play.

The Unity of Work and Play

Reenchantment develops and takes on new forms at the commune. In the psychedelic phase, the integration effected was seen as symbolic-metaphysical; it was a change in modes of seeing. In the poetry chapter reenchantment was concretized in art, but it still remained symbolic.

In the commune stage, for the first time, the reenchantment attempted was continuous. Rather than an exception to everyday life, it was part of the rhythm of their life.

Janis: "We were high all the time. It was a constant flowing organic experience. Everything we did was part of the whole adventure." Todd notes: "We were always on,

never off. We are not taking a vacation from life. This is it."

This continuous flow was seen by the group as a movement from reenchantment of the mind to a complete entrance into total physicality. Steven notes: "About a year after I began using LSD regularly, I decided to remake my body in the same way I was refashioning my mind. I left my substitute teaching job and learned to do plumbing. Within six months my body was much stronger. I also did yoga. Here we have remade ourselves in the physical rhythm of farming." This new physicality also implied a movement away from introspection and even poetry, or the former partial definition of oneself as poet. Mark states during the period of harrowing, manuring and planting: "We have been working until we drop. We return to the house exhausted, eat dinner, and go to sleep almost immediately. But draining as it is, we all feel more integrated. We have stopped writing poetry and begun to live life more."

The meaning of working on the land for the participants then, was an attempt at uniting work and play. The goal was unalienated labor, in the sense of pure use value. By farming together the participants had broken down the division of labor in their own lives and effected a new integration. Farming was not alienated work; it was a joyous, funny, sensuous activity. It was a festival.

Thus, Steven states: "We are in touch with the organic rhythm of time on the land. It makes a real difference in the flow of our lives. Clock time is a bureaucratic fantasy,

a myth we must destroy."

"It's such a natural experience. We get going when we want in the morning. There is a great feeling of camaraderie working together in the fields. If we don't get stoned before we start, we are stoned on the rhythm of farming. Couples would slip off quietly to make love in the nearby woods. Farming is erotic. There are no separations."

The group had a tractor without a starter. Luckily there was a hill on the land, so they could get the tractor up the hill and start it rolling down. Richard relates: "We all loved it when the tractor stalled out. It was such a blast to get it started. Sometimes this would happen over and over again. Usually we would push it up the hill. Once we were pulling it with a second tractor and it stalled also. So we attached both to the truck and pulled them both up. The whole thing was a complete dance."

In another instance, Mark relates: "Todd was on the manure spreader. He had brought manure from another farm, and was about to turn on the switch. The others were standing near the tractor. He hit the switch, but the machine threw manure on everyone, including the driver, in a crazy way. This manic moment was just perfect, a heightening of time and experience."

As in the examples above, this feeling of perfect integration, when everything flows, was attempted to be realized in the events and rhythms of the actors. Mark

writes: "We worked in rhythm in the fields, and everything was just synchronized. The game was to see the smoothness that things could be swung along to. The days were organic and gliding."

And Richard: "We just flowed together when we worked, or when we jumped together under the falls. We are like one mind, one body. We communicate like ESP, we got it together."

The goal, then, was to synchronize, to flow, to be in touch, to unite work, art, and life, to break down divisions. Life was an integrated festival, a living expression of the techniques the group had been previously developing.

And so, for the actors, each day was reenchanting, filled with picaresque, magical moments, highs, derived now from a new rhythm of integrated life.

Contradictions

We have analyzed the new life of the members as a living out of their ideas which we have called an attempt at the reenchantment of the world. The actors clearly were aware of their goals, having developed techniques to express their ideology, while tripping, and having extended their world view into poetry. The further concretization of their ideology during this commune stage has a paradoxical effect in that it forces these people back into the "real world." To engage in ideologically guided practice puts one in relation to alternatives, particularly when one is trying to follow

that ideology continuously. Therefore, one is always in confrontation with the real world. The discrepancy between their ideology and the real world produces further problems which had to be played out in practice. Therefore, contradictions began to develop between the espoused ideology and the problems of attempting to live it out. Any living pattern which did not live up to these goals was seen by the actors as a gross violation of their project. Coupled with this was the fact of their isolation from others. The intensity of their living collectively tended to magnify these contradictions. Each interpersonal conflict became an enormous event.

Sexism in the Division of Labor

Sexism in the division of labor was the first contradiction that arose and, since it was finally resolved, did not turn out to be a major stumbling point for the group. Most of the couples had young children, a few did not. Janis relates: "The men were into trying out roles, stomping, ball clanking, spacing out behind the vastness seen from the mountain tops, walking in the woods."

Miriam, who had no children recalls: "At the beginning of planting somehow it was the men who went to the fields, leaving the women behind with the children. They might join them later, or put in an herb garden as Janis did, but we were generally kept out of participating. There was an unacknowledged macho thing in which the men would do it, leaving women to do housework and baby care. Although it

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didn't make any sense, the women with children somehow fell into this pattern at the beginning. But for me, especially, I felt excluded. Mark brought me to the fields and we all worked together. In turn he participated in the housework."

Janis further notes: "The women, especially those with small kids, were into following their men. Only after Miriam made a strong statement did we stop this way of relating. Later, labor was shared as much as possible. Women did field work, the men helped cook, everyone avoided doing dishes until someone or two or three would break down and do them. Informal rotation worked O.K."

Contradictions between Syles of
"Authority" vs. "Anarchism"

The group never devised roles for getting things done. This was seen as contrary to the project of reenchancement. They saw themselves as anarchist in thought. They preferred the "zen-synchronization" model discussed in Chapter 6 of things "just flowing together organically." But when this didn't happen severe problems developed, which contributed to the breakup of the group. The conflicts basically developed around those who felt that certain things had to be done, versus those who wanted to let things happen organically.

In living and working together, property, especially tools, was shared by the participants. Steven relates: "Richard began leaving tools out at night. They would be ruined, but he would not take responsibility. For him 'it just happened.' Picking them up might interfere with the

groovy things he was doing. For me, for all of us, the tools were ruined. He was just plain irresponsible. When some of us confronted him with our feeling about this, we were labeled 'uptight,' authoritarian."

Janis relates another incident. "Richard seemed to break everything he touched. He was using the tractor to pull some logs after clearing some woods, and the tractor broke down. He didn't try to fix it or get help. He just abandoned it there. I don't know who he expected to fix it, or when."

By this time animosities had already begun to develop, and Richard and Susan had moved out of the house. Janis felt that "we came here to live and work collectively. One day Richard and Susan just announced that someone had given them a little shack to live in on some land, and they were moving. This was a bit of a shock to the rest of us, who had planned to live collectively. There was no discussion, just an announcement of their intention to separate from us." At this point, then, the solidarity of the group had broken down.

Although the group had made a lot of contacts with farmers and townspeople, all problems that developed seemed exaggerated because of their isolation. They were isolated from other communes because of their location at the extreme north of New Hampshire. Both joys and interpersonal conflicts were exaggerated due to the intensity of living collectively. Living together here was continuous. Every

event loomed large, and these conflicts took on a degree of importance that they wouldn't have in the previous episodic stages of the group.

One of the crucial incidents occurred during the harvest. Steven relates: "It was the time of harvest. We had planted together, and we only had three to four days to do most of the harvest. Otherwise most of the crops would just rot in the ground. We needed all hands; one less was not enough. I went to get Todd. I found him carving a beautiful miniature frieze to put next to the door. Todd told me that he didn't want to do harvesting now because he was into doing this great frieze. I was furious, lost my temper, and threw the carving on the ground. This was supposed to be our food for the winter and a cash crop. People that weekend told me that they just were 'into' different things than harvesting right then. But the harvest doesn't wait for anyone. We had to do the harvesting ourselves, and lost a lot of the crops. We stored what we could and put the rest on our truck to bring to a Boston health food store which had already contracted with us, and of course I couldn't get the people I needed to drive down with me. We felt abandoned by the others. We had to do it all by ourselves."

Janis relates: "Right after this Todd and Carol put their mattresses in the back seat of their car and said they were going to leave. Steven told them 'You've got to help finish the house.' We had begun building for the winter. It was already late September. If the house was not finished

by the snows, which can come pretty early in northern New Hampshire, we would be in real trouble. But they were just grooving on the beautiful weather of early fall, going fishing, carving friezes. So they took their friends and gear and crashed upstairs next door and helped with the house and we finished the cabins but not before the first snow."

At this point the conflicts between the two styles of doing things was great. There was a split into two "camps." Couples visited each other but some of the main antagonists in the two camps would not even talk to each other. From a project of living collectively, now there existed antagonistic groups of people living separately in the country.

The other group saw the problem a little differently. Richard relates: "Steven has this patriarchal style that he tried to lay on us. We all found him pretty oppressive. He was just too uptight, anxious. Things always get done in their time. If we are into other things then this is our priority. If he just let things flow, like the way we did the harrowing, manuring and planting, everything would have worked out. We didn't have to harvest that weekend. We could have waited a little longer. This trip must be joyous to work. We didn't come here to work hard, to reproduce the bourgeois trip of alienated labor. Otherwise it's just not worth it."

In the same vein he said later: "Steven was so worried that we wouldn't get our house built, that we would freeze, that we wouldn't have enough wood for the winter. Well, we

did do all of those things. It's true that he had all of this wood cut before the snows. We had little done, but it didn't matter. Todd and I went out in winter with a metal dish attached to the back of a snowmobile, and cut wood in six feet of snow. He claims we were crazy, that it was dangerous. For us it was one of the funniest, most ecstatic experiences during that winter. It was part of the whole carnival. We didn't just survive, we are not into mere survival, we are into ecstasy, and moreover we thrived."

The group, then, divided around these different styles of life and work.

Sexual Conflicts

It is in the realm of sexual conflicts that the group as a collectivity really foundered. In interviewing the participants about why the project broke up, it is important to note that, after many hours, the last thing mentioned by most of them was the sexual conflicts that developed. It was the most basic of disagreements, but it was repressed and then revealed in an almost offhand way.

On a theoretical level at least, group sexual activities were seen by the members as a delegitimizing and re-enchanting technique. Thus Janis relates: "The importance of group sex for us is that it breaks us out of ordinary programming. Like acid, we divest ourselves of learned patterns and roles. We can break down possessiveness, jealousy, ownership of each other, go beyond heterosexuality

and homosexuality. We are all sexual, sensual beings. We can make real contact with an other or others through expressing our sensuality and not getting hung up about who is with who, the 'proper' way to do things. It gets us to that ecstatic presentness. We learn to really love the other." But she later conceded: "If it could work, it would be wonderful. But it exaggerated or was the root of the conflict which developed."

Todd relates: "It's true that Richard and Susan moved out because they were given a house to stay in. That was the pull. But the push for them was really the free sex scenes in the house. We never talked about it, but we knew that they just weren't ready for that kind of thing. It sort of put them off, estranged them from the group. On one hand it was not their trip, on the other hand we were doing something, sharing something in which they could not participate. I think we frightened them away."

Janis notes: "I have always had this conflict about being sexually free with Steven. In my previous marriage I remained sexually independent. But Steven, although he was sexually free, laid the old double standard on me. I felt his jealousy and rage. When I related sexually with another man when he was around, he would get strange and pull me away. I related with the others in group sex, but he would just giggle and go away, but then be very upset. He just couldn't handle it. Once when Fred and I were balling, he went up to Fred's wife. He did it out of

jealousy, not out of desire."

She further notes: "The root of the problem began with Todd and Carol. Remember, the four of us had been very close friends for many years. Todd and I have always had a thing for each other going back many years. Once he came up behind me, and we got into a beautiful sexual thing. Steven then went over to Carol, and they started giggling and fooling around. But they couldn't get off on each other. After this, animosities really developed. Carol and Steven didn't get along any more. Carol I guess felt rejected. Soon after this Steven threw his frieze on the ground when they wouldn't help with the harvest. They moved out and wouldn't ball with me anymore. They wouldn't even talk with us." Todd: "In the poetry group, we synchronized as one but without group sex. That's why it worked. I'm glad we made the next step, but it was with people not yet ready; next time it'll work."

We have seen that the contradictions of hierarchy and the old sexual conditioning were resistant to change, despite the fact that this was seen as part of the overall project of the group. We note that they could not be worked out within the confines of the group. At the same time, however, most members of the group wanted to work through these problems. Only by going beyond the group could the developing project meet the contradictions and try to come to terms with them.

The group project was committed to breaking down old roles, ending interpersonal domination, power trips, sexual property rights. Most of the members, when confronted with these residues of the old culture they were trying to divest themselves of, were ready to go further developing themselves and throwing off the last vestiges of repression, even if this meant the dissolution of the original group. Paradoxically, therefore, the process of disintegration must be seen as a clarification of the project. This holds true although it involved internal contradictions that the group could not solve by remaining together.

Thus what characterizes this group is finally not necessarily their solidarity with one another, or any particular stage of their activities, but their commitment to an ongoing project of resistance to rationalization. And as they work through the contradictions they face, the forms this commitment takes finally demand the dissolution of the group itself.

NOTES

¹Paul Goodman, "The Diggers of Vermont," Liberation,
2 (March 1968): 27-35.

²Paul Goodman, New Reformation: Notes from a Neolithic Conservative (New York: Random House, 1969).

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: RESISTANCE TO RATIONALIZATION
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The value of a comparative analysis of the European avant-garde and East Village counter-cultural poets is that I have been able to show that the ideology of delegitimation and reenchantment has a certain structure. Part One of the study focuses on these structural features, while Part Two examines the practical working out of this ideology.

The comparative nature of this study reveals that, for example, for the 1960s counter-culture, psychedelic use must be seen in context. That is, the ideological need of the counter-culture was to develop techniques to delegitimize and reenchant the world. Psychedelics were only an adjunct to this historical desire, as they were in the avant-garde movements previously. No doubt they did serve as a trigger mechanism, or, as Weber put it, there is an elective affinity between psychedelic use and more direct attempts to delegitimize and reenchant the world.

In other words, I stress not mainly this or that specific technique we find in the avant-garde or in the counter-culture, but the consistent attempts to break the unity of life which is felt as a form of domination. These attempts create a structure of resistance to rationalization. It is

in this way that I see various forms of delegitimation played out in both groups.

Each group uses its own special and historical formulations for essentially the same process. For example, what Novalis called "making strange," and what the Russian formalists referred to as "de-familiarization," the counter-cultural poets refer to as "breaking the set." All these various features of particularization or randomization the actors see as devices which they can appropriate in order to delegitimize and reenchant the world.

However, I have treated my examination of these two groups differently. Part One examines the avant-garde in order to trace out the theoretic structure of delegitimation and reenchantment, to demonstrate that this is a unitary ideology, and to display that within each feature, delegitimation achieves a reenchantment. The purpose of Part One, then, is to develop a formal, synchronic model of delegitimation and reenchantment.

My examination in Part Two, of East Village poets, differs from this earlier theoretic model in that it catches a steady diachronic movement. Over time the group develops practices of resistance to rationalization. And these practices cohere as an ongoing project. Beginning with forms of delegitimation that achieve a break with their past, the group moves towards attempts at a lived-out reenchantment.

For instance, the first settling in the East Village and early psychedelic experimentation stress the

delegitimizing side of the poet's break with the past. Here they prize "deconditioning," a pulverization of a unity of self, which is seen as repressive, and "non-attachment." The reenchantment they reach here is no doubt a strong subjective experience, but it is one which remains provisional in the sense of not yet being acted out in the world.

Their writing of poetry is an externalization and concretization of their ideology. And here, although much of the poetry is a poetry of dissociation, that very dissociation effects a reenchantment in the sense of a new unity. And the need for continuous as opposed to episodic reenchantment is a driving force toward further actualization of their ideology in the world as they construct their commune.

This movement of their history, in Part Two, first stressing delegitimation, and then reenchantment, is also the working out in the real world of their struggle against instrumental rationality. In comparison, my examination of the avant-garde in Part One remains synchronic, not revealing a historical project, but rather building a theoretic model which I later draw upon.

This historical struggle we display in the project of the East Village poets. As these poets work through the practical conflicts they face, they create their own history. And their very failures or reversals drive them to clarify their own project, pushing them from stage to stage.

I would like to suggest that resistance to the pervasive rationalization of modern life is recurrent, but that

this effort is enmeshed in the very rationalization it opposes, and therefore generated new problems. But, on the other hand, these new problems clarify resistance to rationalization as a project, and make the whole endeavor an act and ongoing one. Therefore, this study points to both the fragility of their attempted project, and its dynamism.

Concretely, in terms of our group of poets, their appropriation of new techniques of delegitimation and re-enchantment is the beginning of their attempted project of self-realization, and this is the major radical break. These techniques are freeing precisely because, as an expressive group, they are appropriating techniques that have no historicity in their own lives.

This is not to say that there is no history and knowledge of the avant-garde, or a site in which counter-cultural activity becomes possible. What it does mean is that their radical techniques are formulated not simply in opposition to but outside of the total historical context in which they live, and thus are a way of denying history itself. It says about them that they are conceptualizing the domination they experience in a totalistic way. The whole system of historical struggle has to be rejected, not ultimately, but now in the very process of coming to terms with it.

Their positive contribution, then, is that they encourage what Marcuse has called the great refusal, trying to get beyond history itself. The negative side, however, is that they cannot resolve the contradiction between their

lives in the world and the techniques of change which they use.

However, this very unresolved tension creates the driving force of the project as it develops through successive stages. Their very "failure" is but one moment of the tension of history. Thus, the history of resistance to rationalization is the experience of always being caught up in the tension of ongoing desire in the midst of domination.

This expressive group thus perceived instrumental rationality as total domination. To deal with it the group developed a strategy. That strategy points to the tension, but does not solve it.

I would like to discuss the broader importance of cultural practice as a historic strategy of resistance to rationalization. In our time, expressive or cultural movements often precede political ones, and set the stage for larger, more instrumental struggles. Political movements, as Max Scheler notes, are often preceded by expressive movements which may have features that appear bizarre to the instrumentally oriented onlooker.¹ Similarly, the different analyses of Wilhelm Reich, the Frankfurt school, Henri Lefebvre, and Bruce Brown all point to how cultural repression blocks political change.²

These authors argue that the domination expressed in our society operates to a large extent in a "one-dimensional" manner, closing off certain socially available means of

perception, language, and communication, repressing fantasy, imagination, sexuality, and the esthetic. For this reason a project for social change must include the cultural, for here is the realm that can open up the field of possibility by recovering the ability to use imagination and fantasy, and then using this power for social transformation.

The May 1968 movement in France is a prime example of how oppositional cultural practice can unblock political domination. Specifically, in that movement, techniques of delegitimizing language stand out. One of the major slogans was "all power to the imagination." What is being said here is that one must begin the project of social change by changing consciousness, or renewing the ability to think that change is possible. Another slogan prominent on walls in May was "be realistic, demand the impossible."

What is implied is that the only way to get out of the "iron cage" is to change first on the level of culture. When the social base is blocked, one must begin to delegitimize language to make conceivable once more the possibility of ending forms of domination in modern life.

In sum, the project of delegitimation and reenchantment, as with the surrealists, usually begins on the plane of cultural practices that resist instrumental rationality, and moves to a more active and political stage as it develops. Thus, before hierarchical power can be contested on the economic or political level, it must be attacked in the realm of social imagination.

My own study, too, points to the importance of cultural practice. Seen in the context of a developing historical project, with all the inherent contradictions, at a time in America when political change was blocked, this expressive group attempted to decondition itself from the iron cage, and acted as a workshop of utopian possibilities. The successes and failures of the project--the very contradictions that appear, that are resolved, or that remain--serve as a precursor to further historical analysis and action in the 1970s.

Expressive movements such as the one I have studied tend to develop their opposition in totalistic ways. As a result, they develop a practice and total critique of society. And this is their positive role. For while instrumental movements remain subordinate to means-ends relations, these kinds of total cultural movements play a role in social change precisely because they bring attention to details of domination. In historical microcosm, therefore, this study has shown the potential of expressive movements.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the recurrent tension we find in resistance to rationalization. As I have noted, the resistance does not occur in a vacuum, but always partakes of the very rationalization it opposes. In other words, resistance creates a tension played out in history again and again. The tension holds true not only for the two groups studied here, the European avant-garde and

the East Village poets. This tension will also occur, I argue in conclusion, in other similar movements for social change.

Both groups studied commit themselves to an ongoing praxis that resists the iron cage, and that searches for a non-alienating form of life.

That neither of the groups succeeded in the face of a total system and ideology of disenchantment is not surprising. On the contrary, it is startling that they were able to produce so much in the midst of this pervasive system of domination.

Still, this study points to the fragility of such expressive movements for change. It seems that the actors go through an intensity whose contradictions burn them out too fast. The history of the avant-garde is replete with these examples. Thus, Artaud's vision of reintegration leads him to the madhouse. And Rimbaud ends his life as a gun-runner to the Abyssinians, after his participation in the failed Paris Commune, and his poetry of reenchantment.

But it is important to note that historical practice is discontinuous. In other words, it develops by leaps and reversals; movement is not congealed in a single person's biography.

In fact, people do leave traces of liberatory acts. This holds true whether the liberatory acts congeal in art and artistic movements, or labor struggles, or ideologies. All are mediated, reevaluated, thought through as well as

trivialized and repressed by new actors. As a prime example, Willener notes that May 1968 grew out of the avant-garde of dada and surrealism, plus marxism and anarchism.³

Therefore, desire in the midst of domination is a dilemma for every liberating activity. And although desire may reproduce the logic of domination, it does so on another historical level. In this sense, I believe that the praxis of these two groups constitutes a genuine historical intervention.

Thus my study shows that resistance to the pervasive rationalization of modern life recurs. True, the iron cage grows tighter as we move toward a form of Orwell's "1984" that Samir Amin and George Fischer specify as a higher level of capitalist rationalization.⁴ Yet, at the same time, in true dialectical fashion, opposing forms of resistance develop.

Therefore, any commitment to liberatory acts such as the ones we have called delegitimation and reenchantment must by its nature remain fragile and ambivalent. For these attempts can only exist and are brought forth in the midst of the whole complex web of domination, alienation, and exploitation which I have summed up under the rubric of rationalization.

Hence the tragic aspect of expressive resistance to rationalization: all resistance to domination develops in the midst of domination itself. No wonder that resistance turns out no more than a provisional solution. Each and every time, in ever developing forms, both of theory and

practice, the effort at delegitimation and reenchancement generates the same tension that I stress throughout this conclusion.

No movement can account for making real historical change by itself. Like all interventions, each is afflicted by the very disenchantment it opposes. But the present study offers sociologists a significant example of the dynamic interaction between rationalization and resistance.

NOTES

¹John Staude, Max Scheler, 1874-1928: An Intellectual Portrait (New York: Free Press, 1967).

²Wilhelm Reich, "What is Class Consciousness?", 1934, Liberation, 16:5 (October 1971); Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Henri Lefebvre, Everyday Life in the Modern World (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1971), pp. 34-35; Bruce Brown, Marx, Freud, and the Critique of Everyday Life: Toward a Permanent Cultural Revolution (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

³Alfred Willener, The Action Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

⁴Samir Amin, "Toward a Structural Crisis of World Capitalism," Socialist Revolution 23 (April 1975), 5:1; George Fischer, "Self-Rule or 1984," in G. Fischer, Ways to Self Rule: Beyond Marxism and Anarchism (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1978).

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