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-Preface-
Human Rights and the Dangers of Political Manichaeism

My argument is concerned primarily with the ethical history of the 1968 student movements, but the conclusions reached can be applied to the 21st century War on Terror.[*] From the 'Axis of Evil' to 'Operation Iraqi Freedom', the Bush Administration endorses a Manichaean doctrine of coercive moral imperialism; the American government's response to extremist terrorism is itself dangerously extremist. Instead of trying either to isolate the extremists or to understand the roots of terrorism, American governmental discourse post-9/11 uses the blanket terms 'terrorists'—subhuman, cowardly, evil incarnate—and 'murderers' to gloss over unilateralist double-standards.

This is emphatically *not* to endorse terrorism; that mass violence targeted against civilian noncombatants goes against the fundamental precepts of ethical right is overwhelmingly clear. Rather, the present U.S. foreign policy is flawed in two basic respects: (**1**) it defines the transnational domain in stark friend/enemy terms that reject the complex nature of international relations, and (**2**) by declaring war on terrorism itself, the U.S. military indeterminately expands its own moral agency—

[*] And, for a current example closer to Italy, the political uses of terrorism are strikingly apparent in Spain. Polls had former prime minister José María Aznar slotted to win the coming election until the day of the Madrid rail bombings of March 11 2004 that left 200 dead and over a thousand injured. Whether it's because of Aznar's unpopular participation in Bush's 'coalition of the willing' or because his Partido Popular groundlessly fingered the Basque nationalist terrorist group ETA, March 15 saw the landslide election of socialist party (PSOE) leader José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. I would thus like to mention a somewhat disturbing potentiality that I do not discuss in the body of my work: that Berlusconi's Italy—another 'willing' coalition member without much popular support for war in Iraq—may be next to feel the violent repercussions of a manipulative and dangerously black-and-white approach to modern terrorism.

both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*[*]—while espousing an unrealizable doctrine of guaranteed security. Following John Rawls and Immanuel Kant, I argue that the best of the '68 generation showed what many today apparently do not: an understanding that human justice is *and must be* in a state of constant negotiation, both between individuals and between peoples.[†]

Although this work addresses Kantian liberalism and the *Brigate Rosse* (the Red Brigades: BR) in considerable detail, I refrain—in an attempt to maintain a modicum of synchronicity—from discussing human rights and terrorism as viewed in contemporary political philosophy and just war theory. A look at Michael Ignatieff on human rights and Michael Walzer on terrorism will contextualize the '68 movement's rights discourse and the Janus-faced opposition of its legitimate claimants.

In *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, Ignatieff demonstrates both that human rights contest each other and that rights doctrines are practically, if not epistemologically, self-justifying. On the first point,

> Activists who suppose that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a comprehensive list of all the desirable ends of human life fail to understand that these ends—liberty and equality, freedom and security, private property and distributive justice—conflict, and, because they do, the rights that define them as entitlements are also in conflict. If rights conflict and there is no unarguable order of moral priority in rights claims, we cannot speak of rights as trumps. (20)

My work is an attempt to approximately reconcile the ultimately incompatible Communist and capitalist rights traditions[‡] and a demonstration that utopias of either tradition tend toward dystopia by rejecting the opposed tradition's basic legitimacy.

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[*] The justice of war and justice in war, respectively.

[†] Rawls' word, which he prefers over states or nation-states and all they (negatively) connote.

[‡] Writes Ignatieff: "The Communist rights tradition—which put primacy on economic and social rights—kept the capitalist rights tradition—emphasizing political and civil rights—from overreaching

Like myself, Ignatieff follows Kant rather than Hobbes in his untranscendentally normative justification of rights theory.

> People may not agree why we have rights, but they can agree that we need them. While the foundation for human rights may be contestable, the prudential grounds for believing in human rights protection are much more secure. Such grounding as modern human rights requires, I would argue, is based on what history tells us: that human beings are at risk of their lives if they lack a basic measure of free agency. (55)

This argument is premised on—and logically follows from—moral free agency.[*] Against the Hobbes who famously wrote that 'covenants without swords are but words', "all societies need a juridical source of legitimacy for the right to refuse legal but immoral orders. Human rights is one such source" (16). Although the ontologically nonmoral status of natural processes[†] is in my view almost unquestionable, a variant on Pascal's wager tips the scale against the relativist nihilism of postmodernism run amok.

Accordingly, Michael Walzer's 'qualified absolutist' position in *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977) is central both to BR terrorism and to the best of the '68

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itself" (19). The former was weakened after the Helinski Final Act of 1975, letting the latter run rampant in the Reagan-Thatcher '80s.

[*] Also, as Amy Gutmann writes in the introduction to Ignatieff's work, "some people, of course, do say that nothing is a human right, but that does not mean that they are right, or even reasonable in claiming that there are no human rights. To believe in human rights does not entail believing that they exist independently of human purpose. Human rights are important instruments for protecting human beings against cruelty, oppression, and degradation. That's all we need to believe to defend human rights" (xi). Or, again quoting Ignatieff, "Our grounds for believing that the spread of human rights represents moral progress, in other words, are pragmatic and historical. We know from historical experience that when human beings have defensible rights—when their agency as individuals is protected and enhanced—they are less likely to be abused and oppressed" (4).

[†] Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, which successfully explains the problem of complex design, has in my view garnered enough broad base support and evidence to redefine Darwinian evolution from scientific theory to scientific fact. Thus, although one opposing view, Lamarckianism, is, with its doctrine of constant and spontaneous progress closer to the '68 interpretation, it is largely lacking in empirical evidence. Writes Darwin: "Lamarck, who believed in an innate and inevitable tendency towards perfection in all organic beings, seems to have felt this difficulty so strongly, that he was led to suppose that new and simple forms are continually being produced by spontaneous generation. Science has not as yet proved the truth of this belief, whatever the future may reveal" (130).

generation's moderate universalism. He presents four ways to deal with the tension between *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum*: the utilitarian argument (in favor of wantonly violating the war convention), the 'sliding scale' argument (the more justice, the more right), the absolutist argument ("*fiat justicia ruat coelum*, do justice even if the heavens fall") (230), and the qualified absolutist argument ("the convention is overridden, but only in the face of an imminent catastrophe") (232). Nothing substantial can be said about the first three without saying a lot; it here suffices to select the fourth.

Importantly, qualified absolutism does theoretically allow for what Camus' play terms *Just Assassins*:[*] 'terrorists' who adhere to a political code that acknowledges noncombatant immunity. It could be argued that the BR were not terrorists by Walzer's definition (random murderers of innocent people) (198), but by objectively misreading Italian society they fall afoul of his next distinction:

> Soldiers and officials are, however, different in another respect. The threatening character of the soldier's activities is a matter of fact; the unjust or oppressive character of the official's activities is a matter of political judgment. For this reason, the political code has never attained to the same status as the war convention. Nor can assassins claim any rights, even on the basis of the strictest adherence to its principles. (200)

My argument is premised on the *potential* justifiability of revolutionary violence and on the objective unjustifiability of late-20th century Marxist terrorism.

Structural Outline

[*] " . . . "just assassins" are at least possible, and men and women who aim at that kind of killing and renounce every other kind need to be marked off from those who kill at random—not as doers of justice, necessarily, for one can disagree about that, but as revolutionaries with honor" (Walzer 203).

The work is composed of two parts: part I documents the intellectual origins and immediate causes of 1968 while outlining its protagonists' moral critiques, and part II analyses the movement's ethical legacy and the extent of its historical impact. The first unit looks at France, the second at Italy; both are intellectually situated, but both are also taken as constituent parts of the larger 1968 phenomenon. In both cases, historical, philosophical, and political analyses are supported by artistic texts.

Section (**I:1:1**) begins by tracking the Enlightenment origins of rights theory from Condorcet, Kant, and Montesquieu to Robespierre's *terreur* and beyond. The work goes on to document the related role that the radical French Revolution's deified reason plays in spawning the Sadean and Nietzschean rebuttals to enlightenment bondings of morality with reason. Part (**I:1:2**) rejects Hobbesian and postmodern/(post)structuralist relativism at the normative level—there favoring instead reformist Kantian idealism—while acknowledging postmodernism's utility as a means. After a short history of the origins of France's student movement, what follows in (**I:1:3**) is an outline of Ronald Inglehart's postmaterialist thesis and its situated applicability in the France of 1968.

Seeking artistic representation for the scholarly data of (I:1), I turn to Godard in (I:2). Section (**I:2:1**) develops the movement's primary concerns with a look at the form and narrative of three of Godard's earlier films. *Vivre sa vie* (1962), *Pierrot le fou* (1964), and *Masculin/Féminin* (1966) tackle the dehumanizing effects of consumer capitalism, the commodification of value, and the moral imperialism of colonial apologetics. The trajectory of Godard's filmic career is a lesson in deontological maturation, and although his films importantly affirm a universalist

ethic and the moral worth of human life, part I is concerned primarily with the negative spurs to '68's positive action. In (**I:2:2**), Godard's *Weekend* is presented as the critical culmination of these concerns.

Part II returns to the past to uncover the revolutionary influence that '68 utopianism—which was both reformist and revolutionary—shared with the odd Kantian bedfellow addressed in part I. Section (**II:1:1**) begins with a look at Barrington Moore's troubling but persuasive theory on the inherence of violence in the transition to modern liberal democracy. Next, the interpretive merits and dangers of Marxist materialism and its anti-dogmatic alternatives are discussed, both synchronically (Proudhon and Fourier) and diachronically (Togliatti and Gramsci).

Using Togliatti and Gramsci to segue into the particulars of Italian political and intellectual culture, (**II:1:2**) presents Benedetto Croce as a model of misinterpreted liberalism while giving a rapid-fire introduction to the *Risorgimento*, the *Resistenza*, and the structure of post-WWII political institutions. Following a summary of John Rawls' position (presented as a worthy archetype to be contrasted with Croce's faulty liberalism), I introduce Pier Paolo Pasolini as decrier of a consumerist homogenization—the truth of which I support with statistical evidence—and as practitioner of a justified Marxism. Subsequently, I document how Pasolini's derisive "Il PCI ai giovani!" simultaneously presents worthy critiques of and demonstrates an historically situated inability to see the virtues of the '68 generation.

Part (**II:2:1**) begins with a general synopsis of Italian terrorism in its Left and Right manifestations, and with a look at the apparent collusion of covert organizations with the forces of order in manipulating terrorist actions and reactions.

What follows is an in-depth analysis of the *Brigate Rosse*'s ideological underpinnings that reveals their fundamental disjunct both from contemporary Italian society and from the '68 interpretation. Next, Leonardo Sciascia's *L'Affaire Moro* demonstrates how the Christian Democrat response to the kidnapping and assassination of DC potentate Aldo Moro implicates Andreotti and his fellow elites (for their obdurate misreading of Moro's plea to live) more than it tarnishes the '68ers' reputation.

In (**II:2:2**), Sebastiano Vassalli's *Archeologia del Presente* and Marco Tullio Giordana's *La Meglio Gioventú* provide a retrospective look at '68's legacy. Before addressing Vassalli and Giordana I outline the historical development of two new political cleavages: between the 'materialist' and 'postmaterialist' Lefts and between the old and new Rights. I also track the meteoric rise of Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia. I go on to argue that Vassalli's *Archeologia* joins with Pasolini's "Il PCI ai giovani" in its strengths, while its seeming weaknesses are more open to literary interpretation: although *Archeologia* presents the narrator and the protagonists as near-stereotypes of reckless consumerism and blind utopianism, Vassalli's formally nuanced work confounds the too-easy conflation of authorial sympathetic identification with the narrator. Only by realizing that both arguments have reasonable grounds that the reader can imagine a balanced ideal forged in the dialogic reconciliation of the two extremes.

Unlike Vassalli's rich but overly cynical satire, Giordana's *La Meglio Gioventú* captures the balanced ideal of '68 in a individual character. I focus my analysis on Nicola Carati, his partner, Giulia, and his brother, Matteo. The film demonstrates the virtues of tolerant psychologist Nicola's laudable 'moderate

utopianism' and the flaws both of Giulia's too-selfless Marxist terrorism and of Matteo's deadly need to live in a simplistic world of black-and-white military order. However, also unlike Vassalli's text, Giordana's made-for-TV film relies heavily on a melodrama that—its tasteful and moving utilization notwithstanding—tends towards too-easy solutions of necessarily complex issues.

Finally, the Afterword closes the study with a return to present-day France. The moral legacy of '68 cannot be understood without an appreciation of more recent political phenomena, and therefore I look to the Front National and at the present state of popular political (dis)satisfaction in the French elections of 2002. It lies beyond the scope of this work to determine the real origins of the *LéPeniste* counter-movement and whether it poses a serious threat to '68 universalism. Nonetheless, evidence of racial unrest and surging particularisms in present-day France (and Italy, minus the racial unrest) poses disturbing challenges to the continuing presence of a '68-bred moderate universalism.

Although the project's vast scope and interdisciplinary approach allowed for the integration of myriad elements, certain issues were not addressable here. In particular, the many concerns of postcolonial France and the European '68 movement's links to its American counterpart are alluded to but not properly analyzed. Other important developments, like the student movement's enormous impact on feminism and women's empowerment, are also absent. This work's claim is admittedly contingent on these and other developments, but my argument is

"simply" an attempt to justify '68 in the intellectual and historical contexts of the French and Italian political Lefts since 1789.

My analysis has helped me realize the empowering moral agency that obtains in egalitarian visions of Kantian liberalism, but it has also revealed that freedom imposes limits on equality, and vice-versa. At the basic level, and as I will demonstrate throughout, this work is one of moderate universalism. One the one hand, relativism and particularism cannot provide a normative foundation of agreed-upon basic rights in an otherwise plural cosmopolitan federation. On the other hand, strict moral absolutism is practically untenable and is in many cases undesirable. In this light, the progressive legacy of the '68 movement was a much-needed resurgence of deontology and foundational right: recognizing the ultimate incompatibility of valid particularist bonds with universalist egalitarianism, the '68-era 'disillusioned utopian' has no alternative but to approximate the asymptotic union of the two.

A great deal of research has gone into the making of this work, and I would like to thank Marcello Simonetta and Typhaine Leservot for patiently channeling my enthusiasm towards manageable pursuits. I am also very grateful for the much-needed nightly relief that the zany antics of my fellow B6 residents have provided. Finally, I wish to extend a special thanks to Alex and to my parents for always being there and for helping me to keep everything in perspective.

-Part I-
Les Soixante-Huitards

SPHINX: To make a riddle, just enounce yourself.
Try and resolve your inmost self and action.
-*Faust* (Goethe 203; pt. II, act II)

1
1968: A Moral History

1
Enlightenment Reason and its Discontents

> On pourrait sur ce qui précède ajouter à l'acquit de l'état civil la liberté morale, qui seule rend l'homme vraiment maître de lui, car l'impulsion du seul appétit est l'esclavage, et l'obéissance à la loi qu'on s'est prescrite est la liberté.
> -Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Le Contrat social* (Fellows and Torrey eds. 526)

> DOLMANCE: l'homme aime à commander, à être obéi, à s'entourer d'esclaves contraints à le satisfaire; or toutes les fois que vous ne donnerez pas à l'homme le moyen secret d'exhaler la dose de despotisme que la nature mit au fond de son coeur, il se rejettera pour l'exercer sur les objets qui l'entourent, il troublera le gouvernement. Permettez, si vous voulez éviter ce danger, un libre essor à ces désirs tyranniques, qui, malgré lui, le tourment sans cesse . . . il sortira satisfait et sans aucun désir de troubler un gouvernement qui lui assure aussi complaisamment tous les moyens de satisfaire sa concupiscence.
> -Marquis de Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (221)

To understand the struggle between reform and revolution which the '68 movement paradoxically merged, it is necessary to briefly outline the role played by Enlightenment reason and its many critics. Although the purportedly 'anti-reason' French student movement saw its roots in its nation's revolutionary tradition, Enlightenment thought was central to the revolution of 1789. Positing the basic unity of reason and moral progress, the champions of 18th century Enlightenment reason* have left us with the monumental contributions that were formalized (if not carried

* Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Kant, and Condorcet, among others.

out) by the French Revolution: universal human rights and the related principles of equality and liberty. See, for example, the first and third clauses of the *Déclaration des Droits de L'homme et du Citoyen*: "Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres, et égaux en droits. Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune" and "Le principe de toute souveraineté réside essentiellement dans la Nation" (Fellows and Torrey eds. 637). These are taken from the Marquis de Lafayette and from Rousseau's *Contrat social*,[*] respectively, and are reflected in the (albeit limited) revolutionary enfranchisement of the French polity.

In addition to being fundamentally equal, Enlightenment thinking affirms that all of the world's cultures contain the necessary ingredients for moral progress. According to Condorcet's *Progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794), "Toutes les erreurs en politique, en morale, ont pour base des erreurs philosophiques, qui elles-mêmes sont liées à des erreurs physiques. Il n'existe, ni un système religieux, ni une extravagance surnaturelle, qui ne soit fondée sur l'ignorance des lois de la nature" (Fellows and Torrey eds. 623). The enlightenment thinkers' main contribution is their break from the Western tradition of elitist xenophobic racism which spans from the *barbaros*-fearing Greeks to the 19th century social Darwinists and beyond.

As with culture and reason, so too with religion and morality. Quoting letter 46 of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*,

> . . . en quelque religion qu'on vive, dès qu'on en suppose une, il faut bien que l'on suppose aussi que Dieu aime les hommes, puisqu'il établit une religion pour les rendre heureux; que, s'il aime les hommes, on est assuré de lui plaire en les aimant aussi, c'est-à-dire en exerçant envers eux tous les devoirs de la charité et

[*] As the section 'Que la Souverainete est Inalienable' from book II of *Le Contrat social* states, "le souverain, qui n'est qu'un être collectif, ne peut être représenté que par lui-même: le pouvoir peut bien se transmettre, mais non pas la volonté (Fellows and Torrey eds 527).

> de l'humanité, et en ne violant point les lois sous lesquelles ils vivent. (Fellows and Torrey eds. 119)

Accordingly, all cultures are rational and all religions are good. Always and everywhere, rational progress is beholden to and allied with moral progress.

The teleology of moral progress, transformed by Marxism into material progress and by postmodernity into a nebulous web of power asymmetries, is best defended by the father of political liberalism, Immanuel Kant. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant's most famous maxim states that we should treat every human (rational, moral, and thus free in their agency) as an end in themselves and not as a means (166-67). Of morality he writes, "if we abandon this basic principle, we are faced not with a law-governed nature but with an aimless, random process, and the dismal reign of chance replaces the guiding principle of reason" (42). Kant's defense of moral progress is complex, but essentially it is to morality what Pascal's wager is to God.

Although the abstract premises of enlightenment rationality generally cohere with 'moral justice', the dangers of cold rationality are demonstrated by contrasting the aspirations of Sieyés' Third Estate with Robespierre's Terror. Whereas the Third Estate was justified in wanting to go from being nothing in the political order to being something (Hunt ed. 65), Robespierre's terror imprisoned 300,000 royalists and Girondins (only 15 percent of whom were clergy or nobility, albeit a disproportional 15 percent given their 5 to 8 percent of the population) (Merriman 536). Robespierre's secularized "Cult of the Supreme Being" transformed the Parisian Notre-Dame into a "temple of reason," where 'Liberty,' dressed in the revolutionary Phrygian cap and pike, "bowed down before the flame of reason. The painter Jacques-Louis David constructed huge statues of monsters like Anarchy and Atheism

made of pasteboard. After Robespierre set fire to them, a statue of Wisdom rose out of the ashes" (Merriman 536). Juxtaposing the literally blood-drenched streets of Paris to the monolithic deification of reason, the dangers of intolerance hinted at in Diderot's *Encyclopedia*[*] (1772) are fully manifest Robespierre's actions.[†]

It should come as no surprise, then, that Sade's *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* was written and published in 1795, at the height of the Terror. For a taste of the protagonist Dolmance's world-view, it suffices to say that the play closes with his gang-raping, infecting with syphilis, and bloodily sewing shut the vagina and anus of the mother of the girl he was charged to look after (who is 2nd in command of the gang in question). Sade turns liberalism and the Enlightenment on their head by rejecting the claim that reason and morality are good bedfellows in favor of a doctrine of 'natural' self-fulfillment. Its own outrageous extremes notwithstanding, Sade's play demonstrates the errors of placing faith in reason alone. For reason, like the natural world, is itself strictly nonmoral.

According to Dolmance, "rien n'est égoïste comme la nature: soyons-le donc aussi si nous voulons accomplir ses lois" (194). Similarly, he clearly rejects both the concept of human rights and the intuitively felt nature of moral sympathy: "il y aura donc alors tout autant de mal à tuer un animal qu'un homme, ou tout aussi peu à l'un qu'à l'autre" (237), and "n'écoutez jamais votre coeur, mon enfant; c'est le guide le plus faux que nous ayons de la nature" (249). For Dolmance, power rather than

[*] Where in defining "Natural Law" he chillingly writes that "Whoever refuses to look for the truth renounces human status and must be treated by the rest of his species like a ferocious beast; once the truth is discovered, whoever refuses to conform to it is either mad or bad in a moral sense" (Hunt ed. 36).

[†] The example of Napoleonic megalomania and its disillusioned Romantic critics—citing, among others, Beethoven (who named his *Eroica* symphony after Napoleon but later crossed out the dedication) and Hegel (who commented on Napoleon's embodiment of the *Weltgeist* [world-spirit] but later rescinded his praise)—would also be apt but will not be addressed here.

morality aligns with nature and reason: "le premier et le plus sacré des mouvements de la nature, celui de conserver sa propre existence, n'importe aux dépens de qui" (218). However, the valid point of Sade's argument lies not in his association of reason with power (rather than with morality), but in the realization that reason *alone* can be co-opted to myriad claims. If faith in the compatibility of reason and moral action underlies Enlightenment thought, Sadeanism reveals that selfish fulfillment at the expense of moral justice is also a rational pursuit.

Friedrich Nietzsche is a massively complicated and contested figure, but he appears to join with Sade in his nihilistic rejection of 'slave morality:' or, as Adorno and Horkheimer put it, "Sade and Nietzsche were "two black writers" who exposed the dark side of reason"(qtd. in Viano 295). Paralleling Dolmance, "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" is premised on the moral indifference of nature: the Nietzsche of 1873 laments "how pitiful, how shadowy and fleeting, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect appears within nature" (246). Although his arguments against practical reason's moral inclination are many—for example, the inapplicability of common standards of "*right perception*" that in his view "*do not exist*" (252) given the gulf between a bird's perception and a human's—his views encapsulate the nihilist, anti-universalist,[*] and Hobbesian[†] dangers latent in postmodernity which the moral agents of '68 justly counterbalanced.

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[*] Writes Nietzsche: "we know nothing of an essential quality called honesty; what we know are numerous, individualized, hence dissimilar, actions which we equate by omitting the dissimilar and then referring to them as honest actions" (249).

[†] "Dissimulation . . . is the means by which the weaker, less robust individuals survive, since in the struggle for existence they are denied the horns and the sharp teeth of beasts of prey . . . deception, flattery, lying and cheating, slander, false pretenses, living on borrowed glory, masquerading . . . in sum, the constant fluttering about the flame of vanity, is so much the rule and the law that almost nothing is more incomprehensible than how an honest and pure desire for truth could arise among men" (257).

2
Relativisms Old and New: From Hobbes to Foucault

> We are not at law with them, and so have no need to speak of justice.
>
> -Diododus' speech, Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian Wars* (71)

> . . . the proletariat doesn't wage war against the ruling class because it considers such a war to be just. The proletariat makes war with the ruling class because, for the first time in history it wants to take power. And because it will overthrow the power of the ruling class it considers such a war to be just . . . One makes war to win, not because it is just . . . When the proletariat takes power, it may be quite possible that the proletariat will exert towards the classes over which it has just triumphed, a violent, dictatorial and even bloody power. I can't see what objection one could make to this.
>
> -Michel Foucault (qtd. in Wolin 31)

The French structuralists would be loath to admit it, but their reinstitution of power over/against justice follows more in Hobbes' footsteps than in Kant's. While Hobbesian realism is rejected on normative grounds, Sartre's critical subjectivism and the legacy of the student movement successfully balanced the nihilistic tendencies within intellectual France circa 1968. Opposing Sartre's existential humanism to Foucault's impersonal power matrices,[*] the postmodern assault on Kant's "grand narrative" (Lyotard's term)—and the accompanying danger of Hobbesian regression—was balanced by '68's utopian idealism and by the ethical strength of Kant's deontological argument.[†]

I begin by outlining Hobbes' and Kant's opposed views on agency. Three interrelated points are essential to an understanding of Hobbes' relativism: the

[*] Since postmodernism deals particularly with problems of representation and legitimation, I will use Foucault's *Discipline & Punish* to outline the legitimation of truth-power and Roland Barthes' work on literary deconstruction to demonstrate the further troubling of what for Saussure and Levi-Strauss were already problematic: sign-symbol relationships.

[†] This critique of postmodern relativism is paired with an assault on dogmatic and anti-idealist interpretations of Marxist materialism that is addressed in (II:1:1).

absence of moral agency in the state of nature, the absence of *intrinsic* human value (in any condition), and the conflation of law with justice in the common-wealth. Only with some fancy exegetic footwork can he justify the first: upon eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve "did indeed take upon them Gods office, which is Judicature of Good and Evill; but acquired no new ability to distinguish between them aright" (260). Justice thus forfeits its claim in the state of nature. Regarding the second, since "there is no such *Finis ultimus* . . . nor *Summum Bonum*" (160), "the *Value*, or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power" (151). In such a state, there are no readily discernible ends or goods.

On the third point Hobbes takes a page from Diodotus' speech in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*.[*] In the state of war, "The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have . . . no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinall vertues" (188). Flying directly in the face of Paul's *Romans*, where "sin was already in the world before there was the law" (5.13), Hobbes claims that "Sinne [is] nothing but the transgression of the Law" (371). Although Hobbes' highly sophisticated argument—whereby the Sovereign's oppression is morally justified by the otherwise fleeting good of peace[†]—deserves more attention than space here allows, its relativism and

[*] Also relevant is the Athenian generals' comment to the Melians: "Don't you realize that advantage lies with safety, and that the pursuit of justice and honour brings danger? Which the Lacedaemonians are usually least willing to face?" (106) Notwithstanding the patent falsity of this biased statement—the Spartans were renowned for honor via dangerous feats, as per Herodotus' account of Leonidas' 300 at Thermopylae—it is a further example of the nature of political realism.

[†] The argument being: "so long a man is in the condition of meer Nature, (which is a condition of War,) as private Appetite is the measure of Good, and Evill: and consequently all men agree on this, that Peace is Good, and therefore also the way, or means of Peace, which (as I have shewed before) are

particularism ultimately dismiss transnational justice and moral universalism as unattainable pipe dreams.

Placing himself firmly against political realism, Kant structures the argument of "Perpetual Peace" on the aprioristic moral desirability of "a universal right of humanity" (108): Kant's definition of justice is incompatible with Hobbes'. For the latter, the Right of Nature is a far cry from the 'universal right of humanity':

> the Infliction of what evill soever, on an Innocent man, that is not a Subject, if it be for the benefit of the Common-wealth, and without violation of any former Covenant, is no breach of the Law of Nature. For all men that are not Subjects, are either Enemies, or else they have ceased from being so, by some precedent covenants. But against Enemies, whom the Common-wealth judgeth capable to do them hurt, it is lawful by the originall Right of Nature to make warre. (360)

The Right of Nature, self-preservation, exists outside of law and, thus, outside of justice.

Kantian justice, however, revolves around "what the relationships between men and states *ought to be* according to the principle of right" (92). By this definition,

> 'an unjust enemy' . . . must mean someone whose publicly expressed will, whether expressed in words or in deed, displays a maxim which would make peace among nations impossible and would lead to a perpetual state of nature if it were made into a general rule. (170)

Thus does Hobbes' fundamentally *amoral* state of nature become a fundamentally *immoral* state of nature that—supposing, as Hobbes does,[*] the transitivity of the Law of Nations with the Law of Nature—applies equally to the international domain.

Justice, Gratitude, Modesty, Equity, Mercy & the rest of the Laws of Nature, are good; that is to say; *Morall Vertues*" (216).

[*] For Hobbes, "the Law of Nations, and the Law of Nature, is the same thing. And every Soveraign hath the same Right, in procuring the safety of his People, that any particular man can have, in procuring the safety of his own Body" (394).

As a necessary corollary of Kant's break from Hobbes on his positive view of morality and free agency, Kant definition of politics is equally telling in its non-compatibility with Hobbes'. While Carl Schmitt proposes one potential view of Hobbesian politics—its condensation into a morally vacuous 'friend-enemy' dichotomy[*]—Kant's views on the inseparability of morality from politics are as clear as his support of positive moral agency. In "Perpetual Peace,"

> . . . there can be no conflict between politics, as an applied branch of right, and morality, as a theoretical branch of right (i.e. between theory and practice); for such a conflict could occur only if morality were taken to mean a general doctrine of expediency, i.e. a theory of the maxims by which one might select the most useful means of furthering one's own advantage—and this would be tantamount to denying that morality exists. (116)

By defining morality as 'a theoretical branch of right,' Kant grants politics a normative foundation with which the human individual's 'greater moral capacity'[†]can surmount the vicious ouroboros of moral nihilism.

Thus, our ability to perpetually approximate to peace makes it the individual's deontological duty to posit the motors of said peace—positive moral agency and teleological progress—even if the utopian state cannot itself exist. Notwithstanding the conditionality of philanthropic duty (unlike "respect for the *rights* of man," which are "*unconditional* and absolutely imperative") (129), the duty to act towards an end need not be contingent on the end's phenomenal existence if it can demonstrably be approached:

> no-one is duty-bound to make an *assumption (suppositio)* that the end in question can be realised, since this would involve a purely

[*] "The inherently objective nature and autonomy of the political becomes evident by virtue of its being able to treat, distinguish, and comprehend the friend-enemy antithesis independently of other antitheses" (28).

[†] demonstrated elsewhere in the general polity's ability to see through "opportunistic machinations" feigning public right. (120-21).

> theoretical and indeed problematic judgement; for no-one can be obliged to accept a given belief. But we can have a duty to act in accordance with the idea of such an end, even if there is not the slightest theoretical probability of its realisation, provided that there is no means of demonstrating that it cannot be realised either. (173)

For if "it appears that we might by our own rational projects accelerate the coming of this period which will be so welcome to our descendants" (50), we *must* act in such a fashion regardless of whether or not agency and progress can be proven to exist. "Moral aims . . . so long as it is not demonstrably impossible to fulfil them, amount to duties" (89).

Moving, for now, beyond Hobbes and Kant, the ideological behemoths of the 20th century were communism and capitalism, not realism and liberalism per se. And just as the ideal of communism was corrupted and discredited by its practitioners, liberalism in practice is fraught with hypocrisy and social irresponsibility.[*] Thus were French structuralists and their followers therefore justified in critiquing liberalism *in practice* as a form of theoretical moral imperialism. Nonetheless, by following Sade/Nietzsche in breaking the bond between reason and moral agency—and by delegitimating the subject's self-representation—they reopened the sluice gates that moral philosophers since Plato have attempted to control.[†] Faith in the integrity of the subject preserved the intellectual's essential role of criticality (Sartre's "littérature engagée") without falling prey to the anti-normativity that the postmoderns can so easily be interpreted to endorse.

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[*] For present-day examples one need only note the omnipresence of the word 'freedom' (usually in context to its being 'brought') in the speeches of George W. Bush and Silvio Berlusconi, both of whom falsely lay claim to the freedom of liberalism without addressing its egalitarian concerns.

[†] What Stuart Hall calls "the great de-centerings of modern thought" (Hall, "Old and New Identities" 44)—briefly put: Marx on the ideal, Freud on noumena and *nous*, and Derrida on the Good—have greatly increased the importance of power and domination at the expense of the right and the good.

Thanks to his intellectual preponderance on the French stage and to the literary journal *Tel Quel*[*] and the daily *Liberation,* Sartre strongly influenced the engaged artist's political responsibilities. Relative to politics he

> was indeed a "corrupter," and both his writings and his own career called into question the so-called dilemma of the Stalinist alternative. They suggested that one does not have to be *either* an unquestioning adherent of the Party *or* a servile tool of Wall Street. According to Sartre, critical independence is not only possible, but it is also the only authentic position that a petit-bourgeois intellectual can assume. (Johnson 38)

To Sartre, both bourgeois idealism and Marxist materialism were deeply flawed by their ideological dogmatism, and his paired affirmations of humanism and critical independence would contribute to the student movement's normative idealism.

Although the structuralists and their ilk joined in critically rejecting 'ideology', their own totalizing methods arguably transform anti-Westernism and the so-called opposition to ideology into dogmatic ideology proper:[†] As Richard Wolin writes,

> Their criticisms of Eurocentrism had been so vociferous that they ended up, *nolens volens*, endorsing a variety of oppressive regimes precisely in so far as they were non-Western. Foucault's rash support for Iran's revolution of the mullahs was perhaps the most egregious case in point (Miller, 1992:306-14). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the structuralist left became infatuated with Maoism . . . Lacanians, the *Tel Quel* group (Philippe Sollers Julia Kristeva), and Foucault all flirted with the charms of the Great Helmsman and the *gauchiste élan* of the Cultural revolution (Foucault, 1980: 1-36). With the 1974 publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* – whose grim accounts of the Soviet camps reverberated like an earthquake across the left bank intellectual scene – all were caught with egg on their faces and compelled to make a prompt volte face. (23)

[*] the literary journal founded in 1960 by Philippe Sollers, to which Roland Barthes was probably the most famous contributor.

[†] Thus does intellectual historian Richard Tarnas rightly claim that "the one postmodern absolute is critical consciousness, which, by deconstructing all, seems compelled by its own logic to do so to itself as well. This is the unstable paradox that permeates the postmodern mind" (402).

Foucault's knowledge-power replaces individual agency with institutional agency, Lévi-Strauss' linguistic and Lacan's psychoanalytic deconstructions rob the individual of holistic subjectivity, Derrida's *différance*[*] undermines the very foundations of liberalism with its attack on logocentrism. Just as Robespierre's Terror portrayed the perils of deifying reason, postmodern deconstructions are useful as tools for self-criticality but become solipsistic when exempted from their own criteria.

The structuralist murder of the French subject tradition[†] implicitly opposes both the social justice-oriented New Left and humanism itself. For the structuralists,

> The goal was to replace a philosophy of the subject with a cool and detached *structural anonymity*. At issue is the trajectory from Jean-Paul Sartre's celebration of 'consciousness' in *Being and Nothingness* to the impersonal 'discursive regimes' of Michel Foucault's 'archaeology'. (Wolin 25)

In this light, Foucault's 'structural anonymity' can be rightly used as a means to a just end, but by effectively totalizing *itself* into the end, human worth can too easily be dismissed as a non-issue.[‡] 'Instrumental reason' seems to argue against the possibility possibility of justice:[§] "when reason is viewed from an exclusively functional standpoint as a form of social coercion, the question of what might constitute a legitimate or rational claim to authority appears unanswerable" (Wolin 31). The problem is not the "functional standpoint" itself; it is the "exclusiv[ity]" with which it attempts to tear down all other standpoints.

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[*] Derrida's neologism combining difference and deferral, identity and difference.

[†] Itself potentially necessary—citing, for example, Lévi-Strauss' attack on 'evolutionism' and 'progress' as just means to denounce colonialism—as an historical event (Wolin 34).

[‡] Similarly, as Arthur de Gobineau, author of the blatantly racist but insightful *The Inequality of Human Races*, writes: "We exaggerate the real services done by printing to science, poetry, morality, and civilization; it would be better if we merely touched lightly on these merits and spoke more of the way in which the invention of printing is continually helping all kinds of religious and political interests. Printing, I say again, is a marvelous tool; but when head and hand fail, a tool cannot work by itself" (166).

A look at *Discipline and Punish* helps clarify Foucault's positions on how truth-power is in tension with justice. Part one of his work argues that the public execution relates not to justice but rather to truth-power (as the prison does to knowledge-power): torturous atrocities committed upon the body in the judicio-political spectacle of execution demonstrate how the 'truth' of complicity is grounded more in power than in justice: "the public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power" (49) such that "a successful public execution justified justice" (44). The body, penitent and humiliated, physically manifested the veracity of guilt in the public spectacle: insofar as the bodies of the spectators beheld the body of the condemned—they too were flesh and bone—sovereign power was maintained by execution-as-deterrence.

Torture, atrocity and execution were the tools of truth-power in the sovereign age, and their excessive use demoted the importance of justice. "If torture was so strongly embedded in legal practice, it was because it revealed truth and showed the operation of power…the truth-power relation remains at the heart of all mechanisms of punishment" (55). In flightier words, "the atrocity of the expiation organized the ritual destruction of infamy by omnipotence" (57). Sovereign justice gave way to power in the one-upping of the crime: rather than justice, absolute control via power was at stake in the sovereign system.

The dissymmetry of power relations also demonstrates sovereign supremacy and the secondary importance of justice. Sovereign "surplus power" over the condemned "lack of power" (29) created an "irreversible imbalance of forces" (50): The body was a tool in the demonstration of dissymmetric superiority which was to

be seen as the "triumph of the law" (49). The punishment could not simply mirror the crime; it necessarily had to exceed it, and thus did justice give way to power.

Foucault then goes on to differentiate truth-power from knowledge-power, but for my purposes the implication of justice in matters of political truth as summarized by Jon Simons are clear: "Foucault's approach to truth rules out a humanist emancipatory politics which is grounded in a truth purified of all error and illusion. His argument that modern power and human sciences are always entangled precludes the possibility of freeing truth from power" (44). Foucauldian power has a narrative rather than an ontological form: we live it rather than have it. As Pasolini notices, the conceptualization of Power with a capital 'P' self-actuates a parallel reality in which Power replaces justice as the normative ideal.[*] In such a discursive realm, *all* concepts of legitimation are necessarily problematic.

Although legitimation is deeply tied up with representation, I believe that Foucault's privileging of power over justice—thus delegitimating justice—is vastly more dangerous than the representation issue. All the same, poststructuralist theorist Roland Barthes' (and Jacques Lacan's[†]) murder of the author possibly undermines the the viability of a Kantian ethics that is premised on moral free agency. For a whirlwind outline of the crisis in artistic representation: the binary model[‡] of Saussurean linguistics and Claude Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology did for semiotic representation what Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of*

[*] 'Ideal' here used does not imply a positive goal; rather, it emphasizes Power's attempt to gain access to—and to debunk—truth's transcendent domain.
[†] Lacan's famous (and notoriously complex) essay on the 'mirror stage' presents an image of selfhood that is wholly diffracted.
[‡] To Ferdinand de Saussure, languages (*la langue*) are structures composed of units (phonemes): the most important binaries are between signifier and signified (Sr/Sd) and between syntagmatic and paradigmatic series'.

Mechanical Reproduction (1937) and Frederick Jameson's work on Warhol's 'shoes'[*] did for the plastic arts.

In *S/Z*, Barthes argues that semiological linguistics necessarily collapses upon itself. "The meaning of a text can be nothing other than the plurality of its systems, its infinite (and circular) 'transcriptibility'" (qtd. in Todorov 140). Elsewhere, "Ultimate meaning lies beyond expression: the sole task of the artist is to explore possible meanings, each of which will, in isolation, constitute a (necessary) lie; when taken together, however, they will constitute the writer's personal truth" (qtd. in Todorov 141-42). That we can at least approach a personal truth is surely something, but the problem remains. Transposing Barthes' critique from the literary to the political domain, it is definitely true that personal truths must be allowed to flourish both within and between societies; what is missing here is the agreed upon bare minimum that should[†] underlie political (both national and international) and literary communities.

Most notably in his layered essays *From Work to Text* and *The Death of the Author* (1967), Barthes' conclusions could be seen as the teleological result of Benjamin's and Saussure's merger. The confounding of identity politics[‡] as a series

[*] Which represent a "new fragmentation of the emergent sensorium which replicates the specializations and divisions of capitalist life at the same time that it seeks in precisely such fragmentation a desperate Utopian compensation for them" (7). As with postmodernism writ large, "this shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology can be characterized as one in which the alienation of the subject is displaced by the latter's fragmentation" (14).

[†] 'Should' because the one cannot be enjoyed without the other. In rights theory, for example—following Henry Shue's *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (1980)—basic rights are the right to security, the right to subsistence, and the right to certain liberties, and they are necessary predicates for the guaranteed exercising of *any* other rights.

[‡] As Stuart Hall would have it, "identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process" (Hall, "Old and New Identities" 47).

of distortions and diffractions—" *myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (121)—help render moral agency substantively useless:

> Discourse is inauthentic because so also is the self (or vice versa). The individual is no longer an essence, as was the case in what is now for us a mythical, classic past. But neither is he a Romantic fusion of opposites, the noble criminal, the passionate rationalist—in other words, a living oxymoron; today, the self is viewed as a diffraction. (Todorov 128)

It is therefore all the more essential that the student movement of '68 helped keep a newly renovated normative humanism alive in the face of postmodern critiques that are sometimes playful (Barthes), sometimes disturbing (Foucault), and sometimes both. And in any case, even when the critiques are 'merely' playful they often play dangerously into the French tendency to regard logical abstraction as its own practical reward.[*]

This is not to say that postmodern insights should be rejected. Quite the contrary: they should be utilized as tools of self-reflexivity. But, being definitively anti-normative, they cannot be more than this. Anthropologist and development practitioner[†] Rosalind Eyben distinguishes between the conflict and the utility inherent in postmodern insights:

> [postmodernism gives us] models and theories on which any one of us bases our understanding are partial representations of reality, not to be confused with reality itself . . .While not claiming universal insight, I still need principles to guide my practical

[*] Opposed to the Anglo tendency to look (also blindly, at times) for results rather than flawless systems, this view traces from the Cartesian tradition. Writes John Ardagh: "French opinion has long tended to regard discovery as its own reward: as one Frenchman once told an American, 'No, we don't have pasteurized milk in France, but we *have* Pasteur!" (104).

[†] Eyben is trying to reconcile her work in the economics-dominated development industry with her anthropological and sociological background: "In contrast to postmodernist anthropology and sociology, economics is, of course, modernist, par excellence. As still generally practised in development agencies, it is concerned with 'rational' behaviour in a mechanical, linear world . . . Its attachment to universal and reductionist explanations fits neatly with organizational theories based on concepts of rationality and objective order. Uncertainty and messiness, and the expression of values and emotions, were unacceptably both in theories of development and in the explicit structures of organization promoting these theories" (10).

> agenda …so I hold my principles not because I know no better but because they are what I have freely chosen to believe. I *prefer* to believe that the world is constructed this way because my belief might help it become so. (8-9)

It is in this context that Foucault's call for a rehabilitation of Kant[*] can be appreciated.[†] To conclude, issues of domination and coercive power *should* be taken into consideration, as should the more subtle and self-perpetuating power of political and cultural hegemony. The point, rather, is that such issues cannot themselves dominate the discourse, for to allow that would be to acknowledge right where only might presides.

3
1968 and the Postmaterialist Phenomenon

> It is clear that socialism by its very nature cannot be decreed or introduced by *ukase*. It has as its prerequisite a number of measures of force—against property, etc. The negative, the tearing down, can be decreed; the building up, the positive, cannot. New territory. A thousand problems. Only experience is capable of correcting and opening new ways. Only unobstructed, effervescing life falls into a thousand new forms and improvisations, brings to light creative force, itself corrects all mistaken attempts. The public life of countries with limited freedom is so poverty-stricken, so miserable, so rigid, so unfruitful, precisely because, through the exclusion of democracy, it cuts off the living sources of all spiritual riches and progress.
>
> -Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution* (70)

In 1789, Abbé Sieyès proposed that the Third Estate makes up everywhere 19/20ths of the polity (Hunt ed. 65). By rejecting the existing political categories' (the Sword, the Robe, the Church, and the Administration) public supremacy, he laid the foundations for the French political Left's identity. Ever since,[‡] the revolutionary

[*] It should be readily apparent, but "It is ironic that a writer with a reputation for anarchistic, nihilistic, even apocalyptic opposition to rationality, humanism and the Enlightenment turned to Kant as a model for critique" (Simons 13).

[†] As will be revealed in part II by the power-mongering of modern Italian politics.

[‡] François Furet goes so far as to assert that "L'histoire du XIXè siècle français tout entier peut être considérée comme l'histoire d'une lutte entre la Révolution et la Restauration, à travers des épisodes

flavor of Left politics in France has been ubiquitous. But as a revival of the (reformist) utopian socialists' of the early 19th century, the '68 movement was, paradoxically, reformist *as well as* revolutionary. Using the postmaterialist theory and 'pure' revolutionism's injustice as support, I argue that '68 was fundamentally a moral movement.

Much has been made of the New Left: bursting onto the world stage in May 1968 like a fully-formed Athena, it was largely powerless by the elections of June 23/30 and was seemingly dead within a decade. Rather than bullets, the walls of Nanterre and the Sorbonne were riddled with spray-paint: "There are no revolutionary thoughts, only revolutionary actions" (Quattrocchi and Nairn 49), "It is forbidden to forbid . . . The dream is reality . . . Imagination to Power . . . the Mandarin is with you. I have something to say but I don't know what" (Inglehart 268-69). The wealth of definitions—"new social conflict" (Touraine), "generational revolt" (Morin), "institutional crisis" (Crozier), "critical movement" (Bourdieu) (Gilcher-Holtey 253)—speaks to the significance and fragmented vastness of the student uprising.

The immediate theoretical origins of 1968 trace to diverse Anarchical and Situationist movements, but the generative forces of dissent can be found in the historical, political, and social realms. Historically, France's Paris-centrism has since Louix XIV fostered a divide between state and citizen and a resulting lack of political participation. Also, the economic *dirigisme* of Jean Monnet's postwar National Planning commission did little to help social unrest or the mounting poverty of the urban periphery. Politically, both the policies of Charles De Gaulle's right-wing

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qui seraient 1815, 1830, 1848, 1851, 1870, la Commune, le 16 mai 1877. Seule la victoire des républicains sur les monarchistes, dans les débuts de la Troisième République, signe définitivement la victoire de la Révolution dans les profondeurs du pays" (17-18).

Union Démocratique de la République (UDR) regarding the university system and the theoretical obtuseness of the Communist PCF provided the necessary impetus. Socially and institutionally, the rigid hierarchies of the French family paired with the built-in elitism of the Grandes Écoles system to help create the negative impetus for what Ronald Inglehart terms postmaterialism.

Historically, although the Algerian war (1954-1962) and the hypocrisy inherent in the quintessentially liberal France's quashing of Algerian nationalism helped spur student dissent, the causes for dissatisfaction were present locally as well. The Paris-bound *Conseils d'Etat* were torn by the warring exigencies of State unity and democratic participation. The official line is now changing, but the statist suppression of regional languages and cultures—Brittany's Breton tongue and Celtic origins, Languedoc's Cathar heritage, Alsace's Franco-German hybrid identity, and Corsica's long-suppressed culture—has long been common practice. Thus does political scientist Stanley Hoffman notes how in France there is "neither any real leadership or any real participation", for "the transmission belts between nation and political régime are lacking" (qtd. in Nairn 118).

The political roots of May '68 were thus threefold: vague centrism, De Gaulle and the PCF. The demographic fragility of partisan governments saw the domination of pre-Gaullist France by unrepresentative catch-all centrist coalitions.[*] Mark Kesselman cites the UDR's "government-imposed wage restraint, the reduction of

[*] "Neither Right nor Left was able to govern by itself for any length of time because it would invariably lose its narrow majority. As a normal consequence of the existing party system, a centrist coalition has been in control of the government most of the time, no matter what the outcome of the preceding elections may have been. According to some calculations, during the period from 1789 to the advent of the Fifth Republic, France was ruled by centrist governments for all but thirty years or for more than 80 percent of this period (Ehrmann 216).

trade union representation on the governing boards of the social security (public health) system, and the rapid expansion of higher education" (Kesselman 252) as causes of '68, and the longevity of De Gaulle's reign is itself worth noting. On the other side of the political spectrum, the intransigence of the PCF's 'democratic centralism'—short on democracy and long on centralism—is clear from the binaries polarizing them from the '68 camp: subjectivist vs. objectivist, hierarchical vs. antihierarchical, conscious vs. spontaneous.[*] Whereas the Students are mostly subjectivist revolutionaries in the Sartre-Luxemburg tradition[†], the PCF officials are in the opposed objectivist camp of traditional Marxism-Leninism.

Falling as it did too far into the anti-individualist camp, the discrediting of the Old Left ultimately allowed the rise of the New. Between Sartre's abhorrence at the failed Budapest revolution of 1956 and the *gauchiste* splintering of the political Left throughout the 1960s, the French intellectuals' party disengagement helped mark '68 as a splinterer of once-unified political identities (Johnson 122). Although the process was far from simple, the Communists had lost their monopoly on revolutionary politics:

> The Communist Party monopoly over revolutionary politics had broken down. The implications of Khrushchev schema of 'convergence' and 'peaceful coexistence' between capitalist and socialist societies (outlined in his speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party), the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the French Communists' servile endorsement of this, and, more locally, their surrender to the policies of the Fourth Republic over the conduct of the Algerian struggles, had all decimated the Party's claim to represent genuine and benign

[*] Writes Johnson: "Like the bourgeois/proletarian construct, the consciousness/spontaneity formula finds its roots in the original theories of Marx and Lenin. Marx forcefully condemned the anarchism of Bakunin, and Lenin polemicized endlessly against the narodniks and the ultra-leftists . . . The student revolutionaries were, for the most part, champions of Luxemburgist spontaneity. The PCF, on the other hand, was a forceful advocate of conscious, directed, above all else, *organized* political action" (110).

[†] For Luxemburg the proletariat has a Nietzschean "will to power" and a "strength to act;" for Sartre, the revolution is freely signed on to by the conscious individual (Johnson 137).

> revolutionary intentions. It had entered whole-heartedly into the electoral bargains and political manoeuvring of the new Republic, and by 1962 had sealed contractual alliances with the Socialists (SFIO), and even spoke of an alliance between all 'true republicans' (which included the MRP (Mouvement Républicain Populaire), as well as more conservative Radical politicians and business leaders) against Gaullist 'bonapartism'. Intellectuals of the left therefore looked elsewhere, outside the compass of the Party, in their search for new forms of radical political criticism and involvement. (Johnson 84)

Simply put, party loyalty decreased in inverse proportion to the rise of all-encompassing non-partisan criticality.

On the stage of social impetus, the patriarchal and hierarchical inflexibility of the French family system is clearly identifiable in the arts and in the institutional structure of the French education system's upper echelons. Popular historian John Ardagh has the following to say of François Truffaut's *Les 400 Coups*: "his masterly début aged twenty-seven, was the story of a boy driven to delinquency by loneliness and unhappiness: based partly on his own childhood, it was also a model of implied social criticism" (469). The loneliness that drove him to delinquency, I would add, resulted directly from his parents' and his schoolmasters' cruelty and indifference. In a scene inspired by Truffaut's own early life, the protagonist is sent to a corrective facility not for a real infraction but for being falsely accused of having plagiarized a brilliant and deeply heart-felt essay on a novel of Balzac's (to whom the boy had a candle-lit shrine in his room that his parents would have noticed if they had even pretended to care).

As in the alienating social sphere, so too in higher education. A look at the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA)'s—rivaled solely by the Napoleonic École

Polytechnique ('X'),[*] which is to engineering what the ENA is for politics—alumni list, nicknamed *les énarques*, helps reveal the cliquish élitism of the French education system: Chirac, Jospin, Aubry, Rocard, Giscard, Balladur, Juppé (Ardagh 90). And so on.

Returning to the New Left generation, political scientist Ronald Inglehart's critically debated postmaterialist theory provides a potent counterexample to Mark Kesselman's apt truism, "governments generally flourish when the economy flourishes and are punished when the economy stagnates" (310). For there were no precipitatory economic deficiencies that preceded the May '68 events (instead, the '60s saw the number of university students explode from 170,000 to 600,000) (Quattrocchi and Nairn 93). More than just an explanation of '68's most clearly discernible causes, postmaterialism attempts to understand the volatile nature of a phenomenon the very year of which President De Gaulle's New Year address congratulated France on her relative stability (Inglehart 267).

Inglehart's central argument runs as follows:

> After a prolonged period of almost uninterrupted economic growth, the principal axis of political cleavage began to shift from economic issues to life-style issues, entailing a shift in the constituency most interested in obtaining change. Following a law of diminishing returns, economic gains became relatively less important, particularly to those segments of society that had never experienced severe economic deprivation . . .
>
> The resulting shift toward emphasis on new political goals might be called the Post-Materialist phenomenon. For younger, economically secure groups, new items were at the top of the agenda. Efforts to fight the dehumanizing tendencies inherent in Industrial society book high priority; it was a fight against hierarchical relationships on both the domestic scene and in international politics. (285-86)

[*] Writes Henry Ehrmann: "When after the Second World War Michel Debré, the first prime minister of the Fifth Republic, established another grande école, the école National d'Administration (ENA), he pursued the same goal as Napoleon I when he had founded the Ecole Polytechnique: both wanted to open the civil service to "talent," whatever its economic standing or family background" (164).

Furthermore, "with concrete economic expansion one would expect the base of recruitment for postmaterialist radicalism to expand. Insofar as the radicals are reacting against problems inherent in production-oriented bureaucratic society, conflict is not likely to be resolved by marginal concessions" (290).

Looking at the results of the June 23/30 election with which Inglehart supports his claim, the decisive factors of age and education clarify '68 as a student rather than a worker movement. While a larger number of French working-class votes went to the Gaullist coalition than to the left (270-72), "the effect of education is *reversed* between older and younger generations"* (273). The UDR gained voters among all other groups, but

> despite the strong overall trend favoring the UDR in 1968, the party suffered a net *loss* among the younger modern middle class. In that category, 41 percent of our respondents under forty years of age voted for the UDR in 1967, whereas 32 percent did so in 1968. The UDR made gains between 1967 and 1968 among all other groups. (275)

Citing Seymour Lipset, Inglehart distinguishes between the *traditional* (craftsmen, small businessmen) and *modern* (non-manual occupations, service professionals) middle classes, the latter grouping possessing of higher levels of education and income (287).

* The preponderantly Gaullist working-class vote weakens Tom Nairn's alternative explanation for the postmaterialist phenomenon. According to Nairn: "the gap between generations endemic to bourgeois society becomes catastrophic, for the new generation is much more instinctively social than its predecessors (following the erosion of the traditional repressive mechanisms), and this sociality encounters both the fossils of the bourgeois *ancient régime* (parents and teachers) and the new forms of alienation (harsher rhythms of work in higher education, a machine-like preparation for a circumscribed role in a big organization, etc" (90). Nairn claims that "as far as the Communists are concerned, the failure is infinitely worse. They fail to grasp its historical significance, as well as its immediate sociological nature. Student revolt is the self-definition of students as *workers*. It is the rejection of the entire, ancient, now phony category of student-hood, the assertion that intellectual work is what it is" (104). While his observation on the blindness of the PCF is justified, the 'self-definition of students as *workers*' fails to explain the June 1968 election results.

If the evidence of reaction appears preponderant in the National Assembly elections of June 1968, Inglehart contests that a generalized fear of civic violence—rather than the students' message—was the primary engine of reaction. "On the one hand, there was a widespread fear of violence. A majority of our sample said they thought civil war might break out. On the other, certain groups cherished hopes that a better society might emerge from the May Revolt" (276). Furthermore, "Only 31 percent of those who were not intimidated by the threat of civil war voted Gaullist" (276). Given the stated opposition of both the PCF and the CGT, the fact that "fully 20 percent of our respondents reported having taken part in some form of protest activity" (279) (elsewhere documented as "between 7.5 million and 9 million citizens were on strike") (Gilcher-Holtey 256) reveals a powerful wellspring of discontent. It was therefore the fear of Daniel Cohn-Bendit's ('Danny the Red') violent anarchism rather than the utopian student ideals of global justice that forced reaction.

Although the movement was 'defeated' in part by its refusal to be ideologically totalized (resulting in an inevitable institutional paucity), a number of positive unifying principles can nonetheless be gleaned from the events of '68: both individualistic and socialistic, the movement supported liberty, defended marginalized groups, and condemned authority, bureaucracy, alienation, and institutionalization (Gilcher-Holtey 255). It sought

> A new model of socialist society: The New Left was convinced that socialism must not be restricted to political and social revolution, seizure of power, and nationalization of the means of production. Rather, it must eliminate the alienation felt by the individual human being in everyday life, recreation, and family, as well as in sexual and societal relationships. (3.) A New transformation strategy: The individual should be freed from subordination to the collective. The premise was that changes in the cultural sphere must precede social and political transformation. New lifestyles and modes of communication had to

> be developed on an anticipatory and experimental basis by creating new cultural ideals, applying them in subcultures and testing them as alternatives within existing institutions….(5) A redefinition of the leaders of social change: The proletarian was no longer seen as the leader of social and cultural change. Instead, the New Left believed that the impetus for social transformation came from other groups: the new (skilled) working class, the young intelligentsia, and the social fringe groups. (Gilcher-Holtey 257)

Being both individualist and socialist, both realistic and Utopian, the New Left's paradoxical embrace of synthesis/hybridity without compromise reflected an understanding of the necessary tensions in human rights discourse.

But whether or not the '68 interpretation was understood by its protagonists is almost immaterial: given the rapidity of its rise and fall, the importance of its historical role as iconic example has implications that extend far beyond contemporary domestic society.[*] Quoting Edgar Morin's "La commune étudiante" (1968), "Le rôle historique de la commune étudiante sera d'autant plus grand qu'elle aura été intensément elle-même" (Morin, Lefort, and Coudray 32). Or, in the caustic words of Jean-Marc Coudray's "La révolution anticipée," "On aurait donc fait une grève générale de quinze jours pour obtenir un avantage de 1 ou 2 %?" (Morin, Lefort, and Coudray 122). Hence the infamous slogan, "imagination au pouvoir."

2
Godard's *Gauchiste* Semiology of Violence

[*] I will nonetheless argue in part II that even domestically, even immediately, the positive effects of the '68 interpretation (properly understood) are clear and heartening.

> "Do you think you're a moralist?" the novelist Le Clézio asked [Godard]. The characteristic answer was, "Yes, oh yes. I think we all are. But one doesn't say it because it sounds pretentious." Tracking him even closer, two left-wing journalists said: "You talk about humanism; do you think you're a humanist?" To which Godard gave the only reply an honest, and a timid man could give. "Er, why yes, but . . . it's a pretty big word. But . . . yes, yes."
>
> -Richard Roud, *Godard* (43)

To help illustrate the causes of the '68 generation's moral outrage, I turn to the early films of director Jean-Luc Godard. The tone of ethical urgency underlying Godard's work in the 1960s parallels the student movement's mounting protests such that the moral validity of the '68ers' outrage is best understood by tracing this gradual crescendo. Demonstrating this validity is the primary focus here, but related parallels, positive and negative, also exist. Thanks to Godard's application of his Hegelian leanings—the pitted battle of opposed binaries (image/sound, realism/theater, truth/beauty) is his preferred method of critical analysis[*]—to the exigencies of contemporary French society, his messages are similar to those of the students' paradoxically individualistic socialism.

Positively, both denounce: (**1**) the dehumanizing ravages of late capitalism, the (**2**) commodification of value, (**3**) (colonialism and) Manichaean moral imperialism. Also positively, both defend: normative universalism, the fundamental value of human worth, the deontological duty central to the privileged postmaterialist. Negatively: both are self-contradictory on violence. Godard draws heavily on the structuralist critique of representation, and it is used sometimes properly (as a means)

[*] Blurring the formal and the narrative levels, this includes non-diegetic sounds and the often-jarring mixture of short and long takes. "Like Hegel, [Godard] has decided that truth and beauty lie, not in either alternative, nor yet in a synthesis of the two, but rather in a conscious exploitation of these seeming contradictions" (Roud 12).

and sometimes improperly (as an end).[*] I argue that the call to violence is a repugnant but potentially necessary corollary to all that is positive in Godard and in '68.

1
Auteurial Ethics in Three Early Films

> One is not committed just because one makes films about the working class or about social questions; one is committed in so far as one is responsible for what one does. In the early days I felt less responsible because I was not fully aware, but now . . . yes, I am committed in that I grow more and more conscious of what I am doing and my responsibility for it.
>
> -from a 1962 interview with Godard (Sterritt ed. 4)

Godard's pre-'68 filmography is quite extensive, but for my purposes it will suffice to trace his deontological maturation in three early films: *Vivre sa vie* (1962), *Pierrot le fou* (1964), and *Masculin/Féminin* (1966). The first film focuses specifically on the dehumanizing effects of consumer capitalism (**1**) and the commodification of value (**2**), the second attacks moral imperialism (**3**) but is most important for marking the violently extreme manifestation of '68, and the third ties the dehumanizing capitalism (**1**) into a depoliticizing consumerism. While violence in *Vivre* is targeted against the brutalized protagonist and is in *Masculin/Féminin* generally used to highlight repression, its 'empowering' use in *Pierrot*[†] is more blatantly self-contradictory.

Vivre sa vie (*My Life to Live*) begins with various close-ups of the protagonist Nana (Anna Karina), ends with a two minute still-shot of her brutalized corpse,[‡] and is in between composed of twelve titled tableaux. The film portrays Nana's gradual

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[*] It is difficult to determine exactly how this breaks down in Godard's films. Also, it should be noted that 'as a means' and 'as an end' are slightly misleading: my argument is not that the structuralist toolbox can truly be and end of itself, but that it substitutes itself as end when a normative ideal is lacking.

[†] Which is closer to that used by Belmondo in Godard's first major film, *A bout des souffle*.

[‡] Harshly reduced to a few seconds in the American version.

descent into spiritual prostitution. Godardian auto-referentiality and the particular use of close-ups follow Bertolt Brecht's attempt at a self-conscious "literarization of the theatre"[*] (98), formally confounding facile views of representation by co-opting the structuralist approach and highlighting the incommensurability of the signifier and the signified. But Godard's tactics are neither nihilist nor relativist, for it demonstrates the positive use of (post-)structuralist theory. *Vivre sa vie* deals particularly with the commodification of value types (**2**) and with the cold injustice of the prostitution-as-metaphor trope.

Vivre sa vie's formal complications are many, and they begin with the first scene:

> Twice [the first] scene makes a creative use of the "pickup." A pickup is when the same line is spoken at the end of one shot and the beginning of the next, and it is used by filmmakers when shooting to give themselves more flexibility during the editing process. Just before complaining that Paul doesn't regard her as special, Nana twice says: "You're mean, Paul"—once as we look at his back, and once as we look at hers . . . These repetitions are a bit like reverse jump-cuts, underscoring the fictiveness of the narration. (Silverman and Farocki 4)

Throughout Nana and Paul's conversation their backs are turned to the camera, divorcing image from sound and further fictionalizing the narrative. Finally, the only close-up of Nana's face not in the intentionally drawn-out opening takes place while she is watching Dreyer's classic *Jeanne d'Arc*; as Joan's tears and imminent death mirror Nana's, so are the Brechtian motivations of Godard's superimposition revealed.

[*] For an example: in Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, musical numbers are specifically marked as such with stage directions such as: "*song illumination: golden light. The organ is lit up. Three lights on a bar come from above, and on a board is written:* PIRATE JENNY" (Brecht 24).

Putting the formal structure aside, *Vivre sa vie* tells the disturbing story of Nana's descent into prostitution.[*] To Godard, prostitution symbolizes the commodification of reality, where "all is consumption, all is commerce. Women and men exist as commodities to be traded in exchange for goods or services, rather than independent agencies capable of controlling their respective fates." Thus does "prostitution equal the death of identity, the death of self" (Dixon 33). Whereas Nana's 'self' was conspicuously on display early in the film, exactly when she becomes a prostitute is difficult to pinpoint: "It is as though Godard means to blur the dividing line—to suggest that it is not so easy to determine where conventional human interaction ends, and prostitution begins" (Silverman and Farocki 14). Somewhere in between, her identity is negated. Nevertheless, the ethical Nana throughout affirms responsibility for her actions, even in the face of adversity (as did Dreyer's Jeanne). However, her efforts[†] are to no avail: she is traded, indifferently murdered, and left dead in the street by Raoul, her pimp.

Passing over *Le Mépris* (1962)[‡] and *Alphaville* (1963)[§]—which deal respectively with artistic integrity and dehumanizing capitalism (**1**)—*Pierrot le fou*

[*] Originally a record store clerk, Nana is violently evicted by her landlady. Godard then cuts to a *gendarmerie* office, where Nana recounts a pitiful incident of failed petty theft. When asked what she plans to do, she responds "I don't know."

[†] Save for a brief moment of happiness found with a man who respects her uniqueness.

[‡] A film about compromise, authenticity, and miscommunication. Rather, it is a film about a film. Based on Alberto Moravia's *Il Disprezzo*, *Le Mépris* entails Fritz Lang's imaginary film *The Odyssey*, his and the screenwriter's battles with a greedy and obnoxious American producer, Prokosch, and the collapse of the screenwriter's relationship with his wife (Bridgitte Bardot).

[§] A cross between science fiction, film noir, and enlightenment dogma run amok, *Alphaville* pits the detective stereotype Lemmy Caution against the totalitarian machine Alpha 60. Although the city-state of Alphaville is supposedly separated from the rest of the world by a mysterious barrier, the film is shot in Paris, and the imposing Sarcelles high-rises that are often seen in the backdrop present a biting criticism of growing urban unrest. Less overtly form-oriented than *Vivre sa vie* or *Le Mépris*, *Alphaville* is an homage of sorts to the early detective thrillers of Hollywood.

(1964)[*] was retrospectively prescient in its foregrounding of violence, its meta-cinematic form, and its politics: all would become central to *Weekend*'s apocalyptic vision. Unlike, say, the comparatively carefree *A Bout de souffle* (1959) and *Une Femme est une femme* (1961),[†] *Pierrot* marks the advent of an increasingly skeptical pessimism regarding the unjust madness of civilized urban life. As a film dealing with the relationship between art and life, *Pierrot* rejects filmic realism on the grounds that art and life are *not* the same. The protagonists, Ferdinand/Pierre (Jean-Paul Belmondo) and Marianne (Anna Karina)—who, in typifying the New Wave's petit bourgeois young couple without generational or familial ties,[‡] can be linked to '68's postmaterialists—are constantly dragged into the violent realm of contemporary political events.

The crevasse separating life from art is portrayed both in Brechtian self-consciousness and in the demonstration of (1): there is in Godard's films a fundamental divide, visible as early as Belmondo's 'innocent criminal' in *A Bout de souffle*, between 'right living' and capitalist society. As Marianne states, ce qui me rend triste, c'est que la vie et le roman c'est différent…Je voudrais que ce soit pareil… clair, …logique, …organisé…mais ça ne l'est pas" (Forbes 120) If Pierrot

[*] Although *Pierrot*, like *Le Mépris* and *A Bout de souffle* before it (and, after it, like *Masculin/Féminin*), is deeply concerned with male/female miscommunication, my analysis focuses instead on the implications of formal and narrative methods on the political realities of 1960s France.

[†] About which Godard has said in a 1962 interview: "[*Une Femme est une femme*] doesn't prove anything about anything. I simply hoped that the film would give pleasure. I meant it to be contradictory, juxtaposing things which don't necessarily go together, a film which was gay and sad at the same time. One can't do that, of course, one must be either one or the other, but I wanted to be both at once." (Sterritt ed. 4)

[‡] Althusser regarded education and the family as the two most powerful Ideological State Apparatuses.

escapes Ferdinand's oppressive roots,[*] the French tricolor serves to ignite both the revolutionary legacy of Leftist France and the colonial oppression of the Algerian war.[†] Ferdinand the "(cowardly) intellectual" becomes a Frenchified Pierrot thanks to to Marianne the "(revolutionary) outlaw" (Williams 50).

But while Ferdinand is better off 'awake' (as Pierrot), *Pierrot*'s depiction of Marianne reveals the two perilous phenomena that accompanied the otherwise positive '68 movement: in my reading, she typifies both the violent/extremist 'wing' of '68 and the dangers of deconstruction.[‡] She subverts both language and life, from the corpse on her apartment floor to the Marianne-as-Ariadne scene—preceded by Marianne's staggered writing "Marianne / Ariane mer / âme amer / arme" on a piece of paper, disassociating the signifying relationships of language and image[§]—where she traps a car in her rampaging web of violence. The violent revolutionary model of '68 therefore fails even before it starts: "If Godard in the 1960s is, as the situationists proclaimed, an unredeemable bourgeois, he is at least a postmodern bourgeois, full of nostalgia for a mythical middle that he can only imagine, and never find" (Williams 59). Thus, although Marianne rather than Pierrot is the culpable revolutionary, Pierrot takes the blame: a bathroom water torture scene is the best, but not the only, example of 'Pierrot-as-Algerian'. The attack on moral imperialism (**3**) here becomes a situated denunciation of French colonialism.

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[*] Ferdinand-cum-Pierrot represents an escape from history: a Spanish teacher at the Lycée St. Louis married to an Italian (whom he abandons), Ferdinand's quintessentially Spanish name evokes the repression of Franco's Spain.

[†] American director Sam Fuller's definition of cinema as a conflict between "Love . . . Hate . . . Violence," and "Death" —shot at a party in alternating blanket-frames of red, white, and blue—further defines the tricolor's simultaneous symbolisms: revolutionary and reactionary/statist.

[‡] The latter is probably not what Godard intended, but the point still holds as an extra-textual interpretation.

[§] Just as the preceding scene had dislocated image from sound with a passage on Rimbauld.

Godard's growing awareness of the problems inherent in the production and consumption dichotomy joins *Masculin/Féminin* with *Pierrot* in its awareness of film semiology and the modes of viewer perception. The film's represented violence speaks both to consumer capitalism (**1**) and to moral imperialism (**3**) by following two related tracks: racist colonial violence as a metaphor for the injustice of late capitalist exploitation, and the rude interposal of violent non-sequitors that force the viewer to confront the repressed conflicts inherent to modernity.[*] Wheeler Winston Dixon paints an evocative picture when he writes that *Masculin/Féminin*

> abounds in petty cruelties and savage throwaway gags; during a murder in a Parisian café, Paul complains loudly that by leaving the café door open, he's caught in a draft. A man borrows some matches from Paul, not to light a cigarette, but rather to immolate himself (off-screen) to protest the war in Vietnam . . . In an arcade, a man menaces Paul with a knife before abruptly turning it on himself, plunging the knife fatally into his stomach. (69)

Whereas self-immolation reminds the audience of a real event, the man who guts himself evokes Godard's earlier works on capitalist prostitution as a form of self-annihilation.

As the repression and torture of the Algerian War often took place behind closed doors, the film's most disturbing brutalities are offstage. A scene on a train witnessed by Paul and his misogynistic best friend involves the surrounding of a French (read: white) woman by three African men. After insults are swapped—harsh on both sides, admittedly—she pulls a gun from her purse and three shots are heard firing. The repercussions of the woman's racist fear of the 'Other' are swift and

[*] Nick Hewlett, citing the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, aptly notes that "domination does not need to take place in a direct and obvious way in advanced capitalist societies if it can take place more subtly: "symbolic violence is the milder and covert form which violence takes when overt violence is impossible"" (170).

violent. Paul's eventual death, finally, is both ambiguous and brutal in its implications.

> Paul falls to his death off-screen when he backs up to take a snapshot of the group (perhaps suicide, perhaps a coldly calculate murder by Madeleine, who is growing weary of him). In the film's final shot, Madeleine reveals that she is pregnant by Paul, and is thinking of inducing an abortion with a coat hanger. (Dixon 71)

Since Madeleine is excused from guilt by the sympathetic horror her planned abortion evokes, the confused viewer is given yet another taste of the potentially dehumanizing effects of Western modernity.

The audience members are therefore meant to understand their Brechtian roles as critical analysts of a theatrical production, and the fact that this is generally not what happens is why Madeleine says of *Masculin/Féminin*: "this film could be called the children of Marx and Coca Cola: think of it what you like" (Roud 98). Dixon notices how "it is apparent that people today go to the movies *not* to think, *not* to be challenged, but rather to be tranquilized and coddled" (Dixon 2). Godard's criticality is to Marcuse what his violence is to Fanon: Godard realizes not only that consumerism commodifies values (**2**) but also that capital, following Marx, fetishizes commodities.

From his faux interview with an ethically oblivious pop star to his approaching the screening room of a cinema to demand that the quality of a cheap Scandinavian skin-flick,[*] Paul is clearly concerned with the damaging effects of consumer indifference on production values. In *Masculin/Féminin*, then, "the popular forms of art, despite their appeal, are increasingly shown as ineradicably ruined by their relation between producer and consumer, epitomised in the cinema audience's

[*] Which, meta-textually, is also a Godard creation.

indifference to the quality of the projection" (MacCabe 51). To close with Madeleine's closing words, "give us this day our television, and an automobile, but deliver us from freedom" (Roud 98).

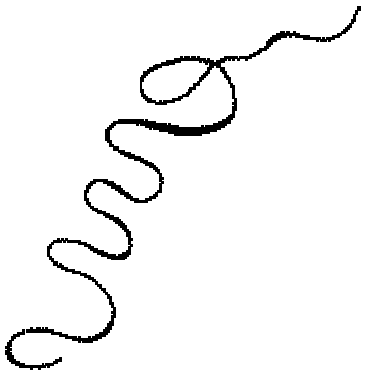
Masculin/Féminin's final day vs. night montage—the above-quoted sentence is split: the first half is spoken at night, the second during the day—brings Eisensteinean issues of montage and emotional solicitation to the screen's forefront. Godard pairs Eisenstein's 'colliding shot method'[*] with Brecht's literarization of the theater to construct *Masculin/Féminin*'s auto-referential narrative form (like *Vivre sa vie*, *Masculin/Féminin* is composed of a series of sequences). From the use of the written word as an interrupter of conventional image/sound narrative structures to the prioritization of form over content,[†] in *Masculin/Féminin* Godard's attention to form and to the mechanisms of reception approach the explosive height they find in the following year's *Weekend*.

2
Weekend:
Violent Consumption and Meta-cinematic Overkill

> Art is not the reflection of reality, it is the reality of that reflection
> -*La Chinoise* (1967) (MacCabe 108)
>
> We have to fight the audience.
> -Godard, "No Difference between Life and Cinema" (1968) (Sterritt ed. 15)

[*] For Sergei Eisenstein, director of *Potemkin* and virtual founder of the formalist—as opposed to realist—school of film theory, "Montage is not an idea composed of successive shots stuck together, but an idea that derives from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another" (Kiernan 66). The best example of montage is *Potemkin*'s famous Odetta steps scene, where Eisenstein's dialectical technique "elicit[s] an emotional outcry from the viewer" that is "accomplish[ed] by engaging the viewer in the filmic process" (Kiernan 102).

[†] Insofar as ""Episodic" would not characterize the narrative either, for there are few discernible actions or events; those that do occur – for example, the knifing of a man in a pin-ball arcade – are random and brief" (Kiernan 108).

> Whilst a man is free—cried the Corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus—
>
> 
>
> -Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,Gentleman* (550)

Widely regarded as a prescient take on '68, *Weekend* (*Le Week-End*, 1967) picks up where *Pierrot* left off.[*] Gone, however, is the utopian island reverie of *Pierrot*: in *Weekend*, neither the film's bourgeois protagonists nor its revolutionaries escape criticism. Moving with the New Left beyond traditional Marxism, Godard's workers and bourgeois alike are pawns of a faceless and exploitative capitalist system: Power with a capital 'P'. But the supposedly 'real' desires and emotions to which the chic revolutionaries return involve grotesque cannibalism of mock-Freudian dimensions. The quintessential utopianism of Godard's earlier works is largely absent from *Weekend*, and the result, at first glance, is Hobbesian realism and defeatist pessimism. This is not the reading I propose: by rejecting dogmas Right *and* Left as both extremist and repressive, *Weekend* stays true to the anti-dogmatic foundations of '68 precisely because of its refusal to abandon the normative ideal.

Weekend joins the '68 crowd in being a meditation on the warring demands of individuality and equality, which in the world of late capitalism seem to be

[*] Instead of being a break with Godard's earlier films, as some critics contend, *Weekend* is rather the inevitable culmination of the interests I have tracked.

irreconcilable. Like the '68ers, Godard found that the only just answer was to have his cake and eat it too by being both individualistic *and* socialistic. However, as a contemporary text without the benefit of hindsight, *Weekend* also falls prey to what could be called the movement's catastrophism. Nonetheless, it remains for the anti-extremist best that *Weekend* portrays the consequences of a dystopian future where commodification does away with individuality, maintaining only it's charred one-dimensional carapace.

It is in the context of Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967)—which helped transform already fetishized commodities into *spectacle*—that the role of the automobile[*] in *Weekend* is best understood: at once, it encapsulates the ills of 'cash-nexus'[†] consumerism and Enlightenment reason.[‡] "Embodying the materialism and aggression of a society being crushed by its own fetishized commodities" (Sterritt 93), automobiles dominate the interminable traffic jam in the beginning of the film.

> Automobiles are central to this scene, and it is interesting to note how the metaphorical meaning of cars has shifted in Godard's value system. In the early *Breathless* they represented a Beat-style dream of liberation via speed, flexibility, elusiveness. They played a more somber role in *My Life to Live*, introducing Nana to the sad pavements she would walk, and carrying her to the lonely street where pimps would gun her down before speeding away to safety. *Weekend* veers even more sharply in this cynical direction, paralyzing cars altogether by cramming them into a self-suffocating gridlock so devoid of action and energy that the movie itself almost stops moving. (Sterritt 97)

[*] According to Kristin Ross' *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*: during the 1960s, "The car, as the commodity unlike any other, took center stage in cultural debate; it became the vehicle, so to speak, for dramatizing the lack of social consensus around the French state-led modernization process" (Ross 23).

[†] Writes Roud: "the tightest bond which links any of us to the social structure is what Marxists call the cash nexus. We all have to eat, and to earn money in order to do so. And one of Godard's main contentions is that many of us earn that money by doing things we don't want to do" (Roud 28).

[‡] Represented in *Vivre sa vie* and *Alphaville*, respectively.

Earlier in the film, protagonists Corinne and Roland recklessly bump into another car, and the violence that ensues culminates in the other man running for his gun. Later, as Roland and Corinne "stroll past the debris" of "mangled bodies" and "twisted steel" "as if they were window shopping" (Silverman and Farocki 84), Corinne's only concern is to salvage her designer purse.

Tied in with the crashed automobile and the protagonists' vicious greed is the diminution of unique human value beyond the commodified (**2**) and into excretory waste.

> In late capitalism, the commodity quickly gives way to "waste." The supremacy of economics over other forms of value leads to a dramatic diminution in the *kinds* of value any thing can have. It also leads to a decrease in the *amount* of value a thing can have . . . There can no longer be absolute value, only objects for which substitutes can quickly be found. With this serialization of the exchange process, the moment of enjoyment of each new commodity also becomes briefer and briefer, so that it passes for this reason as well much more quickly into the category of "shit." (Silverman and Farocki 89)

The quantitative domain of "anal capitalism" (Silverman and Farocki 111) tramples qualitative values under foot.

As with Nana's dehumanization—via prostitution[*]—in *Vivre sa vie*,[†] even human subjects are brutally and indifferently commodified in *Weekend*: Roland permits a stranger to rape Corinne in a ditch, and Corinne eventually eats Roland. Literally. Exchanged rather than exchangers, Roland and Corinne forfeit their subject status (Silverman and Farocki 81). Thus does the purpose of their trek to Oinville, the

[*] About which Silverman has a similar point to make: "prostitution is also a socioeconomic institution, and that—for the most part—is the view which is offered here . . . *My Life to Live* is concerned with prostitution as a mechanism for enforcing a particular psychic condition . . . As *My Life to Live* helps us to understand, accepting anyone who pays does not merely imply assuming as one's own the desires of the culture or Other, something which every subject necessarily does. Rather it means having no desire but to satisfy the desire of *any other*. It signifies the end of all personal desire, and so the demise of subjectivity as such" (Silverman and Farocki 20-21).

[†] And Natasha's in *Aphaville* via totalitarian reason.

inheritance of their dying mother [and mother-in-law's] money, result in a brutal matricide that symbolizes, in its extremity, their selfish greed and the perilous potential in the New Wave's cutting of familial ties.[*]

Whereas *Vivre sa vie*, *Alphaville*, and *Masculin/Féminin* demonstrate clear parallels of violence and dehumanization with *Weekend*, it is thanks to the Luddistic Naturalism, the semiotic unorthodoxy, and the ethno-political critiques of *Pierrot le fou* that most critics regard it as *Weekend*'s most significant predecessor. However, the film's state of Nature differs from [what for Pierrot, if not Marianne, was] the utopian idyll in *Pierrot*. *Weekend*'s 'Nature,' due to the inverted negative essence of its utility, is, rather than being inherently good in a Rousseauist sense, useful thanks what Sterritt terms "its comparative distance from the power/knowledge networks of mainstream society" (100). The danger here, a regression to Foucault's take on Hobbesian realism, is a real one.

But by expanding his vituperative to include the too-chic hippy revolutionaries and their pop bourgeois conflation of anomie with justice, Godard reaffirms the paradoxical utopianism of '68. Thus can Tom Nairn both praise and attack *Weekend*:

> Jean-Luc Godard's film *Weekend* (1967) has been widely interpreted as a prophetic vision of May 1968. It is a story of a week-end escape to a countryside where the rustic bliss has been destroyed by tourist-eating rebels, blazing cars, and corpses. But this is over-simple. The film is certainly a powerful depiction of the *violence* of Gaullist France, incarnated in its advert-photo characters ('*jeunes cadres'*) and their degenerate obsessions. Their non-humanity is conveyed by their indifference to the bloody corpses strewing the countryside and the casualness with which

[*] According to Jill Forbes, "The New Wave's version of modernity focused on young people with no familial or generational ties, the petty bourgeois equivalents of the famous literary and artistic couples whose activities filled the newspapers and who sometimes ran them too: Louis Aragon and Elsa Triolet, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Servan-Schreiber and Françoise Giroud, Yves Montand and Simone Signoret" (113).

> one slits his mother's throat to get an inheritance. But this very effective *guignol* contrasts strikingly (and characteristically) with the film's failure of imagination on the main point, the young rebels. The *Front de Libération de la Seine-et-Oise*, far from anticipating the liberating violence of May ('counter-violence'), practices a bestial violence which is the extreme form of the conventional aggressiveness shown earlier. The effect is therefore to *épater* the bourgeoisie in a conventional way, rather than to escape imaginatively from its categories. (Quattrocchi and Nairn 127)

Nairn's argument hinges on the distinction between 'bestial aggressive violence' and 'liberating counter-violence,'[*] and it is, following Barrington Moore[†] and Franz Fanon, at least theoretically valid.

Nonetheless, what Nairn points out—how the *Front de Libération de la Seine-et-Oise*, rather than being too different from the established order, is *too similar*—reflects an historically accurate distortion of '68 rather than the plural (and, thus, difficult to represent as anything but a reductive synecdoche) and incorporeal spirit of '68. As Nairn himself wrote, "it was too big, too novel, and inevitably dwarfed most of the circumstances around it" (86). Many (though clearly not all) of the '68ers, therefore, kept consuming and hoarding, and simply did the trendy thing because it was new and hip.[‡] Again, for my purposes this is immaterial: the student movement's moral legacy was vastly more progressive than were the various shortcomings of its material manifestation.

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[*] 'counter-violence' is the term used by J. W. Freiburg in the preface of Touraine's *The May Movement*.

[†] See (II:1:1)

[‡] The so-called revolutionaries of *Weekend* are suspiciously up to date: "the women wear mini skirts, and dance the latest dances. The hippies could be said to represent nothing more dramatically countercultural than a preference for the fashions of London over those of Paris" (Silverman and Farocki 106).

Returning to the filmic text: while arguing in favor of violent ethnic liberation,[*] *Weekend* rejects class violence in particular and the class struggle in general. In Godard's universe, proletarian and bourgeois alike are victims of capitalist prostitution. Farocki and Silverman lay out the actions of the 'Class Struggle' scene:

> As the farmer (Georges Staquet) drives into frame, prior to the accident he is singing the "International," the theme song of socialism. "You bastard of a peasant," shouts Juliet (Juliet Berto), the girl, after she has discovered her boyfriend's death. "Little bourgeois cunt," he responds, and *Weekend* cuts to the intertitle "The Class Struggle." (93)

> The Marseillaise provides the only commentary, but the conclusion we are meant to draw is clear. The class war at the heart of *Weekend* is not that between workers and capital, but rather that between gold and commodities. It is the war between the general equivalent and the many whom it dooms to having only a relative value. (94)

Adding the information necessary to leap from Farocki's statement to Silverman's—that, as Corinne and Roland drive away from the observed scene, Juliet and the farmer fall arm-in-arm with the hitherto-impassive group of onlookers, demonstrating their fundamental solidarity *as human beings*—the conclusion is indeed clear.

Although incidents of violent behavior in *Weekend* are legion, the final *form* of violence to take place crucially extends to the formal realm. By admitting formal concerns to the domain of violence, the 'literary' violence Corinne and Roland inflict upon Emily Bronté and Tom Thumb inclines the viewer to view rapid montages and image/sound disjuncts as representations of 'formal violence' that demonstrate the *auteur*'s power over the screen.

> The travelers . . . physically attack the English author and her friend. Emily moves to escape, panting, "we must cover the flowers with flames, we must stroke their hair, we must teach them to read." Savagely parroting her – "So you want to cover the

[*] While hitching a ride with an African and an Arab, the latter declares that "a black man's freedom is as valuable as that of a white man," rejects the possibility of freedom through "nonviolence, patience, and love" (Sterritt 115).

> flowers with flames!" – Roland sets her dress on fire while Corinne holds her from running away. Emily shrieks off-screen as the killers gaze in her direction, and their words reiterate Godard's insistence on blurring all distinctions between the realities of fiction and the fictions of reality. (Sterritt 108)

This episode could also be viewed as a criticism of mass culture's intellectual vacuity and hyperbolic moral cruelty. From this perspective, the shot of a dead rabbit crudely splashed with blood shows that "the rabbit shot is an unusual sort of synecdoche, inverting that trope's ordinary purpose of allusiveness and discretion" (Sterritt 119).

On the level of formal extra-diegetic sound, musical soundtracks are strikingly absent from Godard's films,[*] making a scene of *Weekend* where a Mozart sonata is played in the environs of a farm encapsulates Godard's theories on the image/sound relationship all the more. Corinne and Roland approach the performer, who, as if to criticize the backgrounding of music so common in Hollywood films, extols at length the various subtleties involved in the art of musical production.[†] Then, the music playing all the while, the camera does two 360-degree pans, slowly passing over the bored onlooking farmhands: Godard believes that "sound is not a complement of the image. Well, maybe sometimes—but maybe sometimes the image is only the complement of sound. And maybe sometimes they are both together" (Sterritt ed. 36).

Like Sartre before him, Godard is too much of a Romantic humanist to accept dialectical Marxist materialism; after the fall of *gauchisme*, Godard admitted that "I

[*] excepting *Une Femme est une Femme*, which itself was playfully self-aware in hiring the composer for *les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, to which much of the film is an homage, to score the film. Also, while official soundtracks are absent from Godard's films, *noise* is ubiquitously present (see, for example, the traffic jam scene in *Weekend* where honking horns create a cacophonic symphony of sorts).

[†] Film, like music, is for Godard but one of the arts: from Jean Seberg's juxtaposition with a Renoir painting in *à bout de souffle* and *Vivre sa vie*'s excerpts of Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* to Anna Karina's scissor-cutting—both of the screen and of the Picasso behind her—in *Pierrot*, Godard had by *Weekend* clearly demonstrated his support for the Shandean principle that film is but one of the arts.

think we pretended to be Marxist,[*] or that we weren't fully Marixsts" (Sterritt ed. 46). Beginning with *A bout de souffle*'s oversimplified dichotomy of earned money and stolen money representing "a restrictive social world and one of individual freedom" (Sterritt 34), respectively, Godard searched for a form of film that could represent his form of politics. *Weekend* hints Romantically at "some more profound affinity" underlying the various differences that provoke human suffering; maybe "the antagonism which most profoundly structures the social field . . . lie[s] elsewhere altogether" (Silverman and Farocki 104). Godard's dictum that "the problem is not to make political films but to make films politically" (Kiernan 109) is a fundamentally ethical concern: adrift between the warring factions of individual liberty and social justice with no equitable reconciliation in sight, the only just and humane course of action is to simultaneously affirm the subjectivist's individualism, the humanist's value absolutism, and the socialist's aversion to marginalization, all the while engaging and enraging the viewers and pushing them toward positive action.

As an interesting aside,[†] the filmic development of Aragonese director Luis Buñuel follows a similar trajectory: between *L'Age D'Or* (1929) and *Los Olvidados* (1950), Buñuel lays out the valid concerns of particularist (egoistic) and univeralist (egalitarian) visions. *L'Age d'Or*[‡] anarchically rejects the three pillars of modern Western civilization in favor of two lovers' sexual freedom *à la* Wagner's *Tristan*

[*] As Johnson amusingly puts it, "Marx said that ideas become powerful social forces once they have permeated the minds of the masses. It is difficult, however, to permeate mass consciousness with three 600-page volumes of obtuse observations about nineteenth-century British capitalism" (71).

[†] While they may seem slightly out of place, Buñuel's films are introduced to demonstrate how the recurring theme of rights conflict has deep artistic and intellectual roots in Western Europe that, unfortunately, cannot all be addressed here.

[‡] *L'Age D'Or* is a film where a man shoots and kills his son for stealing his tobacco, where the protagonist throws a Cardinal out of a second-story window and slaps his lover's elderly mother in the face, which ends with a blatant Christ-cum-Marquis de Sade figure (Duo de Blangis) defiling a bevy of girls in his mountain hideaway.

and Isolde (to which the film is set). As with Tristan and Isolde's fleeting cave reveries, the garden reverie does not last. Modot's Freudian toe-sucking statue fetishization combines with Lys' reverse-Oedipal embrace of her father[*] to demonstrate civilization's sublimating powers. Created 20 years later, the Mexican *Los Olvidados*[†] balances an egalitarian ideal against the self-centered *L'Age D'Or*. In the humanist world of *Los Olvidados*, where nobody is a free agent, even the odious Jaibo cannot be blamed for his actions.

[*] Writes Freud: ""From this time onwards, the human individual has to devote himself to the great task of detaching himself from his parents, and not until that task is achieved can he cease to be a child and become a member of the social community. For the son this task consists in taking his libidinal wishes from his mother and employing them for the choice of a real outside love-object, and in reconciling himself with his father if he has remained in opposition to him, or in freeing himself from his pressure if, as a reaction to his infantile, rebelliousness, he has become subservient to him. These tasks are set to everyone; and it is remarkable how seldom they are dealt with in an ideal manner – that is, in one which is correct both psychologically and socially. By neurotics, however, no solution at all is arrived at: the son remains all his life bowed beneath his father's authority and he is unable to transfer his libido to an outside sexual object. With the relationship changed round, the same fate can await the daughter. In this sense the Oedipus complex may justly be regarded as the nucleus of the neuroses" (337).

[†] *Los Olvidados* documents the moral decay of a group of street urchins in the shantytowns of Mexico City. The film focuses most closely on Pedro, a young boy whom hunger had forced to leave his family and join the street gang, and Jaibo, the delinquent leader of the pack that has recently escaped from juvenile hall. Put briefly, the plot progresses from Jaibo's murder of another youth (witnessed by Pedro) through Pedro's being sent to and coerced into leaving—both thanks to two thefts of Jaibo's—to Jaibo's murder of Pedro and his own ensuing death at the hands of the police. All the while, as Pedro's repeated attempts to get back on his mother's good side are thwarted by forces beyond his control, the street gang flaunts its ruthlessness. First they are seen beating up first on a blind and elderly street musician (who himself is cruel and violent), then on an archetype of helplessness: a legless boxcar-rolling beggar.

-Part II-
I Sessantottini

> Milioni di stelle . . . milioni di nebulose, cazzo, milioni di nebulose, e noi qui ci stiamo occupando di elettrodi che ci infilano nei genitali . . .
>
> Direte e diremo che nessuno di noi è responsabile di quella mostruosità storica, ma dove finisce la responsabilità individuale?
>
> -Antonio Tabucchi, *La Testa Perduta di Damasceno Monteiro* (178 and 217)

1
1968: An Intellectual History

1
Violent Revolution or Peaceful Reform: Marxism(s) or Utopian Socialism?

> "There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."
>
> What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.
>
> -Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (83)

Since the French Revolution, European intellectuals of the Left have been divided by the warring exigencies of revolution and reform, of Communism and Socialism. Although—following Barrington Moore—it is as apparent as it is repugnant that violent upheaval historically inheres in the successful transition to Western democracy, reform is in all cases preferable once liberal societies have been attained.[*] I argue that Marx's reductive materialism provided the impetus for post-'68

[*] Although it admittedly remains true that the *threat* of unsanctioned public violence—which implicitly relies on its occasional use—is both necessary and useful in forcing governments to reform and in unifying polities against insurrection.

Leftist Italian terrorism, whereas the anti-dogmatic nature of Proudhon and Fourier's utopianism—and of Togliatti's and Gramsci's (distinct and possibly incompatible) Italian Marxisms—allowed diversity and a concern for marginalized social groups to coexist with individual freedoms and desires.

Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* facilitates an essential understanding of the violent revolutionary origins of modern democracy. For a unfairly brief synopsis: the success and functionality of modern industrialized democracies requires large-scale violence (either from above, as with the British peasant enclosures,[*] or from below, as with the French Revolution[†]) as a historically necessary precondition for fundamental change.

> It is time to restore the dialectic, to remind ourselves of the role of revolutionary violence. A great deal of this violence, perhaps its most important features, had its origins in the agrarian problems that arose along the road that has led to Western democracy. The English Civil War checked royal absolutism and gave the commercially minded big landlords a free hand to play their part during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in destroying peasant society. The French Revolution broke the power of a landed élite that was still mainly precommercial, though sections of it had begun to go over to new forms requiring repressive mechanisms to maintain its labor force. (416)

The British people may pride themselves on the Glorious Revolution, but it is unlikely that the events of 1688 could have taken place had the memory of a horrific

[*] Regarding which Moore writes: "That the violence and coercion which produced these results took place over a long space of time, that it took place mainly within a framework of law and order and helped ultimately to establish democracy on a firmer footing, must not blind us to the fact that it was massive violence exercised by the upper classes against the lower" (19).

[†] On the radical elements of the French Revolution Moore warns against a too-easy dismissal: "The radical revolution was an integral part of the revolution on behalf of private property and the rights of man since it was in very substantial measure a negative response to the bourgeois revolution. The anticapitalist elements in the *sans-culottes*' revolution and the protests of the poorer peasants were a reaction to the hardships arising out of the steady spread of capitalist features into the economy during the latter phase of the *ancien régime* and the Revolution itself. To regard the radicals as an extremist band, an excrescence on the liberal and bourgeois revolution, is to fly in the face of this evidence. The one was impossible without the other. It is also quite clear that the bourgeois revolution would not have gone as far as it did without pressure from the radicals" (104).

Civil War that culminated in the 1649 regicide of Charles I been absent from their memory.[*]

It may follow from this argument that the disempowered nations of today's Third World would be justified in carrying out the violent upheaval they may never have had (following "the conundrum ably identified by Gustavo Zagrebelsky: a constitutional reform is necessary when a political system works badly, but when a political system works badly, it will not be able to produce a reform") (Ginsborg 273), but nowhere could the actions of modern domestic terrorism carried out by the BR and other such groups be justified on these grounds. Even the former, however, does not *necessarily* obtain.

A passage from the conclusion of Moore's work deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

> Altogether the communist defense requires an act of faith about the future that involves too great a surrender of critical rationality.
>
> In the place of such a surrender, I would urge the view that both Western liberalism and communism (especially the Russian version) have begun to display many symptoms of historical obsolescence. As successful doctrines they have started to turn into ideologies that justify and conceal numerous forms of repression . . . To the extent that such is the case, the task of honest thinking is to detach itself from both sets of preconceptions, to uncover the causes of oppressive tendencies in both systems in the hope of overcoming them. Whether they can actually be overcome is dubious in the extreme. As long as powerful vested interests oppose changes that lead toward a less oppressive world, no commitment to a free society can dispense with some conception of revolutionary coercion. That, however, is an ultimate necessity, a last resort in political action, whose rational justification in time and place varies too much for any attempt at consideration here. Whether the ancient Western dream of a free and rational society will always remain a chimera, no one can know for sure. But if the men of the future are ever to break the chains of the present, they will have to understand the forces that forged them. (507-8)

[*] As an interesting side note, the vastly different conditions of the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution go a long way in explaining the opposed conclusions—absolutist sovereignty and parliamentary supremacy under the Bill of Rights—reached by Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* (1690).

In this light, the unjustifiability of the BR's actions hinges on two points: their alienation from the vast majority of Italian society, and the objective unattainability of the communal utopian ideal for which they fought.

Shifting to what Marx and Engels themselves viewed as clearly Utopian—that is, if we reduce More's pun to *outopos* ('no place') at the expense of *eutopos* ('good place')—the *Communist Manifest* denounces the socialists of the 1830s as "both reactionary and Utopian" (88). Marx & Engels cite Proudhon as a prime example of "The socialist bourgeois [who] want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom . . . They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat" (91). Distinct from Proudhon and the 'practical socialists',[*] the Utopian Socialists [Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen] "want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured" (93). "The underdeveloped state of the class struggle" (93) kept them from seeing that reform—the Utopian Socialists' desired means of change—left "the bourgeois relations of production" (91) unacceptably intact.

But the students of '68 drew on Proudhon *and* Fourier, and, while the two forms of utopianism differ in certain respects, their emphasis on equilibrium as against Marx's synthesis (Allen 5) is an important one. Although Charles Fourier's Rousseauist "simplism"[†] *is* utopian in More's original sense, his reformist[‡] *Theory of*

[*] P.J. Proudhon, Flora Tristan, and Louis Blanc. (Merriman, p. 712) Unlike the Utopian Socialists, the practical socialists (particularly Blanc) did advocate violence. Part of the '68ers' willful utopianism was thus the contradictory allegiance to Saint-Simon and to Blanc, to Fourier and to Proudhon.

[†] "This code will be revealed to man only when man ceases to follow the dictates of the sophists and obeys without exception all of his own psychological impulses. It is through these natural impulses that the Creator makes his will known to man" (qtd. in Bowles 356).

[‡] Writes Fourier: "The chartists (People's Charter of 1838) looked to democratic politics as the way to institute reforms that would alleviate social inequalities and integrate the organization of labor into a public social society" (qtd. in Toews ed. 120).

Universal Unity writes that "tasks must be performed by groups of friends who have gathered together spontaneously and who are stimulated and intrigued by very active rivalries" (Toews ed. 117). Similarly for Proudhon,

> Marx's scorn for his idealism was occasioned by Proudhon's belief that men become revolutionary through the exercise of their reason and not through the play of "historical" forces. At the time of his meeting with Marx, Proudhon had already grasped the essentials of his doctrine of "equilibrium" and was in search of its application to society. He believed that it had the enormous advantage of preserving the liberty that he considered a requisite of collectivity; it constructed a unity out of the free competition of opposing forces, a competition in which conflict modifies and changes the balance of forces without ever destroying one side in favor of the other. It was impossible for Proudhon to accept an explanation of progress based on the violent destruction of opposing forces, and he rejected the dogmatism inevitable in the search for such a synthesis. (Allen 3)

I agree with Proudhon's anti-dogmatism,[*] and while I reject his so-called anarchism[†] and Fourier's apparent naïveté,[‡] their understanding that egoistic desire cannot be dismissed is an important one.

Returning to the *Manifesto,* a glance at Marx & Engels' derision for German Socialism hints at the relationship between Marx's materialist dialectic and its antagonism to the philosophical Idealism of Kant and Hegel. The German Socialists' Idealism ("philosophical nonsense") (Marx and Engels 89) is denounced as the intellectual obfuscation[§] by which the French literature, "completely emasculated", went from "true requirements . . . [to] the requirements of Truth; not the interest of

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[*] As with Zygmunt Bauman's related *Intimations of Postmodernity*, where the *objectivity* of certain utopias are precisely what make them appalling The title of another of Bauman's books, *Socialism: the Active Utopia*, speaks for itself.

[†] Attributed to an essay which comes to the conclusion that "property is theft."

[‡] I follow Dave Robinson and Chris Garatt's *Introducing Ethics* when they write: "is it even *possible* for us to define human nature or generalise about a species which includes London bus inspectors, Kalahari bushmen, Italian tenors, Mahatma Gandhi and Adolf Hitler?" (Robinson and Garatt 20).

[§] "The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry "eternal truths," all skin and bone, served to wonderfully increase the sale of their goods amongst such a public" (Marx and Engels 90).

the proletariat, but the interests of . . . man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy" (89). Strict egalitarianism here trumps morality, giving the exploited agent free reign to "ma[k]e impossible" the bourgeois, "the middle-class owner of property" (80). "Law, morality, religion, are to [the communist] so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests" (75).

Marx breaks violently from the morality of Kantian Idealism, embracing instead a fusion of Feuerbach's materialism and a willed inversion of Hegel's dialectic. For Kant, "all politics must bend the knee before right" (125). The normative ethics to which Kantian politics are beholden, however, are absent in Marx, where "the immediate aim of the Communists" is decidedly amoral (or it is only moral in the sense that egalitarianism conflates with right at the expense of liberty): "formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat" (77).

By denying that morality exists, the Marxian dialectician willfully destroys the fundamental component of the dialectic s/he appropriates: Spirit. The Hegelian dialectic is neither simple nor materialistic: rather, "it is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end and its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Hegel 10). Instead of this ouroboros of process-as-realization, however, the Marx of *Capital* affirms:

> My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought. (152)

Or, as he wrote 29 years earlier in his contribution to Hegelian criticism, this "*inverted world-consciousness*" is "the *fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality" (126). Rejecting Idealism as empty obscurantism, Marx's materialism couldn't but transform justice into power (as does Foucault), right into ability. If one denies the existence of virtue, knowledge can be *nothing but* power. Neither the *homo sapiens* of Descartes nor the '*homo hedon*' of Feuerbach, Marxian man is *homo faber*.

In fairness, it should be emphasized that Marx's historic de-centering was an understandable response to the atrocious conditions of the early industrialism that the 'satanic' mills of Manchester evokes. The juxtaposition of technological Taylorization and urban explosion—Paris doubled in size during the first half of the 19th century[*]—spawned widespread poverty in the urban periphery. Thus is Marx's critique in "On the Jewish Question" justified:[†]

> Where the political state has attained its true development, man – not only in thought, in consciousness, but in *reality*, in *life* – leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the *political community*, in which he considers himself a *communal being*, and life in *civil society*, in which he acts as a *private individual*, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. (128)

The dangers of civil society that Marx presents are indeed very real.[‡]

That said, 'fundamentalist' Marxism in modern Western society tends towards terroristic interpretations whereby even the most abhorrent means can justify the questionable end that is the paradox of enforced egalitarianism. Although the "private individual's" condition, sadly enough, is accurately described—for Kant, himself a

[*] From 547,000 in 1801 to 1,053,000 in 1851 (Merriman 693).
[†] And thus is it central to much of Godard's *oeuvre*.
[‡] Notwithstanding that liberalism is itself an attempt to find a just solution to this problem.

Hobbesian pessimist at the descriptive level, it is termed *unsocial sociability* (44)—the history of 20th century Communism has clearly demonstrated that s/he cannot be 'made impossible', for two reasons. First, such a sweeping revolution could not take place without egregious and thus unforgettable harm being done.* Second—and more basically—whatever one's views might be as to the ingredients of such a nebulous thing as human nature, it is overwhelmingly clear that egotism cannot be eradicated. Rather, giving due respect to the individual moral agent, it should be termed a healthy egoism and should coexist with humanitarian duties and mutual respect.

It is tolerance that reconciles Togliatti's polycentrism and Gramsci's essential 'opening up' of theoretical Marxism with the situated demands of a changing world. It should be duly noted that the powerful Togliatti's political motives differed fundamentally from the perenially imprisoned Gramsci's intellectual aims. My aim is not to put Togliatti on the same plane as Gramsci—the former was deeply involved in Soviet power machinations while the latter spent much of his adult life in prison and was resultingly critical to a degree impossible for a politician—but to demonstrate two discrete trends in Italian communism away from dogmatic readings of Marxism.

Both Togliatti and Gramsci were contemporaries not with Marx but with the Frankfurt School† of anti-hegemonic critical theory. In the political (as here opposed

* Although he was avowedly reformist rather than revolutionary, Kant's ethics agree with those of Václav Havel's *Power of the Powerless* (or vice versa, as is more likely) on the general unacceptability of grave injustice done in the name of justice: "all these supposedly good intentions cannot wash away the stain of injustice from the means which are used to implement them . . . this can as little annul the above condition of right as can the plea of political revolutionaries that the people are entitled to reform constitutions by force if they have become corrupt, and to act completely unjustly for once and for all, in order to put justice on a more secure basis and ensure that it flourishes in the future" (173).

† This includes Adorno, Horkheimer, Lucács, and the early Habermas. Although Adorno's 'negative dialectic' and Horkheimer's dialectic of 'irrationality against dominating reason' relate centrally to the problematic nature of postmodernity as laid out in part I, such conceptions of the Marxian dialectic are definitively anti-dogmatic. Writes Neil McInnes: "What began in Marx as the critique of political

to the theoretical) domain, the accommodating message Togliatti's 'svolta di Salerno' (April 1 1944) and his later pronouncements on polycentrism allowed the PCI to be the simultaneously feared and impotent mass party that it was. Also, Togliatti's conception of the mass basis of Fascism required the broadening of PCI support beyond the bounds of traditional labor; subsequent PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer's *compromesso storico* with Aldo Moro followed in this tradition.

Similarly, Gramsci's situated[*] Marxism and his apparent support of compromise and spontaneity allowed postwar Italian intellectuals—Pasolini in particular—to follow in his anti-dogmatic footsteps. Of political compromise he writes,

> Se l'unione di due forze è necessaria per vincerne una terza, il ricorso alle armi e alla coercizione (dato che se ne abbia la disponibilità) è una pura ipotesi metodica e l'unica possibilità concreta è il compromesso, poiché la forza può essere impiegata contro i nemici, non contro una parte di se stessi che si vuole rapidamente assimilare e di cui occorre la "buona volontà" e l'entusiasmo. (106-7)

Implicit in the acceptance of compromise is an acknowledgement of the present insufficiency of class antagonisms to effect revolutionary change.

Regarding spontaneity Gramsci affirms that

> Rosa Luxemburg e Karl Liebknecht son piú grandi dei piú grandi santi di Cristo. Appunto perché il fine della loro milizia è concreto,

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economy . . . becomes in Critical Theory the rejection of all the social sciences as mere instances of reification and domination" (149).

[*] Gramsci draws most of his evidence from the rich Italian tradition. For an example: he cites a Roman proverb to demonstrate the very real dangers of rampant individualism. "Il proverbio latino: *Senatores boni viri senatus mala bestia*, è diventato un luogo comune. Cosa significa questo proverbio e quale significato ha assunto? Che una folla di persone dominate dagli interessi immediati o in preda alla passione suscitata dalle impressioni del momento trasmesse acriticamente di bocca in bocca, si unifica nella decisione collettiva peggiore, che corrisponde al piú bassi istinti bestiale. L'osservazione è giusta e realistica in quanto si riferisce alle folle casuali, raccoltesi come "una moltitudine durante un acquazzone sotto una tettoia," composte di uomini che non sono legati da vincoli di responsabilità verso altri uomini o gruppi di uomini o verso una realtà economica concreta, il cui sfacelo si ripercuota nel disastro degli individui. Si può dire perciò che in tali folle l'individualismo non solo non è superato ma è esasperato per la certezza dell'impunità e della irresponsabilità" (91).

> umano, limitato, perciò i lottatori della classe operaia sono piú grandi dei lottatori di Dio: le forze morali che sostengono la loro volontà sono tanto piú smisurate quanto piú è definito il fine proposto alla volontà. (39)

Although he refers here to the physical—"concreto, umano, limitato"—force of Luxemburg's actions (an affirmation fully in agreement with his view that theoretical analysis is only useful if applied[*]), the 'canonization' of Rosa Luxemburg should be interpreted as an approval of spontaneity against dogmatism. As Carlo Levi writes,

> Gramsci [was] a great creator of thought...a great creator of culture and, above all...a great creator, discoverer, inventor and champion of liberty...But one cannot be, by definition, orthodox Gramscians, because orthodoxy is in contradiction with the very quality of Gramsci's thought. One cannot be an orthodox Gramscian, one cannot adopt his formulas. What we can do is follow his method of liberty and historical investigation. (qtd. in Ward 50)

Accepting the contestable argument that one can be an orthodox Marxist, it was *against* the intellectual development of the Italian political culture that the BR misread Marx. Accordingly, before moving to Italian terrorism, what follows is an introduction to the political and intellectual culture of the postwar Italian Left.

2
The Postwar Italian Left and the '68 Generation

> MEPHISTOPHELES:
> Godspeed, Original, in all your glory!—
> How stung you'd be to realize:
> Who can think anything, obtuse or wise,
> That ages back was not an ancient story,–
> But there's no threat in even such romantics,
> A few years hence this will have passed;
> Young must, for all its most outlandish antics,
> Still makes some sort of wine at last.
> [*to the younger public in the stalls who fail to applaud*]
> I see my discourse leaves you cold;
> Dear kids, I do not take offense;

[*] ". . .l'osservazione piú importante da fare a proposito di ogni analisi concreta dei rapporti di forza è questa: che tali analisi non possono e non debbono essere fine a se stesse (a meno che no si scriva un capitolo di storia del passato), ma acquistano un significato solo se servono a giustificare un'attività pratica, una iniziativa di volontà" (Gramsci 84).

> Recall: the Devil, he is old,
> Grow old yourselves, and he'll make sense!
> -*Faust* (Goethe 193; pt. II, act II)

Markedly more so than in France, the Italian student uprisings epitomized a generational conflict internal to the Left. The postwar settlement gave rise to a parallel track of incompatible arguments and cultures[*]—(1) Benedetto Croce's liberalism and Carlo Levi's actionism, and (2) Communism and Catholicism (the Red and the White)—which fueled Pier Paolo Pasolini's critical invectives against the homogenizing effects of mass culture. In this context, he attacks the 'piccolo-borghese' '68ers for abandoning the revolution in favor of the masked liberalism of a 'bourgeois morality'. I content that he was wholly consistent in denouncing the students, but that history has since proven the moral worth of progressive reformism as against that of Marxist 'fundamentalism'.

The myriad difficulties of Italian democracy,[†] the ever-present North-South divide, and the interrelated history of the country's unification are too vast to be wholly addressed here. Suffice it to acknowledge the havoc created by what Giorgio Galli calls "imperfect bipartism" and Giovanni Sartori terms "polarized pluralism": accordingly, political forces "are driven by centrifugal forces toward the extremes. The consequence is a system dominated by ideological discord, governmental instability, irresponsible opposition, political fragmentation, and a division of the

[*] This being in addition to already existing divisions, like the North-South divide and the patron-client tradition.

[†] The opening paragraph of Frederick Spotts' and Theodor Wieser's *Italy: A Difficult Democracy* introduces the problem nicely, if unrelentingly: "Over seventy parties campaign in national elections and some ten of them sit in parliament, yet one party has dominated the country for the entire period of its republican history. There were forty-five governments in the first forty years after the war, yet no other parliamentary democracy has had greater continuity in its leadership and policies. The government changes on an average every ten months, yet essentially the same group holds all the important political positions . . . A party representing a third of the electorate is excluded form government, yet a party with 3 percent of the vote has held the prime ministry of two administrations" (1).

parties into factions" (Spotts and Wieser 12). The political weaknesses are many—from *partitocrazia*[*] and *lottizazione*[†] to *trasformismo*[‡] and a clientelism that lets the salaries of an overstaffed government[§] consume 85 percent of the state budget (Hoffman 67)—but the essential point for my purposes is the resulting lack of popular faith in the mainstream government.

Also crucial is the so-called 'Southern problem', the second disruptive element of Italian society. One needn't adhere Robert Putnam's pessimistic "path dependence" (179) to see the power of his argument: the richness of social capital in the modern north trace to the presence of "norms of reciprocity," "networks of civic engagement" (130), and horizontal associations as early as 1100 in the socially mobile city-states of the Italian north. Conversely, the absence of said factors in an oppressive South dominated by Norman centralization[**] was the necessary response to a society lacking in the 'weak' ties of association and mutual aid (175). Thus, while Southern production almost doubled between 1951 and 1976 (during the *miracolo economico*), its contribution to GNP decreased from 24.1 to 23.7 percent

[*] Since the DC (and the backbench PCI) had effectively ruled for four years by the parliamentary elections of 1948 and were already strongly rooted by the time of the constitution's writing, clientilistic and factional party politics rather than institutions dominated the political scene

[†] Essentially a spoils system, *lottizazione* is the doling out of power by political leverage.

[‡] A process of parliamentary majority building that damages civic empowerment and breeds ideological decay by allowing minority parties massively disproportional strengths when compared with their electoral bases. "According to a study by Mauro Calise and Renato Mannheimer, some 152 politicians held two-thirds of the 1,331 ministerial and subcabinet positions distributed between 1946 and 1976. Indeed 31 persons alone occupied 480 such positions during that period. Thus the aphorism that the Christian Democrats are their own alternative government" (Spotts and Wieser 16).

[§] "Italy's national legislature—the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate—has double the membership of the U.S. Congress, even though the American population is four times Italy's. Then there are hundreds of seats in the twenty regional parliaments" (Hoffman 220).

[**] Which bred what Edward Banfield's work on Chiaramonte peasants in 1958 terms "amoral familism", where individuals are bound solely by the 'strong' ties of kinship (Putnam 177).

(Dunnage 150). Although signs of social change have surfaced in the last decade, serious economic shortcomings have persisted well beyond the 'economic miracle'.[*]

It is therefore telling that Camillo Cavour, the mastermind of Italian unification, had himself never ventured further south than Florence (Merriman 764). The problem of Italian unification, however, was far more extensive than a simple north-south divide. Cultural and linguistic regional differences combined with centuries of foreign occupation and strong papal resistance to unification to support Metternich's famous description of Italy as little more than 'a geographical expression'. Moreover, it is now widely held that the *Risorgimento*—carried out between 1859 and 1870 by King Vittorio Emmanuele II and his prime minister Cavour with the help of Giuseppe Garibaldi's consolidation of the south—was more an extension of Piedmontese hegemony than a unification proper.[†] Retrospective attempts—both artistic and historical—to foist *Risorgimento* solidarity on the (also French-preferring) charismatic Garibaldi and his ties to Mazzini's[‡] Giovane Italia movement seemed willfully oblivious to the realities of Cavour's state.

[*] For example, "in 1990 the number of unemployed youths aged between fourteen and twenty-nine in the South was a terrible 44.1 per cent, as against 14.6 per cent in the Centre-North; the south's GDP in the same year was only, in proportional terms, 59 per cent of that of the rest of the country, lower than it had been in 1980 or in 1970 . . . only 18 per cent of Italy's fiscal revenue, for 36.5 per cent of its population. Infant mortality remained 30 per cent higher than elsewhere; 67 per cent of the railways were not electrified, as opposed to 33 per cent in the Centre-North" (Ginsborg 22).

[†] Especially given the absence of a new constitution (instead the 1848 *Statuto albertino*, which granted limited suffrage, was extended) and Pope Pius IX's refusal to recognize the Piedmontese king's new territory (his *non expedit* decree of 1874 forbade Catholics from political cooperation).

[‡] Seemingly an 'anti-Cavour' of sorts, it is interesting how close Mazzini's universalist vision—for the sake of which he later organized popular nationalist movements throughout Europe, even a prescient Young Europe—is to that of the postmaterialist students: "while he was a determined enemy of monarchism and aristocratic privilege, Mazzini believed that classical liberalism was devoid of moral values and rejected socialism as overly materialistic" (Merriman 757).

A related process of myth-making clarified the intellectual divide between the Liberal Party and the Actionist Party: by fusing the Resistance[*] with a mythically pure *Risorgimento* identity, the arch-liberal Benedetto Croce contended that Fascism was a freak anomaly in an otherwise noble and forward-marching tradition of Italian liberalism. Paired with Croce's acculturation of politics[†] (whereby the Liberal Party was "the party of culture") (Ward, *Antifascisms* 50) was his affirmation that Italy had, as he wrote to the *London Times*, "inaugurated modern civilization." But Fascism "had had roots [there] neither in the past nor would it have them in the future" (qtd. in Ward, *Antifascisms* 79).

> Croce's liberalism transcends boundaries of class and ideology to occupy the forefront and center of what he sees as a neutral political stage . . . The aim of this work of synthesis, as Croce calls it, is to ensure that the directives of history, which liberalism incarnates, can explicate themselves in as untrammeled a way as possible. (Ward, *Antifascisms* 65)

Presuming the effective deification of Italian culture, Croce essentially *had to* assuage pre-Fascist Italy's guilt by denying Fascism's popular roots.

The historical accuracy of Croce's argument, however, is considerably weaker than that of Carlo Levi and the "Actionists." Although both the Resistance and the

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[*] Represented, for example, in Rossellini's neo-realist classic, *Roma Città Aperta*. Although understandable given the time and conditions of the film's production, the Red and White—Giorgio Manfredi and Don Pietro—are close allies who speak the language of Christian humanism. (see Ward 90-91) On the formal level, David Forgacs accurately describes how, in one scene, Rossellini falls prey to trap that Godard was so careful to avoid: "the spectator is directed to follow a linear sequence of shots, and a relay of looks, aided by a careful overdubbing of diegetic sound and music. A predictable emotional response is generated by this and the identifications it produces. It is a very powerful scene but it is also too easy, something of a cheat" (*Roma* 61).

[†] This is not to be confused with the politicization of culture. Rather, culture seems to be here conflated with Kantian ethics (though for Kant they are distinct) such that politics is beholden to culture. Nello Ajello is thus correct in stating the following, although 'crocianismo di sinistra' espouses a acculturated politics whereas the PCI calls for something closer to the politicization of culture: "Il territorio dell'intellighenzia militante che si estende dal "crocianesimo di sinistra" fino al PCI è insomma agitato da mille contraddizioni, ma concorde su un punto: quello di dare all'impegno politico importanza decisiva, e a non considerare la vita civile qualcosa di indipendente dalla speculazione filosofica, o dalla cultura in senso lato" (qtd. in Binetti 362-63).

Risorgimento are, as Ward writes, "unstable text[s] that ha[ve] invited a series of ideologically incompatible readings" (*Antifascisms* 25), the fact is that 45.8 percent (against 54.2 percent for the republic) (*Antifascisms* 86) of the Italian polity voted to maintain the royal family that attempted to legitimate Mussolini's rule. For the Actionists, fascism was not at all inexplicable: rather, it was "the logical outcome of the failure of the *Risorgimento* . . . to build a truly democratic unified Italy State" (*Antifascisms* 21). And as Robin Erica Wagner-Paicifici asserts,

> During the fascist era, Togliatti labored long to convince his fellow communists that contrary to their fiercely held belief that fascism was essentially an elite and declassed-based regime, it was really a reactionary regime with *mass* characteristics. Second, given the ability of reactionary parties to attract a heterogeneous (in terms of class) mass constituency, the PCI had to aim *its* appeal beyond its traditional working class constituency. (26)

Levi rightly saw the mass basis of Fascism, the hegemonic nature of the *Risorgimento* (Ward, *Antifascisms* 159), and the falsely mythical[*] aspects of the Resistance.

Croce's attempt to create an exclusive and monopolistic monolith of secular liberalism led the Left of the Gramsci-Pasolini trajectory to derisive redub his self-avowed *etico-politico* views as what Asor Rosa called "etico-politico-pedagogico" (Binetti 372). His flawed inability to envision the applicability of social justice to liberal democracy set him at odds with the Actionists. Ward writes that

> Croce took great exception to the Action Party's attempt to supplement what Actionists saw as the limits inherent in liberalism with some of the principles of socialism. For the Actionists there was no contradiction in attempting to fuse these two terms. Indeed, in the words of Guido Calogero, one of the party's founders, liberalism and socialism are "parallel specifications of a single ethical principle, which is the universal canon of every history and every civilization." (qtd. in Ward 222)

[*] As Philip Wallan sardonically puts it, "The identification of the vast majority of the Italian people, and in particular the establishment and middle class, with Benito Mussolini's fascist regime was to pose serious problems after its fall, when the majority of Italians discovered overnight that, at heart, they had supported the Resistance all along" (30).

Like the '68 generation, like Mazzini, like Moore, Calogero's assertion demonstrates the need to balance freedom with justice.[*]

Acknowledging the troublingly convincing arguments presented both by Marcuse's 68-ish and Godardian *One-Dimensional Man* ('I shop, therefore I am') and by Moore's *Social Origins*, I argue that Croce's brand of liberalism is ethically inferior both to Kant's and, more recently, to John Rawls'. In *The Law of Peoples'* noble attempt to envision what Rawls calls a 'realistic utopia', he follows Rousseau's opening thought from *The Social Contract*[†] in differentiating liberalism from libertarianism, where "the latter does not combine liberty and equality in the way that liberalism does;" lacking "the criterion of reciprocity" (49), libertarianism rejects the necessary unity of what for Rawls is "liberty and equality," for Calogero is "liberalism and socialism."

Before returning to Croce, a brief explication of Rawls' conception of international justice is required to understand its relevance here: at its most basic level, his is an attempt to reconcile Kant's universal liberal principles with the toleration of (certain) non-liberal peoples. By demanding that universalizability be in no way grounded in aprioristic foundationalism Rawls constructs a justice that is well-attuned to political consensus and a certain degree of ethical plurality, but which

[*] Although Croce claims to don the ethical mantle of Kantian liberalism, his rejection of what Rawls terms 'fair' social distribution places him closer to libertarianism. For Kant, "a constitution allowing the *greatest possible human freedom* in accordance with laws which ensure *that the freedom of each can co-exist with the freedom of all the others* (not one designed to provide the greatest possible happiness, as this will in any case follow automatically), is at all events a necessary idea which must be made the basis not only of the first outline of a political constitution but of all laws as well" (191), Though it is true that the legal institutions of Kant's [anti-utilitarian] liberalism says nothing direct regarding provisions for justice, his deontological ethics quite clearly do.

[†] "My purpose is to consider if, in political society, there can be any legitimate and sure principle of government, taking men as they are and laws as they might be. In this inquiry I shall try always to bring together what right permits with what interest requires so that justice and utility are in no way divided" (qtd. in Rawls 13).

necessarily falls short of acknowledging Kant's transcendental *noumena*. Although it is, in this context, difficult to determine exactly where the dividing line between tolerance and justified intolerance should be placed, to accept both plurality and individual rights to moral autonomy is to understand the difficulties that necessarily inhere in modern society.

As a political (read: non-transcendental, phenomenal) conception, Rawls' realistic utopia lays an excellent foundation for a just social order, but as a political conception it cannot rely on the intuitionism that would be inherent to a 'real' utopia. For "a liberal society with a constitutional regime does not, *as a liberal society*, have a *comprehensive* conception of the good. Only the citizens and associations within the civic society in the domestic case have such conceptions" (34). Rather, it is precisely because Rawls' conception respects and values the individual's moral agency that a just political order need allow for a certain degree of ethical plurality. Therefore, "the final political end of society is to become fully just and stable for the right reasons" (119). Thanks both to the individual's 'moral monopoly'—which by definition cannot be depersonalized—and to the demonstrable incompatibility of Hobbesian egoism and Rousseauist 'popular sovereignty',[*] all a fully just society can seek to do is to guarantee the proper conditions in which freedom (moral and otherwise) can best coexist with social justice and the toleration of acceptable difference.

As against the students' utopian conceptions, in Rawlsian terms the political organization of the reasonably just social order *cannot* be utopian in an ethically

[*] Respectively, Fascism and Marxist-Leninist Communism represent the dangers of disregarding these two irreconcilabilities. Whereas the former, following Pavese, forced a perennial happiness on the citizen-subject, the latter attempted—both unjustifiably and unrealistically— to 'do away with' egoism.

monolithic sense ('good place'), for the good—following Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and against Plato's *Republic*—must, at least in public, bend knee to the right. To be 'realistically utopian' rejects the futility of utopianism as it is pejoratively understood ('no place'): "Readers might charge me with baseless utopianism, but I disagree . . . [my imaginary ideal for a decent hierarchical people,] Kazanistan, is the best we can realistically—and coherently—hope for . . . The alternative is a fatalistic cynicism which conceives the good of life solely in terms of power" (78). But this is also not to accuse Rawls of Hobbesian 'realism': on the contrary, he rejects the power politics of Foucauldian near-nihilism while holding both 'just constitutional democratic peoples' and 'decent hierarchical peoples' to a supremely high (and probably unattainable) standard.[*]

Some would accuse the politically influential Croce of the amoral power-mongering that Rawls rightly dismisses, but it is by defending both the Italian monopoly on the good and the Liberal Party's monopoly on 'culture' that he misinterprets his liberal antecedents. Croce is rightly attacked for being the champion of what Lyotard terms the 'grand narrative' of obsolete liberalism. Although Rawls' argument cannot answer '68's Marcusian concerns, it does reject the intolerance implicit in Croce's argument: Crocean liberalism's incarnation of 'the directives of history' denies the necessary plurality of personal truths and the possibility that 'decent hierarchical peoples' are ethically justified. Responding both to Croce's

[*] The particulars of his argument, which focus on human rights, political participation, and the toleration of acceptable difference, are too many to address here. Suffice it to abstractly state that "the Law of Peoples does not presuppose the existence of actual decent hierarchical peoples any more than it presupposes the existence of actual reasonably just constitutional democratic peoples. If we set the standards very high, neither exists. In the case of democratic peoples, the most we can say is that some are closer than others to a reasonably just constitutional regime. The case of decent hierarchical peoples is even less clear" (75).

implied intolerance and to Hegel's 'scientific' philosophical method, then, Rawls writes: although "it is often thought that the task of philosophy is to uncover a form of argument that will always prove confincing against all other arguments . . . there is no such argument" (123).

It is in this context that Pasolini is heir to Gramsci. Gramsci helped to establish what Stuart Hall[*] calls "the *open horizon* of Marxist theorizing" (Hall, "The Problem of Ideology" 84) by introducing the theoretical possibilities of Marxism as a variable and situated *method* rather than as what Rawls sees philosophical doctrines cannot be: a universally true dogma. By Pasolini's time, Freudian, femininist, and existentialist appropriations of Marxism had fractured the proletarian monolith of Marxian theory into a blurry and necessarily heterogeneous group of constituent factions concerned with power, ethnicity, sex, gender, and nationality (Toews 34).

From Marx's misinterpretation of economic development[†] to the ethical quandary of revolutionary violence to the inherent injustice of truly monopolistic systems, Pasolini—and, on a less theoretical level, Elio Vittorini—represents exactly what the BR do not: an ethically justifiable utilization of Marxian theory in the modern world. As with Kant and Rawls on freedom, Vittorini insists that "il nostro lavoro . . . può essere marxista solo nella misura e nel modo in cui il marxismo è

[*] The 'open horizon' notwithstanding, Hall is much closer to the materialism of 'traditional' Marxism than is Pasolini, as is made clear by his assertion that "ultimately, ideas can be reduced to the essence of their truth – their economic content" (Hall, "The Problem of Ideology" 62). Although what one's essence actually *is* remains chimeric throughout Pasolini's written and filmic work, there is in his works a strong and pervasive sense that it is not to be found in economics.

[†] Instead of class antagonisms becoming more and more sharply divided between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (as he had predicted they would), Western modernity has seen the rise of a social diamond: a massive new middle class in the middle, the extremely wealthy at the top, and various poor or otherwise marginalized minority groups at the bottom. As is true with Pasolini, much of 20th century Marxism, concerned with the injustices done to marginal groups (hence the notorious fragmentation of the plural left that, for a recent example, allowed Le Pen to advance to the second round of the 2002 French election), draws most heavily on the concept of alienation.

positivo anche per i non marxisti, come accade che il cristianesimo sia positivo anche per chi non crede in Cristo" (qtd. in Binetti 364). Echoing Kant's ethical maxim and Alberto Moravia's 1946 essay, "L'uomo come fine," for Vittorini it is essential that Communism be

> un mezzo piuttosto che un fine; una via piuttosto che una meta . . . Perciò è inutile che si parli di "via democratica" al comunismo, di "via democratica" al socialismo. A noi (agli uomini) interessa che il comunismo stesso e il socialismo stesso siano "democratici." Questo intendiamo dire dicendo che li pensiamo come "vie." Noi non vogliamo nulla che non resti aperto all apossibilità di trasformarsi, di mutare, di diventare "altro," nulla che non si ponga su un piano ancora di "passaggio," e di movimento, di storia. (qtd. in Binetti 368)

Vittorini and Pasolini embrace what Binetti calls "un più generico ed approssimato "marxismo universale" che accomuni un po' tutta l'eterogeneità dell'"intellighenzia" italiana" (Binetti 363), but the BR should be excluded from this definition.

To Pasolini, the mass (against Gramsci's popular) culture forged during the *miracolo economico* brought with it a socio-cultural homogenization that depoliticized the masses while maligning the margins. As a homosexual whose PCI membership was revoked in 1949, and, as is starkly clear in his films,[*] Pasolini rejects a modernity the necessary byproduct of which disintegrates the margins.

Understanding the complexity of Gramscian hegemony,[†] Pasolini laments its insidious ability to implant false interests to the extent that we forget the (nebulously defined) real ones: as he writes in the "articolo delle lucciole,"

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[*] In his first film, *Accatone*, the protagonist of the same name is a street pimp who would sooner set his wife to whoring than engage in the mindless physical labor. Similarly, in *Medea*, the manner in which Jason's allure tempts Medea to betray her cultural heritage (in what would eventually provoke disastrous retribution) is analogous to the homogenizing powers latent in the rampant consumerism of contemporary Italy. Even in the more light-hearted *Decamerone*, Pasolini's self-casting as a fresco painter hints at the potentiality of art as a non-alienating way of life.

[†] Which should under no circumstances be confused with simple domination. For Stuart Hall, "Hegemony is not the disappearance or destruction of difference. It is the construction of a collective

> *Dopo la scomparsa delle lucciole*. I "valori," nazionalizzati e quindi falsificati, del vecchio universo agricolo e paleocapitalistico, di colpo non contano più. Chiesa, patria, famiglia, obbedienza, ordine, risparmio, moralità non contano più. E non servono neanche più in quanto falsi. Essi sporavvivono nel clericofascismo emarginato (anche il MSI in sostanza li ripudia). A sostituirli sono i "valori" di un nuovo tipo di civiltà, totalmente "altra" rispetto alla citiltà contadina e paleoindustriale. Questa esperienza è stat fatta già da altri Stati. Ma in Italia essa è del tutto particolare, perché si tratta della prima "unificazione" reale subita dal nostro paese; mentre negli altri paesi essa si sovrappone, con una certa logica, alla unificazione monarchica e all ulteriore unificazione della rivoluzione borghese e industriale. (*Corsari* 159)

Pasolini's explanation helps explain why Italian mass culture is so morally vacuous, socially oblivious, and aesthetically hyperbolic when compared with the unsurpassed brilliance of its cultural heritage: having never experienced the gradual processes of nationalization that accompany social and political development, the many distinct Italian peoples of popular culture, caught off guard, were faced with the sudden threat of annihilation.[*] As Richard Drake interprets Pasolini's "anthropological mutation," "consumer society has made a shambles of the political parties and groups in Italy that claim inspiration from Marx, Nietzsche, and Christ. Marxist, Fascist, and Christian values were swamped during the postwar boom" (154).

A brief glance at the recent history of Italian consumerism retrospectively confirms the premises of Pasolini's analysis.[†] At the basic level—and at the height of

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will through difference" (Hall, "Old and New Identities" 58). Pasolini would probably render a more extreme version of this statement. For example: 'by constructing a collective will through difference, Hegemony destroys difference itself'.

[*] Not only is Italy thus not *better* off than during Fascism, for Pasolini it is, in certain respects, decidedly worse: "Io, purtroppo, questa gente italiana, l'avevo amata: sia al di fuori degli schemi del potere (anzi, in opposizione disperata ad essi), sia al di fuori degli schemi populistici e umanitari. Si trattava di un amore reale, radicato nel mio modo di essere. Ho visto dunque "coi miei sensi" il comportamento coatto del potere dei consumi ricreare e deformare la coscienza del popolo italiano, fino a una irreversibile degradazione. Cosa che non era accaduta durante il fascismo fascista, periodo in cui il comportamento era completamente dissociato dalla coscienza" (*Corsari* 160).

[†] Which he shares, at least in part, with Jean Baudrillard (whose theory of "cultural consumption" states that "if we consume the product as product, we consume the meaning as advertising") and Alfred Gell (who writes of the "incorporation of consumer goods into the definition of the social self") (Forgacs 275-6).

the *miracolo economico*[*]—1958-63 "saw an annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent in income . . . [and] 7.4 per cent in family consumption" (Dunnage 149). Later, between 1976 and 1991, "pro-capita income [increased] by 45 per cent, family consumption by more than 60 per cent" (Ginsborg 28). By 1992, Italy was ranked first in the EU for its expenditure on clothing and footwear as a percentage of total consumption (Ginsborg 335).

The domain of modern television (or *neotelevisione*, as Umberto Eco terms it) is most striking: the average number of total viewers at peak times has climbed from 15,855,000 to 24,524,000 between 1988 and 1999 (Ginsborg 333), the average daily time spent watching television has increased from 173 to 215 minutes between 1988 and 1995 (Ginsborg 332), and the number of advertisements on Italian television has, between 1982 and 1999, increased from 113,914 to 773,610 (Ginsborg 343).

> Forgacs has calculated that in 1985 the RAI showed 46,080 advertisements for a total of 311 hours of advertising, whereas commercial channels showed 494,000 advertisements for a total of 3,468 hours; in all, around 1,500 television advertisements per day were being shown in Italy, more than in all the other European countries put together. The onslaught was not only temporal but aural: volume automatically increased at advertisement time. (Ginsborg 86)

Such events as the San Remo festival and, particularly, the World Cup, literally guaranteed mass viewership (Ginsborg 118).

He didn't live to see it reach such a height, but Pasolini contends that this new threat is more sinister even than the Fascist one (which could at least be recognized): he accuses mass culture of disseminating a homogenizing Power beyond even the

[*] There were many effects of the economic miracle, but Jonathan Dunnage points to some of the most dramatic developments: "There was more living space as the number of occupied houses increased by 50 per cent between 1951 and 1971. At the start of the fifties less than 8 per cent of houses contained electricity, running water and washing facilities. The figure had nearly quadrupled to 30 per cent by a decade later. Many Italians were able to buy such household appliances as washing machines and fridges (owned by 50 per cent of families by 1965)" (158).

political powers' control. "I potenti democristiani coprono, con le loro manovre da automi e i loro sorrisi, il vuoto. Il potere reale procede senza di loro: ed essi non hanno più nelle mani che quegli inutili apparati" (*Corsari* 163). While Pasolini's essay "Il vero fascismo e quindi il vero antifascismo" rebukes the progressive antifascist Left for washing its hands of the young Fascist terrorists of 1969[*] the 1973 essay, "il "discorso" dei capelli," recounts Pasolini's horror at finding that the Hegemonic dialectic had assimilated the 'capelli lunghi': "Il ciclo si è compiuto. La sottocultura al potere ha assorbito la sottocultura all'opposizione e l'ha fatta propria la razionalità è fanatismo" (*Corsari* 11). Thanks to "l'omologazione 'culturale'," the Italian fascist and the Italian antifascist "sono culturamente , psicologicamente e, quel che è più impressionante, fisicamente, interscambiabili" (*Corsari* 49).

Thus, although Pasolini's scathing denunciation of the students' as irresponsible and irredeemably bourgeois in "Il PCI ai Giovani" was consistent with his intellectual system, his argument was predicated on Marx's unjust assertion whereby the bourgeois individual should be "made impossible." But the moral virtue of the '68 movement, albeit an often self-contradictory one, was exactly the supercession of Carl Schmitt's Hobbesian reduction of politics to the friend/enemy distinction. This is not to say that the poem is without valid critiques: the argument in defense of the *poliziotti*[†] who are "*figli di poveri. / Vengono da periferie, contadine o urbane che siano*" is one. Another is the danger of hypocrisy:[‡] "*Siete paurosi, incerti,*

[*] "Quando uno di quei giovani *decideva* di essere fascista, ciò era puramente casuale, non era che un gesto, immotivato e irrazionale: sarebbe basata forse una sola parola perché ciò non accadesse" (*Corsari* 58).
[†] Also used in *La Meglio Gioventú.*
[‡] Present in *Archeologia del Presente.*

disperati / *(Benissimo!) ma sapete anche come essere / prepotenti, ricattatori e sicuri*: / *prerogative piccolo-borghesi, amici*" (*Empirismo* 151).

Nonetheless, whatever the particular weaknesses and deficiencies of the student movement's protagonists, Pasolini—himself historically positioned, however critically,[*] for communism and against a liberalism that, deeply flawed though it was, cannot justifiably be done away with—couldn't have seen the activists' positive moral legacy that brought the world's attention to what Moore rightly sees as the inadequacy both of communism *and* of [classical] liberalism. But to Pasolini, they should "*Smettetela di pensare ai vostri diritti, / smettetela di chiedere il potere. / Un borghese redento deve rinunciare a tutti I suoi diritti, / E bandire dalla sua anima, una volta per sempre, / L'idea del potere. Tutto ciò è liberalismo: Lasciatelo / a Bob Kennedy*" (*Empirismo* 154). In the final analysis, Pasolini's interpretation sides, strange though it may sound, with the conservative leanings of Raymond Aron and his ilk.[†]

Because I will argue in the following section that the Leftist terrorism of the 70's was a vastly different phenomenon than the utopian student movement of 1968,

[*] In fairness, Pasolini's conception of marginality was itself an attempt to keep open the horizons of potentiality. In Ward's view, "marginal groups are of interest to Pasolini precisely because their nonparticipation in the narrative of history has given them no sense of future expectation. As such, they remain open to the possibility of the unexpected and unforseem. In general, the *borgatari* are not swept along by the homologizing laws of either the bourgeois or Marxist versions of history" (*Poetics* 80).

[†] Stuart J. Hilwig argues that there are three conceptual categories for theories on the causes and goals of 1968 (Aron belongs to the first): "The first, that of the delusion theorists, characterizes the protesters as spoiled children of the bourgeoisie ensnared in a web of utopia rhetoric. Another group, who have taken a more objective, less emotional approach, are the generational theorists. They employ cohort analysis to understand the conflict between the "baby boomers" born after 1945 and their parents who had lived through the war and achieved a measure of affluence in the 1960s. A third group, who have focused in ideology, view the unrest of 1968 in more conceptual terms as a symptom of deeper problems in Western society, such as the failure of democratic mechanisms or the continuance of class conflict" (Hilwig 322). Instead, my intent is to unify the second and the third interpretations (bending the former to the latter).

fairness demands that an acknowledgement of the contradictions internal to the students' views on violence. Robert Lumley is correct in finding that

> The political culture of '68 was contradictory on the question of the value of human life and the relationship between politics and morality. There was a wave of protest against injustice and inhumanity in the world . . . At the same time, slogans, songs and writings expressed a desire for revenge, and a disdain for the value of the lives of oppressors and exploiters. (288)

Selections from the time's ubiquitous wall graffiti are telling: "a revolutionary pacifist is like a revolutionary lion" (68), "rivoluzione si – revisionismo no . . . il potere sta sulla canna del fucile . . . Vietcong vince perché spara . . . violenza alla violenza . . . Guerra no – guerriglia si" (68-69), "siate realisti / Chiedete l'impossibile . . . lo stato borghese si abbatte, non si cambia" (144). Of this last pair, although the former (positive) has outlived the latter (negative), the latter was a necessary if unfortunate offshoot of the spirit of the time. The event was seminal because it resurrected the always-distant standard balancing freedom and equality, liberalism and socialism, against which all human action must fall short.

2
Terrorist Violence vs. the Best of ’68: Sciascia, Vassalli, Giordana

1
Terrorisms Left and Right: Violence, Manipulation, and the Moro Affair

> Placing the blame for the violence of the late 1970s upon the children of 1968 is not very different from blaming Robespierre and the *terreur* on the Tennis Court Oath and the Third Estate.
>
> -Sidney Tarrow, “Violence and institutionalization after the Italian protest cycle” (48)

> [The Leftist terrorists] acted out of love for the people, but by turning the people into God they thought themselves above the charge of murder.
>
> -Dario Fo, in an interview with Anders Stephanson and Daniela Salvioni (165)

Many scholars trace the *anni di piombe* to the student movement, but a close assessment requires the fine tuning of this argument: instead of being bound by shared ideals, the Leftist terrorism of the BR trampled roughshod on the freedoms that for the conflicted ‘68ers couldn’t be discarded. Regarding the (vastly different) neo-Fascist terrorism with which the state attempted to slander the Left, governmental collusion with extremist forces and the discovery of Gladio and the Propaganda 2 lodge discredited the Italian political system far more than it did the students. Similarly with the BR’s Leftist terrorism, Leonardo Sciascia’s *L’Affaire Moro* lays bare the moral hypocrisy of the supposedly Christian DC elite. Instead of being heir to ’68, the BR was a response both to the historical weakness of Italian unification (itself accompanied by a long history of terrorism) and to an historically misapplied reading of Marxian theory. Fortunately, the BR’s intellectual elitism ultimately failed in its attempt to bury the students’ utopianism; rather, by revealing through their

actions the Italian state's weakness and lack of transparency, they would in the long run *strengthen* the '68 movement's claim to a legitimate critique.

Although the Right-wing terrorists' demographic backgrounds[*] and ideological underpinnings were distinct from those of the Leftists, indications that covert governmental organizations were colluding with the neo-Fascist extremists further remove the blame from the student activists. Within three hours of the Piazza Fontana bombing of December 12 1969 (which killed 16 people and injured 90), commissioner Luigi Calabresi arrested three anarchist railworkers; three days later, under massively suspicious circumstances, Giuseppe Pinelli 'jumped' to his death. As Robert Lumley writes, "Pinelli, who fell to his death from a window of the police headquarters became a martyr, and [Pietro] Valpreda [,another framed suspect,] became an Italian Dreyfus – the innocent victim of *raison d'état*" (237).

The bombing, however, was discovered to be the work of right-wing terrorists possibly working with the covert forces of what Noberto Bobbio terms the "criptogoverno" (Wagner-Pacifici 41).[†] According to Dario Fo, author of the play *Morte accidentale di un anarchico*,[‡] the terrorists were "supported by or acting in collusion with the fascist elements within the state. We all know about the Masonic Lodge P2, the connections between the police and the early terrorist acts. It was this that ignited the explosion of terrorism" (165). An incriminatory list of Propaganda 2

[*] There is a good deal of evidence that the neo-Fascist groups drew on the poorer and the less and educated, and was overwhelmingly male, while the far Left terrorists—while still mostly working-class—were better educated and were composed of approximately ¼ women. (see Weinberg and Eubank, "Neo-Fascist and Far Left Terrorists in Italy: Some Biographical Observations)

[†] So termed in nuanced opposition to the *sottogoverno* (and to the *governo*, of course).

[‡] Produced by the 'Collettivo Teatrale LA COMUNE', on the surface the play recounts a similar incident that took place in New York in the twenties, but is really an overt reference to the Pinelli incident. In an afterward he writes: "Gli stessi che preparano un autunno di reazione e di violenza, facendo precedere dal ricatto verso il movimento, verso tutti quelli che non vogliono saperne di abbassare la testa. / May, per loro disgrazia, dovranno accorgersi che siamo in tanti" (118).

members found at P2 leader Licio Gelli's[*] house (in a 1981 raid) pointed to the organization's neo-Fascist roots and eventually brought the Forlani government to collapse.[†] More damaging yet, "among Operation Gladio's[‡] first recruits, according to to Gelli, were the fascist veterans of Mussolini's last stand" (Willan 148). In helping to reveal the shadowy bonds binding terrorist violence to governmental and paramilitary powers,[§] terrorism was considerably more damaging to the collapsing mass parties than it was to the students.

But it would be misleading to reduce either of the two 'terrorisms' (that is, reactionary and revolutionary) to monoliths: rather, as extremist movements, both were highly factionalized and fragmentary, and in both cases it was difficult to make out the dividing line between extraparliamentary organizations and terrorist groups

[*] Who, when famous TV personality and fellow P2 member Maurizio Costanzo asked him what he had wanted to be as a child, responded: "a puppet master" (Ginsborg 146).

[†] Writes Ginsborg: "In March 1981 the Milanese magistrates, Gherardo Colombo and Giuliano Turone, while conducting inquiries into the activities of the disgraced banker Michele Sindona, discovered in the office of a certain Licio Gelli at Castiglio Fibocchi in the province of Arezzo the list of 962 persons belonging to a Masonic lodge called Propaganda 2 (the P2) . . . the membership of the P2 included the names of all the heads of the secret services, 195 officers of the various armed corps of the Republic among whom were twelve generals of the Carabinieri, five of the guardia di Finanza, twenty-two of the army, four of the air force, and eight admirals. There were leading magistrates, a few prefects and heads of police (*questori*), bankers and businessmen, civil servants, journalists and broadcasters. The political world was represented by forty-four members of parliament, forty-one of whom belonged to the *pentapartito* and three to the neo-Fascist MSI" (144-45). It deserves noting that Berlusconi was on Gelli's list.

[‡] A CIA-planned arms stockpiling contingency plan—aptly named after the gladius, the double-edged Roman short sword—to protect against both external and internal threats. Although Andreotti attempted to claim NATO involvement when he admitted its existence in 1990, Gelli's version coheres more with NATO's subsequent denial. Ginsborg gives a short outline of the organization's structures: Gladio was "an agreement signed in 1956 between SIFAR (the Italian military secret service) and the CIA which spoke of a 'Stay-Be hind' organization, a clandestine network of groups which would be activated in the case of foreign invasion. Its tasks would include sabotage, guerrilla warfare, propaganda, information collecting, etc. Its training group was the military base at Capo Marragiu near Alghero in Sardinia, and its arms and explosives were buried in 139 different hiding places spread throughout the peninsula" (Ginsborg 171).

[§] If we accept the testimonies of the Genoa Social Forum's *Libro Bianco*, such actions continue to this day: during and before the anti-G7 Genoa protests of June 19-21 2002 (in which the military police shot and killed Carlo Giuliani), a number of Italian youths testify to having been approached by Italian secret service operatives who were attempting to foment 'black' anarchist violence so as to discredit the peaceful *tutte bianche*.

proper. See for example the confusing multiplicity of the extremist groups' acronyms: (Left of the PCI) BR, PL, AO, POTOP, LC,[*] (Right of the MSI) ON, AN, FN.[†] Although the great plurality of extraparliamentary groups warns against oversimplification, the left/right distinction was originally quite clearly divided between the 'workers' intellectuals' (Potere *Operaio*) and the ultra-nationalists (Alleanza *Nazionale*, Fronte *Nazionale*). Even this distinction, however, was often blurred, as the neo-Fascists began increasingly to target state personnel:[‡] the murder of commissioner Calabresi in 1972, for example, has been variously ascribed to Anarchist/Marxist groups and to Fascist ones.

That said, I will from here on focus solely on the BR and the Moro affair,[§] demonstrating (**1**) the group's differences from the student movement and (**2**) how it did more (constructive[**]) damage to governmental stability than did harm to '68's legacy. Four valid arguments (the last being the most important)—two historical, one demographic/teleological, one intellectual/theoretical—are central to point (**1**): that Leftist terrorism responded to neo-Fascist terrorism, that terrorism was rooted in the

[*] Red Brigades, Front Line, Worker Autonomy, Worker Power, Continuous Struggle

[†] New Order, National Vanguard, National Front (and the list goes on: Mussolini Action Squads and the Revolutionary Action Movement to People's struggle and other groups).

[‡] "The later neo-Fascists saw the Italian state as a hopelessly corrupt institution, not to be strengthened but to be destroyed. Accordingly, unlike their predecessors, the second generation groups carried out attacks on the state and its personnel, including judges, prosecutors and policemen, in a way the first generation did not" (Weinberg and Eubank 537).

[§] Much could also be said of the BR's other terrorist actions, but they are beyond the scope of this work. Briefly put, though, an over-quick history is as follows: the BR committed their first kidnapping on March 3 1972 (from which a wounded siemens executive was released only hours later with a sign around his neck reading: "strike one to educate a hundred"), and their first kneecapping (*gambizzazione*, i.e. shooting someone in the legs) on 15 May 1975 (Massimo De Cairolis was the victim).

[**] Again acknowledging, if reluctantly, Moore's conclusions on violent change. To phrase it in Stephen Hellman's specifically governmental terms, "despite the supposed flexibility of democratic institutions, democracies almost never undertake major institutional overhauls. And they simply *never* seem to do so unless massively disruptive and traumatic events such as war, revolution, or deep national division force their hand" (Hellman 511).

above-outlined failure of unification, that the BR and other clandestine groups were of different backgrounds than were the students, that the BR elite foisted 'fundamentalist' Marxism onto the inapplicable societal context of contemporary Italy.

Fo hinted at the first argument while discussing the 1969 bombings: that Leftist terrorism was a response to earlier neo-Fascist terrorism, even to Fascism itself. As is clear from much of his writing, millionare Leftist publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli[*] shared this view (Willan 25). Following Gramsci, Levi, and Pasolini (rather that Croce), the second argument locates the causes of terrorist violence in the failure of Italian unification. Anarchist (and Fascist) terrorism has haunted Italy since the *blocco storico*,[†] at the beginning of which the Anarchist Federation attempted to seize Bologna in 1874. Since then, Italy has not been lacking in terroristic events from the Left.[‡] Anarchist Gaetano Bresci killed King Umberto I in 1900, and the *Gappisti*[§] of Resistance fame engaged in various acts of anti-statal terrorism (Weinberg and Eubanks 21-22). In this vein, asks Sidney Tarrow, "can it be an accident that the three European countries in which terrorism was most highly developed in the 1970s, West Germany, Spain, and Italy, were all fascist for many years?" (*Democracy and Disorder* 307).

It is also Tarrow who successfully argues the third point. He affirms that

[*] who was also possibly 'suicided' during what appeared to be a farcically tragic botched attempt at industrial terrorism in 1972.

[†] The domination of Italian politics by commercial northern elites and southern gentry, which thanks to patronage lasted from approximately 1875 until the onset of fascism (Wagner-Pacifici 29).

[‡] Or from the right, for that matter: the Fascists assassinated social democratic deputy Giacomo Matteotti in 1924. Milan was bombed on April 12 1928 (killing 18 and injuring 40), as were Bologna, Turin, and Genoa in 1932.

[§] Also known as the Garibaldi Brigades, the GAP (Gruppi di Azione Partigiana) was organized by Friulian antifascists.

> Della Porta's data make the lower-class origins of left-wing terrorists abundantly clear. In analysing the occupational positions of 450 militants of clandestine organizations, she found that 43 per cent of them came from the working class, only 11 per cent were university students, and 6 per cent were schoolteachers or university professors. (*Democracy and Disorder* 302)

But even if the two were to come from similar backgrounds, terrorism could be seen as a disruptor of rather than an heir to the '68 tradition (which, as an anti-organizational movement,[*] was by definition unable to consciously control the logic of its own evolution).

> On the one hand, if extremists were adopting increasingly violent tactics, it was their violence that drove many of the veterans of 1968 off the streets. On the other hand, if the unions and parties temporized in condemning terrorism, they also absorbed a large number of former movement militants into the 'constitutional arc.' (Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder* 320)

Although it is historically accurate to state that the two are *related*, the substantially stronger claim that they share basic affinities or an unmediated teleological tie[†] cannot be substantiated.

All three arguments are valid and persuasive, but none truly succeed in properly explaining the specific ideological weaknesses of BR terrorism. Two related elements inhere in the fourth argument: that the BR's interpretation of Marxism is fundamentally unjust, and that it was in any case situated neither in the realities of contemporary Italian society nor in the tradition of Italian Marxism. The foundations

[*] Agreeing with, in Tarrow's words, "a popular school of sociological thought—much in debt to Weber and to Michels—[that] sees organization as antithetical to movements" (Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder* 219).

[†] Tarrow writes that "we can only link the terrorism of the late 1970s back to the mass movements of a decade earlier by tracing a two-step process of competition, outbidding and separation within the social-movement sector. In the first stage, the extraparliamentary left competed for support with the PCI and the trade unions by proposing radical –but mass – forms of collective action to the workers. In the second, a new generation of autonomous groups, collectives and terrorist organizations competed for support with the extraparliamentary groups by proposing more radical, sectarian forms of collective action which – in the absence of a mass base – had to be violent to gain attention" (Tarrow, "Violence and institutionalization" 60).

of (and much of the evidence for) both the first[*] and the second[†] elements have already been argued. Adding to the second: during the '70s, "less than 2% of Italians expressed a willingness to use violence against people in order to achieve such change."[‡] Unlike the comparative mass support earned by the student movement of the previous decade, this was "not a revolutionary situation, but a terrorist situation" (Weinberg and Eubanks 15). And thus did the day of the Moro kidnapping see widespread demonstrations against terrorism.[§]

Equally important is the fact that Italy was *intellectually* situated as a land where

> communism had been subjected to interpretations of such astounding originality, particularly at the highest levels of the PCI, that even Marx's most elementary propositions regarding class war had been turned on their head to mean something totally at variance with the spirit and letter of the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*. (Drake 9)

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[*] Historically, see the Sartrean and Togliattian responses to the 1956 events in Soviet Hungary (the former against the PCF, the latter—albeit more ambiguous in its motives—shifting the PCI's tracks towards polycentrism). Ethically, see Kant's, Rawls', Vittorini's, and Calogero's critiques of proclaiming equality at the expense of freedom, as well as Moore's troubling of the political poles of freedom (Liberalism) and equality (Communism). 'Realistically', see Kant's *unsocial sociability* and the ineffaceability of egoism from human existence (this does not require the centrality of egoism, but just that it must—which is to say, does—exist at some level).

[†] See Ginsborg on the consumerist rampage that paralleled the *miracolo economico* and Pasolini on the 'anthropological mutation' it effected.

[‡] The popular rejection was also clear from the major press's response to the Moro Affair: "a glance at some of the newspaper headlines of March 16 reveals the mass media's reluctance to accept [the Red Brigades self-identification as quintessentially political]: *Il Giornale Nuovo*, "Delinquents"; *La Stampa*, "Desperate Criminals"; *Il Messaggero*, "Criminals"; *La Repubblica*, "Not revolutionaries, not romantic executioners, bloody as they are, not lunatics made barbarous by solitude and clandestinity, but an efficient organization of killers" (Wagner pacifici 81). More extreme still, "The PCI daily was . . . steadily denying that the Red Brigades could even be considered human beings. On March 19, a page 1 article accompanied the reproduction of the photograph of Moro sent to the media and characterized the Red Brigades as follows: "These are beasts who are even difficult to compare with the fascists." Fascists, it seem, were to be included in the human species, the Red Brigades were not" (Wagner-Pacifici 138). Similarly, Sciascia's *L'Affaire Moro* refers to them only as *'nemico.'*

[§]Even though a celebration of this [real or imagined] unity dominated the Italian press on March 17 to such an extent that the real issue (Moro) seemed almost to have been eclipsed. As Wagner-Pacifici writes, "The March 17 *L'Unità* edition was literally dominated by a discussion of, or more appropriately, the homage to, the demonstrations of the day before" (110).

Only by going against the grain of their own national culture could Marxist terrorists justify their actions.

Nonetheless, for Renato Curcio (a BR founder) and Alberto Franceschini (an earlier revolutionary who argued against "the peaceful road to socialism") (Meade 12), a revisionist PCI could only thwart the true revolution. As stated in the BR's 4th communication during the Moro Affair, "In the imperialist state, reformism and annihilation are integrated forms of the same function—preventative counterrevolution" (qtd. in Drake 72). To Curcio, "The action of revolutionary justice [carried out] on Aldo Moro is the highest act of humanity possible in this class-divided society ... For us there is no morality taken from outside society—morality is what serves to bring about the destruction of the old society" (quoted in Tarrow, "Violence and Institutionalization" 130). This proclamation captures the many dangers that are latent in Marxian materialism: only when 'there is no morality taken from outside society' can one defend the abhorrent claim that abduction and murder are—or even: could *possibly* be—"the highest act of humanity." From these statements it is clear that "by following the premise of [Marx's speculative and Lenin's practiced] revolutionary Left to its logical conclusion they reasoned that Red Brigadism was the only possible answer" (Drake 147).

Joining with the likes of Panzieri in breaking from Gramsci's anti-dogmatism, Togliatti's apologetic reformism, and Pasolini' anthropological interpretation, Curcio and the BR elite* ignored Calogero's realization that liberalism and socialism are "parallel specifications of a single ethical principle." Once a devout Catholic,

* 'BR elite' may be an oxymoron, insofar as Leftist terrorism is distinguished from neo-Fascist terrorism in part by the relative wealth and education of its practitioners.

Curcio's *volte face* is a powerful warning against the intolerance that so often accompanies extremism:

> There is a parallel between Negri's career and the careers of Renato Curcio and Mara Cagol, who also left adolescence as devout Catholics only to repudiate their religious heritage in favor of secular Marxism, arriving at their ultimate ideological destination by traversing the Catholic Left to a point in Italian politics where Catholicism no longer had any meaning and where the world of radical Marxists began. (Drake 52)

As will be revealed by the *pentiti*'s actions and by Giordana's *La Meglio Gioventú*, some of the terrorist did eventually realize the error upon which their method was based. Still, Robert C. Meade is right[*] to state that "The [Red Brigade's terrorist] designation is appropriate and reflects that common-sense humanity that the *brigatisti* lost sight of, thereby dooming their dreams for a socialist Utopia" (xxiii).

Before finally moving on to Sciascia's *L'Affaire Moro*, two selections from Dario Fo's interview help clarify the fundamental importance of the BR's willful support of "an act of faith about the future" which, as Moore aptly termed it, "involves too great a surrender of critical rationality."

> *Whereupon we have reached the inflamed topic of your putative relationship with terrorism, that which has presumably prevented the US government from granting you a visiting visa in the past. Could you clarify this?*
> We foresaw that provocation by violence was very dangerous. Some comrades did not, and those people ended up in criminality: they lost all sense of measure, believing they could engage in death because they were revolutionary**.** They acted out of love for the people, but by turning the people into God they thought themselves above the charge of murder. This was the same key as in Greek tragedy: killing someone is always rendered clean by some sort of religiosity. On one side there is the good—on the other, the bad. Being on the good side, they gave themselves an open license to go after the devil. This was exactly the method of the state.

[*] He is nonetheless wrong, however, when he claims that "In short, the seeds of left-wing ideology that had been planted in 1967-8 and that in other countries withered or were swept away, in Italy rooted and grew, and the result was a decade of widespread radicalism, of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric and practice in the streets and piazze." (16) Also, I would probably exchange change "common-sense" with something closer to "mutually respecting."

> *Many fantasized of course that the beginning of a revolutionary situation was at hand.*
> We must be careful about revolution: it is not made up of grand gestures, of myths. That is sheer romanticism, sentimentality and, above all, catholicism . . . The authentic revolutionary moment was very brief and early on, soon overtaken by the secret forces aiming at a coup d'etat. Perversely, this is what the "terrorists" wanted as well since presumably it would catalyze a full-fledged revolution. (Stephanson, Salvioni, and Fo 165-66)

The fatal blood feud of House Atreus—that vicious circle so brilliantly portrayed in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*[*] and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*—demonstrates how the 'good side' excuse so often masks the worst of injustices.[†] Like, for example, actually wanting 'Black Prince' Valerio Borghese[‡] to carry out a Pinochet-style 'white coup'. Athena's solution—similar to that of the Liberal French Revolution (equality under the law)—can, as Fo notes, be problematic, but it remains superior to the gruesome and *Weekend*-esque cannibalistic feast to which Atreus treats Thyestes.

Moving finally to *L'Affaire Moro*, the Sicilian author Leonardo Sciascia uses a close analysis of Aldo Moro's kidnapping and murder to demonstrate the general hypocrisy of the DC, the PCI, the mass media, and the church hierarchy regarding the relative value of Moro's life. Sciascia work is multifaceted, and the actors involved are many, but my argument for (2) relates to the DC in particular (although it often applies to the other groups mentioned above as well). Simply put: the DC elites'

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[*] The never-ending civil dangers wrought by internecine are best demonstrated in Aeschylus: "(*Clytemnestra*) Watch out; guard yourself against / your mother's furious hounds. (*Orestes*) If I let you go, shall I not fear / my father's furious hounds?" (127).

[†] For which see Truman's justification of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a claim of total war against Japan.

[‡] Originally a Fascist navy officer of saboteurial fame (for using midget submarines against British ships), Borghese was convicted of war crimes but was released by the Supreme Court of Appeals in 1949 (he was also possibly complicit in Gladio and with the CIA). The danger of a military coup is hard to gauge accurately—it is thought to have peaked around 1974—but Borghese's 'strategy of tension' intentionally frustrated the democratic process. Also involved was Giuseppe "Pino" Rauti, founder of Ordine Nuovo, who held the following views: "I don't believe in elections. I don't believe that parliament represents the nation. I am convinced, therefore, that in order to count for something in our country we must change tactics and strategy. We must be wolves and make ourselves known as such" (qtd. in Weinberg and Eubank 534).

response to Moro's kidnapping reveals the deceptive criminality of justifying his real and present execution by appealing to a memory of his idealized identity. Responses to the BR's widely denounced actions sullied the DC's reputation—and with it the reputation of mainstream 'politics as usual'—but they did little substantive harm to the moral core of the '68 movement.

As both a principled politician and a respected author, Leonardo Sciascia's political and intellectual life paralleled his views on the ethical foundations of political action. He served on the Palermo City Council from 1975 to 1977 (Marwick 565), and switched in 1979 from being a PCI member to becoming a parliamentary representative of the (vaguely left-wing but anti-dogmatic) Partito Radicale (Farrell 126). But Sciascia was also a Liberal,[*] so his definition of politics (which, following Kant, is an "applied branch of right") was literally the opposite of Andreotti's scheming Machiavellianism.[†] Whereas "Sciascia's contribution to politics took the form of the reassertion of first principles . . . [like] liberty, truth and justice" (Farrell 5), Andreotti was the archetype of "politics as cynical compromise, unprincipled

[*] Joseph Farrell writes that "The only political myth which commanded his unlimited admiration was the French Revolution, the revolution which was the culmination of the century of the rationalist Enlightenment. For him, Danton and Robespierre representeed not the bourgeois revolution but the advent of individualism. The ideals of the Revolution asserted civil and human rights and provided a basis for justice and rational conduct; they sanctioned that individualistic, tolerant 'Liberalism' which was the only political position to command Sciascia's unswerving assent" (10).

[†] According to Margaret Thatcher, "Prime Minister Andreotti was no more on my wavelength than the French President . . . He seemed to have a positive aversion to principle, even a conviction that a man of principle was doomed to be a figure of fun . . . A talent for striking political deals rather than a conviction of political truths might be required by Italy's political system and it was certainly regarded as *de rigueur* in the Community, but I could not help but find something distasteful about those who practised it" (qtd. in Ginsborg 434). Between 1976 and 1979 alone Andreotti headed three successive governments (the Third through the Fifth, to be accentuated only by Ugo La Malfa's 1979 attempt—the first of by a non-DC member since 1945—to form a government): the first two *monocolore* (dominated by the DC's an absolute majority), the third—which was defeated by 1 vote in the Senate—was composed of the DC, the PSDI, and the PRI. Following President Pertini's dissolution of Parliament on April 2 1979, Francesco Cossiga formed a government. Andreotti was also prime minister between 1972 and 1973, and again between 1989 and 1992.

manipulation, cult of power, denial of standards which was at the antipodes of the view of political activity which Sciascia propagated" (Farrell 4). Sciascia, for whom "moral considerations on the value of life override every other argument" (Farrell 123), viewed Moro's colleagues' feigned inability to recognize him as the example *par excellence* of Andreotti's detestable realism.

One of the longest-serving ministers in democratic Italy's notoriously unstable history (in addition to being prime minister from 1963-1968 and from 1974-1976, he served in 16 governments), Moro was—along with Berlinguer—the architect of the *compromesso storico* of the mid '70s, by which the DC and the PCI could claim to stand united in an extremely difficult time. Although Moro had clear motives to negotiate with Berlinguer—the PCI had gained a significant 2 percentage points in the 1976 election (Wagner-Pacifici 31), the DC was under attack from (and would eventually collapse into[*]) both the right and the left, and recent political scandals[†] were damaging the government's credibility—many in his party called him a 'Marxist' (Wagner-Pacifici 36).

In all respects, Moro was the nonetheless archetypal *democristiano* (or, in words that for Sciascia are almost complementary, 'il meno implicato di tutti'): he was both fervently Catholic and avowedly democratic, and his rhetorical style contained a vague and complex nebulosity[‡] that could only come from the spokesman

[*] As Stephen Hellman writes, "The once mighty DC lost its left wing, renamed itself the Popular Party, and then lost its right wing" (482).

[†] Wagner-Pacifici cites the "Fiumicino airport scandal (paybacks to politicians by real estate speculators that induced these politicians to approve the building of the airport on a swamp), the Lockheed scandal, the Petrolio scandal (the selling of incorrectly identified oil for higher prices than the government allowed), the P2," and others (32).

[‡] Although theatricality and the cult of personality (see, for example, the shamelessly self-aggrandizing aggrandizing Silvio Berlusconi) is central to much of Italian politics—what "Giorgio Galli has highlighted [as] the disproportionate amount of time and energy spent on vague rhetoric in Italian

spokesman for a catch-all party[*] riding on forty years of hegemonic control. Just as his physical body importantly came to represent the DC, his daily pattern demonstrated the synthesis of politics and religion:

> A man of rigorous habit, Aldo Moro departed from his home in the Monte Mario section of Rome every morning at nine o'clock. On the morning of March 16, 1978, he had two stops, likewise habitual, planned; the nearby church of Santa Chiara, where he prayed every morning, and then Montecitorio, the site of the Parliament. (Wagner-Pacifici 62)

As for Moro's rhetorical style, I turn to Sciascia.

Grounded as it is in his Liberal and 'anti-Andreottian' ethos, the central premise of *L'Affaire Moro*, appropriately, is a question: "Una vita umana contro astratti principi: e può un cristiano esistere nella scelta?" (496). In step with Gramsci, Pasolini, and (Sicilian predecessor) Vittorini, Sciascia's response is a clear and resounding 'no'. By attempting to mask Moro's murder with the incredibly callous argument that the Moro they knew would sooner die than negotiate with terrorists, the DC potentates divorced abstract reasoning from its physical application.

> E questa era per [Moro]. . . la colpa della Democrazia Cristiana, la colpa che non poteva né politicamente giustificare né umanamente perdonare: il non aver fatto quadrato intorno alla sua vita, il non essersi riconosciuto in lui prigioniero e imputato delle Brigate rosse. E nemmeno di tutta la Democrazia Cristiana, questa colpa; né della Democrazia Cristiana nella sua essenza, nella sua natura e nel suo destino: ma di quegli uomini del partito, di quegli uomini del potere, che si erano arrogato il diritto di decidere. (553)

In a country dominated by "pessimismo meridionale,"[†] Sciascia's conception of Italian justice bends it knee to political power and private interests. He follows

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parliamentary debates, a tendency that indicates the theatrical self-consciousness of the parliamentarians" (Wagner-Pacifici 41).—Moro's style was generally regarded as *particularly* convoluted and obscurantist.

[*] Again quoting Hellman, "The DC's "secret," ironically, was its lack of internal coherence: Its catch-all, multiclass composite nature allowed it to be all things to all people" (482).

[†] Running particularly deep in Sicily, this consists "Nel vedere ogni cosa, ogni idea, ogni illusione – anche le idee e le illusioni che sembrano muovere il mondo – correre verso la morte. Tutto corre verso

Pasolini,[*] for whom "Il coraggio intellettuale della verità e la pratica politica sono due cose inconciliabili in Italia" (*Corsari* 110).

Sciascia justly denounces the power-mongering of the DC magnates. In a letter to his wife (Noretta) written between April 27 and April 30, Moro scathingly writes:

> L'espulsione dallo Stato è praticata in tanti casi, anche nell'Unione Sovietica, non si vede perché qui dovrebbe essere sostituita dalla strage di Stato . . . Con questa tesi si avalla il peggior rigore comunista ed a servizio dell'unicità del comunismo. è incredibile a quale punto sia giunta la confusione delle lingue. Naturalmente non posso non sottolineare la cattiveria di tutti i democristiani che mi hanno voluto nolente ad una carica che, se necessaria al Partito, doveva essermi salvata accetando anche lo scambio dei prigionieri. Sono convinto che sarebbe stata la cosa più saggia . . . Nessuno si è pentito di avermi spinto a questo passo che io chiaramente non volevo? E Zaccagnini? Come può rimanere tranquillo al suo posto? E Cossiga che non ha saputo immaginare nessuna difesa? Il mio sangue ricadrà su di loro. Ma non è di questo che voglio parlare. (564)

But clearly this *is* what he wants to talk about. How could a group of purportedly Christian party leaders wash their hands of Moro's life without turning from Christ's teachings to Pilate's? In Sciascia's terms: "Può un cristiano esistere nella scelta?"

When his so-called allies refused to recognize the Moro they knew in the prisoner Moro's newly transparent writing style, the DC's 'uomini di potere' lay bare their own duplicitous motives: they were vainly attempting to have their cake ('the Moro we knew and love would have condoned what we're doing') and eat it too ('this new Moro is alien to us'). 'Attempting' because Moro's bloody corpse, discovered in the trunk of a car halfway between the PCI the DC headquarters, did what he had said it would. Thus,

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la morte: tranne il pensiero della morte, l'idea del morte . . . Penetra ogni cosa, come lo scirocco: nei paesi dello scirocco" (498).

[*] Whose article on the 'disappearance of the fireflies' is referenced in *L'Affaire Moro.*

> Il Moro che formula questa proposizione: "la dottrina per la quale il rapimento non deve arrecare vantaggi, discutibile già nei casi comuni, dove il danno del rapito è estremamente probabile, non regge in circostanze politiche, dove si provocano danni sicuri e incalcolabili non solo alla persona ma allo Stato"; il Moro che formula questa proposizione è in perfetta coerenza col Moro politico e col Moro docente che gli italiani hanno conosciuto per un trentennio: con la sua visione della vita, delle cose italiane, dell corso della politica; col suo senso del diritto e col suo senso dello Stato (e questa volta non tra virgolette, il senso dello Stato: diverso, cioè, da quello che gli si è voluto, per impostura, imporgli). (497)

Only by forcing a 'Moro I vs. Moro II'[*] schism could his former allies do what they did.

A document circulated to journalists on April 25 (the day celebrating the Resistance's victory over Fascism) argued that the prisoner Moro was not the Moro the signers knew. To Sciascia, "la Resistenza al nazi-fascismo . . . viene invocata e trasposta come resistenza alle trattative per salvare la vita di Moro" (536), and he is correct in terming it "mostruoso" (536). The manifest was signed by

> Una cinquantina di persone, "amici di vecchia data" dell'onorevole Moro, solennemente assicurano che l'uomo che scrive le lettere a Zaccagnini, che chiede di essere liberato dal "carcere del popolo" e argomenta sui mezzi per farlo, non è lo stesso uomo di cui sono stati lungamente amici, al quale per "comunanza di formazione culturale, di spiritualità cristiana e di visione politica" sono stati vicini. "Non è l'uomo che conosciamo, con la sua visione spirituale, politica e giuridica che ha ispirato il contributo alla stessura della stessa Costituzione repubblicana." (537)

The arrogant heartlessness implicit in the document is clear, as is the message to be gleaned from this source (and others): 'no longer recognizing this man as our friend, we are freed from the filial obligation Moro imputes to the word 'family'. We

[*] "Moro I was the man they had known in parliament, Moro II the prisoner. The Moro I would never have behaved like Moro II, the author of the infamous letters. Sciascia the Pirandellian, who had never claimed to have been a friend of Moro, dismissed this version in the name of compassion, defending the integrity of Moro before and after, and denouncing the callousness of the cardinals, politicians and state functionaries who signed the missive" (Farrell 124).

therefore have no responsibility to appease the terrorists' demands[*] for an exchange of prisoners (even if only we can fulfill these demands).'

Sciascia makes the DC's argument clearer still when he does a 'translation' of his own. Writes a note from the government, and Sciascia in response:

> L'invito al governo rivolto dalla DC di approfondire il contenuto della soluzione umanitaria adombrata dal PSI, avrà un seguito in una riunione del Comitato interministeriale per la sicurezza che avrà luogo nei prossimi giorni. Si osserva tuttavia fin d'ora che è nota la linea del governo di no ipotizzare la benché minima deroga alle leggi dello Stato e di non dimenticare il dovere morale del rispetto del dolore dele famiglie che piangono le tragiche conseguenze dell'operato criminoso degli eversori.
>
> Se davvero questa nota l'ha scritta Andreotti, e di suo pugno, l'ha scritta più nel linguaggio di Moro che nel proprio. Di solito lui è più chiaro, più banalmente chiaro. Quale coincidenza riconosceremo più tardi in questo fatto? Traduciamo, intanto: "La Democrazia Cristiana chiede al governo democristiano di tener quieto il Partito Socialista, sulla cui quiete è fondata la quiete del governo, mostrando una certa considerazione nei riguiardi di una soluzione umanitaria del caso Moro. Il governo intende e sta a lgiuoco: ci sarà una ristretta riunione di ministri assolutamente inutile, poiché il governo ha già deciso di no trattare in nessun modo con le Brigate rosse, per il rispetto che si deve alle famiglie i cui congiunti sono stati uccisi dai brigatisti".
>
> Ha ragione Moravia: in Italia, la famiglia spiega tutto, giustifica tutto, è tutto. Come diceva Lincoln per la democrazia: dalla famiglia, per la famiglia, alla famiglia. (546)

Sciascia brutally exposes (and, quoting Moravia, attempts to explain) the note's internal contradiction: it justifies letting Moro die on the grounds of 'il dovere morale del rispetto del dolore dele famiglie che piangono.'[†] Beyond this contradiction,

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[*] Most probably, the BR did actually want to negotiate: "In April 1989, Licio Gelli gave a television interview in which he suggested that Moro might well have been saved, that those who sought his release came close to achieving their aim but were ultimately thwarted because a part of the government did not want Moro freed. Gelli's claim, delivered with an insinuating smile, seems to echo the allegations made by Pecorelli, Giovanniello and others. It also coincides with the testimony of Eleonora Moro, who claimed in court that action was taken to block mediation efforts by the International Red Cross and by Pope Paul VI" (Willan 325).

[†] As Amy Gutmann argues in the introduction to Ignatieff's *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, the DC's letter demonstrates the single greatest misappropriation of rights discourse: "when foundations are treated as more important to honor than the rights themselves, and disagreements about foundations becomes a cause for violating rights, then "idolatry" of abstract ideas, quite apart from the practical consequences of such idolatry, becomes a serious political problem" (xxiii).

Andreotti's appropriation (or that of whomever wrote the letter) of Moro's style becomes something wholly different from what it was for Moro. It becomes a deceptive veil behind which "la vita e la morte di Aldo Moro – la vita o la morte – perdono di realtà: sono presenti soltanto in un gerundio, sono soltanto un gerundio presente" (550).

This hypocritical veil represents the DC elites' attempt to mask their true actions—the exercise of enormous power—in rhetorical ambiguities and in the sanctity of family. If for different reasons, 'prisoner Moro' joined with Pasolini and Sciascia in denouncing the debilitating omnipresence of 'potere' in Italy:

> Ma nonostante dibatta ancora il problema ed esorti a risolverlo, Moro è ormai certo che nulla sarà fatto per salvarlo. Più come ammonizione e previsione che come minaccia, scrive: "Non creda la DC di avere chiuso il suo problema, liquidando Moro. Io ci sarò ancora come un punto irriducibile di contestazione e di alternativa per impedire che della DC si faccia quello che se ne fa oggi." E conclude: "Per questa ragione, per una evidente incompatibilità, chiedo che ai miei funerali non partecipino né autorità dello Stato né uomini di partito. Chiedo di essere seguito dai pochi che mi hanno veramente voluto bene e sono degni perciò di accompagnarmi con la loro preghiera e con il loro amore". (535)

As Sciascia notes, what had until recently been termed "autorità dello Stato" and "uomini di partito" is only now written, "nella più atroce nudità," as what it was all along: 'potere'. Undergoing Sciascia's version of a Pirandellian awakening, Moro now "sa che [il potere] hanno gli altri: ne riconosce negli altri il volto laido, stupido, feroce. Negli "amici", nei "fedelissimi delle ore liete": delle macabre, oscene ore liete del potere" (543). Thus, during his funeral service at San Giovanni in Laterano, 'the few who really loved' Moro—his wife and children—were absent. But all the 'uomini di potere' were there (571), showing their love for the man in whose name they let Moro die. That is: himself.

Whereas the DC's great crime was covert and manipulative (refusing to recognize Moro as a man who did not want to die), that of the BR was overt and coercive (kidnapping and killing Aldo Moro). But these two poles represent powers which both tend towards injustice, the former towards opacity and statal hegemony and the latter towards totalitarianism. Or, as Sciascia writes,

> Sono di fronte a due stalinismi: e chiamo per una più attuale comodità stalinismo una cosa molto più antica, "la cosa" da sempre gestita sull'intelligenza e il sentimento degli uomini, a spremerne dolore e sangue, da alcuni uomini non umani. O meglio: sono di fronte le due metà di una stessa cosa, della "cosa"; e lentamente e inesorabilmente si avvicinano a schiacciare l'uomo che ci sta in mezzo. Lo stalinismo consapevole, apertamente violento e spietato delle Brigate rosse che uccide senza processo i servitori del SIM e con processo i dirigenti; e lo stalinismo subdolo e sottile che sulle persone e sui fatti opera come sui palinsesti: raschiando quel che prima vi si leggeva e riscrivendolo per come al momento serve. (508)

Recalling Moore's parallel critiques of Liberalism and of Communism, Sciascia's 'due stalinismi' show that both the DC *and* the BR are fundamentally pre-68 in their origins. Unlike the imprecise—and thus indestructible—idealism of the student movement, the BR existed "nella sfera di un estetismo in cui il morire per la rivoluzione è diventato un morire con la rivoluzione" (561).

Finally, although I have here focused here on the DC—as the BR has already been addressed (against whom Sciascia makes similar arguments, particularly regarding a force's inability to do away with forces[*])—a look at the elections of 1979

[*] "Personalmente, debbo e voglio essere più cauto. E tenermi a questi due punti: primo, che l'efficienza dell Brigate rosse è italiana, tipicamente analoga ad altra più conosciuta e diffusa efficienza; secondo, che l'azione delle Brigate rosse non è avulsa dal contesto politico italiano e che in esso giuoca in un senso ancora imprecisato, ancora ambiguo: ma, è da presumere, non imprecisato e non ambiguo per chi le muove. Sarebbe pazzesco da parte nostra collocare le Brigate rosse in una sfera di autonoma e autarchica purezza rivoluzionaria che si illuda di muovere le masse a far saltare le strutture politiche che le contengono; e sarebbe ancor più pazzesco che loro vi si collocassero. La loro ragion d'essere, la loro funzione, il loro "servizion" stanno esclusivamente nello spostare dei rapporti di forza: e delle forze che già ci sono. E di spostarli non di molto, bisogna aggiungere. Di sspostarli nel senso di quel "cambiar tutto per non cambiar nulla" che il principe di Lampedusa assume come costante della storia

show that the Moro affair damaged the respectability of the Italian governmental machine *in general*. Also keeping in mind the weakness and bureaucratic inefficiency the Moro affair revealed in the Italian police,[*] and the fact that Italians were frustrated by their government well before 1978,[†] the 1979 election actually damaged the PCI worse than it did the DC. Caught by the Moro affair between appearing soft on terrorism and alienating their left-leaning constituents, the PCI lost a substantial 4 percent, and the "door that had been slammed shut on the right in 1960 [by the Tambroni affair] and on the center-left in 1976 [by the Communists' electoral victory] was now closed on the Communists" (Spotts and Wieser 18).

In sum, the popular response to terrorisms (red and fascist) points to the perpetuation of popular discontent with precisely the governmental organizations which the '68 movement critiqued—if for entirely different reasons—rather than to the blanket denunciation of idealism per se. To reflect on the difficult questions of whether and how the students' idealism survived, I turn to artistic representations of more recent events.

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siciliana e che si può oggi assumere come costante della storia italiana. Operazione di puro potere, dunque; che si può soltanto svolgere in quell'area interpartitica in cui, al riparo dai venti ideologici, il potere ormai vive" (559).

[*] Writes Meade: "Among other things the Moro affair revealed to the nation was the disheartening lack of preparation of the forces of law and order. The blunders began very soon after the shooting stopped in Via Fani. An official in the Interior Ministry sent an order to police offices around the country that they put into immediate effect the emergency 'plan zero'; unfortunately, the plan did not exist. Three automobiles used by the *brigatisti* in Via Fani were discovered in a street not far away – but only on three separate occasions over four days. The Interior Ministry released photographs of individuals believed to be *brigatisti* possibly involve din the crime and these were given wide publicity. It turned out, however, among other things, that two of the individuals in question were already in jail and two photos were of the same person under different names" (174).

[†] Putnam would argue that this dates back centuries, but a more recent example exists: a "1974 poll reaffirmed the public's low estimate of the functioning of the state apparatus. Among the respondents, 43 percent felt it was "in need of immediate major reforms," 35 percent that it required "radical change," while only 21 percent considered it "fine as is" (Spotts and Wieser 3).

2
Against Apathy and the New Right: Keeping the Spark Alive in Vassalli and Giordana

SHOOTING STAR:
Wreathed in fire I plunged from high
In sparks of starry glitter;
Now prostrate in the grass I lie,
Who'll help me to a litter?
. . .
MANTO: I hold him dear who craves beyond his reach.
- *Faust* (Goethe 125; part I and 212; part II, act II)

If nihilistic Foucauldianism and extremist Red Brigadism represent the dangers that were synchronic with the '68 movement and its immediate aftermath, the rivals that emerged in the last two decades of the 20th century were of a different stripe altogether. Whether directly or indirectly, the Thatcherite '80s gave rise to a consumerist apathy that alienated the younger generation's motives from those of '68, divided the 'materialist' and 'postmaterialist' Lefts, and furthered the bifurcation of the northern middle class into '68-era legacies (on the one side) and the insular capitalists of the so-called New Right (on the other). Resultingly, the movement's moral legacy came under attack both from the materialist Left* and from the socially conservative New Right. And both continue to attack '68's ethical message, possibly effecting the damage which terrorism has retrospectively proven incapable of inflicting. Still, even if it rose phoenix-like from a free-market induced dormant state, the '68 movement's utopian potentiality lives on: from the rise of the No Global movement to the middle-aged progressives' 1992 rejection of Berlusconi's antithetically oriented *partito-azienda*,† '68's empowering message perseveres.

* Raised on a hedonistic mass culture, amoral at best, that gradually overwhelmed the archaic and ever-weakening Catholic Church.

† 'Company-party', so called because it is "staffed by lawyers, managers, and publicists from Berlusconi's Finivest business empire" (Hellman 490).

By way of illustrative example, this analysis pairs Sebastiano Vassalli's *Archeologia del Presente* to the above-mentioned political schisms (particularly internal to the divided Left) and Marco Tullio Giordana's *La Meglio Gioventú* to the crimes and rehabilitations of Leftist terrorists and to debilitating extremism (Rightist and Leftist) in general.[*] A detailed historiography of Italy since 1978 is here practically untenable, but it is manageable to map the three developments mentioned above: (**1**) the rise of the New Right both in its extremist and its respectable manifestations, (**2**) the related role of consumer capitalism in reviving the materialist Left's break from postmaterialism, and (**3**) the redemptive role played by the penitent Leftist terrorists (the *pentiti*). Only the second and third arguments are, respectively, central to Vassalli and Giordana, but the first cannot be ignored, for it threatens '68-era cosmopolitanism with at least as much force as does consumer capitalism.

The core of the European New Right[†] developed largely in response what it sees as the dangers that the New Left and impending EU unification hold for (a xenophobic reading of) local identity. The result was "a startling growth, not so much of a civil society, as of a localist culture based on free market values and hard work, patriarchy and vertical hierarchies, conformity and racialist exclusion" (Ginsborg 107). The new Right plays on the traditionalist *response* to the 1968 student movement:

> [Scott] Flanagan (1987) argues that there is a new right, which avoids questions of economic redistribution and focuses on moral concerns such as "law and order, restrictions on immigration, opposition to abortion and anticommunism" As a result, the new

[*] As literary and filmic historiographies, both works could be used to represent many aspects of the historical periods in question; I have narrowed the scope of my analysis in order to best address the most pressing issues.

[†] Particularly powerful in the racially-charged France of Le Pen's Front National, the political effects of which will be addressed in the afterward.

> right obtains strong support from working-class voters, who are attracted by cultural traditionalism without being repelled by economic interests. (qtd. in Weakliem 1337)

While it is true that one need only glance at Putnam's work—or at the comparative study conducted by Sidney Almond's and Gabriel Verba's *Civic Culture Study* of 1959-60[*]—to realize that social atomism and the north-south divide in Italy are rich in historical precedent,[†] in this case they are part of the larger wave of racist nationalism that is endemic to fringe politics in recent Western Europe.[‡]

The Italian New Right is championed by Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord (LN) and the various Leagues that make it up, and Bossi's reactionary restructuring of social cleavages polarized the Italian polity to an extent that stretches well beyond LN's marginal parliamentary standing.[§]

> As Ilvo Diamanti, an acute observer, notes, the various Leagues were able to break with more traditional bases of identity and representation, such as religion versus secularism, or class, taking other long-standing cleavages (e.g., north-south, center-periphery, "common folks" versus big government) and expressing them in a new way, thus dramatically altering the political landscape…the

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[*] In which Italy was "fragmented, passive, alienated, parochial, traditionalist and based on the norms of the patriarchal family" (Ginsborg 135).

[†] For further evidence, Paul Hoffman notes an indicator to which I can from personal experience attest: "In any big Italian city the dearth of civic virtues can be read from the state of public facilities like underpasses at busy intersections or subway passages. They sparkle when they are new, but a year later they look dismal: Burked out or broken neon tubes have not been replaced, walls are covered with graffiti (many of them obscenities), display covered with litter that nobody ever seems to remove" (Hoffman 216).

[‡] See Jorg Haider's resurgent Austrian Freedom Party and the volatile Dutch Fortuynist party which follows in the footsteps of the deceased Pim Fortuyn.

[§] Be it political or ideological, the disproportional sway held by minority parties is (or, arguably, *was*: if Berlusconi's present regime alternates to a stable and credible Left coalition with mass support, the Left-Right alternation of power inherent in healthy democracy might begin to thrive) a major debilitating factor in Italian politics. Adding to what has already been noted, the permissive (pre-1994) 3% minimum barrier for parliamentary elections combined with the absence of direct prime ministerial elections to further alienate the voting public from the institutions that supposedly but so clearly do not represent them. For a few examples, "In 1963 the Christian Democrats and Socialists sought confirmation to enter into a coalition. They did not receive it but went ahead anyway. The extent to which the electorate's decision can be ignored was never more blatant than in 1981 when a new government was formed by Giovanni Spaldolini, head of the Republican party – a party that had won 3 percent of the vote in the previous election. Two years late the Socialists headed the government, after winning 11 percent of the vote in the year's balloting" (Spotts and Wieser 13).

> league turned the southern question into the northern question. (Hellman 489)

Thanks to the comparative racial homogeneity of the Italian citizenry, Bossi's secessionist theatrics appear as little more than a revival of the north-south cleavage.

But whether or not Bossi's xenophobia was somehow innovative is secondary when regarding potential dangers to the student movement's legacy. Important instead are two related developments: the synchronicity of the localistic LN's rise with that of an increasingly atomized middle class, and the League's constant, if extremely volatile, overlap with Berlusconi's various coalitions. The Italian middle classes

> spoke with two rather different voices. One, heavily concentrated among small entrepreneurs and shopkeepers, was localistic, consumerist, strongly oriented both to self-interest and an overriding work ethic. The other, prevalent among those in education and the social services, in reflexive fringes of the professions and the salariat (all areas where a new female presence had made itself most felt), spoke a different language, not puritan but critical, not rejecting of modern individualist consumption but seeking to place it in a social context. The one interpreted modernity in terms of the profit motive and of making good for oneself and one's family. It was exquisitely Thatcherist without Mrs. Thatcher. The other, which had no prophet, sough the collective mediation of processes that were leading to grave pollution, both environmental and social. The first, given the way in which state and economy had developed in Italy, was structurally much stronger than the second, and was destined to triumph, in political terms, at the beginning of the new century. (Ginsborg 66)

Even on the most obvious level, the resurgence of localist particularism is an attack on the universalist '68 movement's imagined egalitarianism.

A proper explanation of the League's connections to the wealthy and influential Silvio Berlusconi would require too lengthy an outlining of Italian politics in the '90s, but, superficially at least, it is enough to list the constituent parties of Berlusconi's 1994, 1996, and 2001 bids for power. Berlusconi's 1994 alliance

comprised the LN, AN (Alleanza Nazionale, heirs to the neo-Fascist MSI) (Donovan 194), and Forza Italia. Following Bossi's defection and the government's ensuing collapse, Berlusconi's coalition emerged in 1996 as the Casa Delle Libertà, which constituted the Freedom Pole (FI, AN, and the Christian Democratic CCD) and the LN. Berlusconi had consolidated his political domination of the Right by 1996, but only after five years and three governments of the Left[*] would his alliance regain power. Whatever the tensions between the free-market FI and the protectionist LN, Bossi's appointment as Minister of Institutional Reform and Devolution[†] in Berlusconi's 2001 cabinet makes it hard to question his influence.

Even ignoring Berlusconi's infamous conversational improprieties, his politics are one part Crocean Liberalism (depoliticizing, freedom-obsessed, and unhealthily nationalistic) and one part cunning realism. The very name of his party (originally a soccer cheer) and of his coalitions (*Freedom* Pole/Casa Della *Libertà*) speak to the former, as does his illustrated biography, *Una Storia Italiana*.

[*] Those of Romano Prodi, Massimo D'Alema, and Giuliano Amato. The fragmentation endemic to the European political left, a much-discussed topic, will be addressed in greater depth in the Afterward, but Donovan provides a taste of the Ulivo coalition's staggering instability: "The two years between early 1998 and the spring of 2000 saw a kaleidoscopic series of party fusions, quasi-party formation and associated government change. In February 1998, the PDS became the DS, fusing with four minor lay, Catholic, socialist and communist formations whilst three ex-socialist groups hostile to the former PCI's hegemony of the DS formed the SDI (Italian Social Democrats). That autumn, Communist Refoundation went in to the opposition, bringing Prodi's government down over the budget, and itself splitting – the PDCI (Italian Communists) breaking away to back the formation of a new government led by the DS leader, Massimo D'Alema. In order to obtain a majority independent of Communist Refoundation, D'Alema accepted also the support of a new quasi-party, the UDR (Union for a Democratic Republic), formed by ex-president (1985-92) Cossiga. This party comprised mostly Christian democratic MPs elected in 1996 as part of Berlusconi's Freedom Pole alliance, and thus continued the tradition of transformism, that is, the transformation of opposition MPs into government supporters" (195). And so on. Or, in a classic demonstration of *The Economist*'s scathingly concise wit: "It's called the Olive Tree. Trouble is, it has too many branches, and they are now blowing every which way" (48).

[†] Donovan astutely notes that "this arguably represented the thief set to catch the thief" (204).

To address the second point, he used his media empire to extend beyond the already-dominated realm of television when he sent 18 million copies of this book to Italian homes (Ginsborg 318). Also inherent in his manipulative style is the catch-all desirability of his dictum "less taxes for all" and of a 5-point promise in which the third and fifth points directly contradict the first: "tax cuts, improving public security, increasing minimum pensions, halving unemployment and undertaking a major public works programme" (Donovan 198). That all this should be at odds with '68 utopianism seems so clear as to be almost unnecessary to mention. And, sure enough, the postmaterialist veterans detected it early on: in the elections of 1992, "the critical and 'reflexive' middle classes had voted *en masse* for the 'progressives'" (Ginsborg 294).

While it is no surprise that the New Right and its more respectable allies reacted against the utopian student Left, it is more telling that the traditional left and much of the working class did the same. As political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset writes,

> There are now two Lefts, the 'materialist' and the 'postmaterialist,' which are rooted in different classes . . . Both Lefts are often in the same party, . . . but they have different views and interests . . . Some workers move . . . to more conservative groupings which espouse growth, favor a competitive mobile society, and retain beliefs in traditional social values. The Left, however, picks up support from the growing ranks of the intelligentsia. Thus, the correlations between class and party voting have been reduced. (qtd. in Weaklim 1330)

The movement's social and historical legacy was thus distinct from the *autunno caldo* of '68-'69: only in the former did "a new *dimension* of political polarization" (Weaklim 1330) emerge, destabilizing the previously solid class-basis of political party lines.

Archeologia del Presente

Vassalli's novel presents two clearly oppositional world views: the narrator's materialist realism and the protagonists' utopian idealism. At first glance, the weight of the novel's argument appears to align more with the narrator than with the postmaterialist protagonists. However, giving the conclusion (presented tragically) disproportional weight against the rest of the text (presented cynically)—and acknowledging the five specifically titled chapters as meaningful disjuncts—presents a more balanced reading. Maybe thus can some much-needed common ground be found between what for both the the narrator and for the protagonists is too extreme a vision.

Even formally Vassalli's work is intricately balanced, as both the structure and the title of the work demonstrate. Excluding an untitled introduction (dated January 1 2001), a conclusion (dated January 2 2001), a post-script and five individually named chapters,[*] *Archeologia* contains thirty chapters: one for each of the years spanned since the "ottobre del 1970" (5) of chapter I. Like Vassalli's earlier *La Chimera*, the structure is that of the historical novel (although the history is two years late in beginning). Admittedly, the name *Archeologia del Presente* parallels the historical cyclicality—not to mention the cynical fatalism—central to the book's

[*] *Il castigo del bidello Fulgenzio* (between 2 and 3), *Storia di Nina, la ragazza che morí in un cesso* (between 8 and 9), *Una lite in giardino* (between 15 and 16), *L'ultimo supermaschio* (between 21 and 22), and *Una telefonata in questura* (between 28 and 29). All five stand out as tangential subplots that don't follow chronologically from the novel's development, but the third is particularly out of step: it repeats, in greater detail, an already-mentioned argument between Leo and the narrator.

Homeric epigram,[*] which the preface and post-script encapsulate in their ouroboric circle ('Tout ça change...') .

The work's overarching cynicism aside, the five titled chapters confound overly simplistic readings of narrator/author affinity. The last two (*L'Ultimo Supermaschio* and *Una Telefonata in questura*) respectively force the reader to realize that Leo does have selfish desires and that the narrator is nowhere near as heartless as he presents himself to be. The third (*Una lita in giardino*) comes both in the middle of the novel—between chapters 15 and 16—and as the third of five unique chapters, and it can be seen to represent the (tragically failed) dialogue between Leo's views and the narrator's. Keeping Vassalli' formally complex hints toward a balanced interpretation in mind, it follows to lay out the narrative structure in which the two world views develop.

Vassalli's novel tracks thirty years in the lives of Leo and Michela Ferrari as viewed by an unnamed narrator about whom the reader knows next to nothing. Excluding the retrospective introduction, the tale begins in 1970 with the three friends' graduation from the "Istituto tecnico industriale "G. Marconi" di ***" (5). At one point or another, either Leo or Michela champion many of the plural Left's causes: environmental justice, antipsychiatry (and the liberation of the insane), alternative medicine,[†] feminism, pacifism, humanitarian aid, etc.[‡] While both of the Ferraris were born into relative wealth, the narrator, who was not, becomes an

[*] "...quale delle foglie / tale è la stirpe degli umani. Il vento / brumal le sparge a terra, e le ricrea / la germogliante selva a primavera. / Cosí l'uomo nasce, cosí muor..." (1)

[†] For example, as regarding not only the apparently masculin (yin) and feminine (yang) natures of different foods, but also the near-alchemist quack Mastrolidolo, who received patients "in una stanza che sembrava l'antro di un alchimista medioevale, piena di allambicchi e di serpentine di vetro" (114).

[‡] In fact, the notable absence of political terrorism—which a recent Italian poll beat fascism to be that for which history will most remember 20th century Italy—is striking (Spotts and Wieser 3).

architect. Leo and Michela eventually adopt two children, Marlon and Aria (the son of a drug-addicted prostitute and a young Indian girl, respectively). After becoming for the New Right what the narrator is for the depoliticized materialist, Marlon and/or his girlfriend brutally kill the Ferraris in their country villa.

In *Archeologia*, the narrator paints the Ferraris as '68-legacy archetypes of postmaterialism, universalism, and idealism. Inversely, the reader infers that the narrator is—in practice—a materialist, a political realist, and part of the ubiquitous new capitalist middle class. However, both arguments are effectively rejected for their self-defeating extremism. Whereas the narrator *in theory* accepts the validity of the Ferrari's premises, the Ferarris *in practice* end up being (**1**) hypocritical rather than postmaterialist, (**2**) credulously self-annihilating rather than universalist, and (**3**) blindly utopian rather than idealist. Both arguments are therefore deeply flawed in being too sharply divorced from each other, and Vassalli's formal clues beg a more nuanced reading where *both* world views have valid concerns.[*] The logical conclusion—to seek a reconciliation of the two—is implied throughout, but would only be explicit with the synthesis of the narrator and the Ferraris.

Beginning with the narrator's capitalist leanings, he discusses the new middle-class while trying to excuse actions that he feels are problematic:

> il rapporto con Irene era entrato in crisi, e avevo delle storie con altre donne. Vivevamo in anni di ritorno all'individualismo e all'egoismo (due sentimenti che, a dire il vero, non sono mai mancati nella nostra società), e anche di benessere diffuso e di grandi sperperi. La lotta di classe . . . Le classi sociali erano scomparse o, per meglio dire, erano diventate un'unica classe media dove tutti avevano l'appartamente e l'automobile, e magari anche la seconda automobile e la casa per le vacanze. Le utopie cadevano a pezzi. I partiti cadevano a pezzi. La politica si faceva

[*] here I hark back to Ignatieff's comment on the various human rights as self-conflicting.

> con i soldi e i soldi, in Italia, si facevano con le cosiddette "tangenti" . . . Anch'io pagavo tangenti, come tutti. (90)

Also, blurring the already-unclear line between the new middle class and the new Right, for the narrator "I tavoli di disegno sono la cosa al mondo che piú ha il potere di rincuorarmi nei momenti difficili, con i loro tecnigrafi e le loro righe millimetrate. Rappresentano la ragionae, la misura, l'ordine" (153). These concerns reflect what Scott Flanigans sees in the new Right.

The narrator's realism is clear from a conversation with Leo: "Diceva che tradivo i miei ideali per motivi ridicoli, e io gli rispondevo che gli ideali devono adeguarsi alla realtà, altrimenti non portano da nessuna parte" (37). Specifically regarding *political* realism, the narrator's world-view is as follows:

> Anche in quell'epoca, come sempre, l'umanità si divideva in furbi, in stupidi e in cosí cosí. (Io sono un cosí cosí). i furbi erano gli svegli in un mondo di addormentati: quelli che non sognavano niente, ma cercavano di approfittarsi dei sogni degli altri. Gli stupidi, invece, erano quegli altri che non riuscivano a distinguere i sogni dalla realtà, e sacrificavano la famiglia, il lavoro, i soldi, per un ideale che non esisteva, e che se anche fosse esistito non gli avrebbe portato niente di buono. (52)

"Cosí cosí" is a vague but important revision, but otherwise this fits perfectly with Hobbes' power-mongering relativism. Strongly implicit in his assertion "i miei amici erano ancora convinti che alla fine il bene sarebbe riuscito a prevalere sul male" (133) is that he disagrees:[*] "*il mondo va dove vuole lui e non dove vorremmo che andasse*" (171).

Regarding amoral materialism: first and foremost, he is an architect. fellow architect Augusto Marinetti (probably alluding to, but not to be confused with, the

[*] But I would follow Walzer for my view of Vassalli's intentions in saying that *both* are wrong: 'potrebbe' should replace 'sarebbe', just as the World Social Forum's motto is 'another world is possible' and not 'another world will definitely come about'. As *Archeologia* demonstrates, systems of unqualified absolutism are self-defeating.

futurist Marinetti) writes: “Non c’è niente di piú lontano dall’utopia, e di piú vicino ai soldi, del lavoro dell’architetto. I castelli in aria li fanno I poeti . . . Noi facciamo castelli per terra” (20). Second, there is the ‘aspirin creed’: “L’utopia socialista è crollata, la fede nel progresso è crollata, ma l’Aspirina, per la mia generazione, è un punto di riferimento incrollabile, e non mi deluderà mai. Se non credo nell’Aspirina, in cosa posso credere?” (106). But if all we believe in is scientific progress, reason can almost as easily side with Sade and Nietzsche as with Kant and Rawls.[*]

Thus does the narrator’s architecture both disrupt his friendship with Leo and demonstrate the latter’s hypocrisy (or his naïveté). Their friendship was clearly damaged by the argument—presented, appropriately, in *Un lite in giardino*—ensuing from his accepting a contract to build in a forested area:

> io stavo costruendo alcune ville alla periferia della nostra città, in una zona attraversata da un torrente e con molti alberi, che nella prima versione del piano regolatore era stata destinata a parco. Nella sua rubrica sul “Corriere di ***”, Leo mi accusò di essere un uomo avido e un cattivo architetto; e riuscí a trasformare una questione tecnica o, al massimo, politica, in uno scontro tra di noi, molto sgradevole e anche molto dannoso per la mia attività professionale e per la mia immagine pubblica. Un giorno andai al Castellacio a spiegargli che si stava sbagliando, ma non volle ascoltarmi. Mi disse: “Non tirare in ballo la nostra amicizia. Non c’è piú. (84)

A look at the history of ‘Castellaccio’ reveals Leo’s (potentially naïve) hypocrisy, and with it the biting irony this passage shares with many others;[†] the narrator himself

[*] A third possibility, that of the narrator’s having a sexual drive linked to the material object of his desire, is a weaker one, but the fact that it is basically the only personal information the narrator divulges is too telling to ignored: he has lived with and had children with at least four different women, one of whom is fully thirty years younger than he, and his brother is only mentioned as the urologist who temporarily transforms Leo into a Priapus of ‘*superuomo*’ proportions. While an argument could fairly be made that the narrator’s behavior is meant demonstrate a healthy alternative to Leo and Michela’s troubled marriage (discussed below), the fact remains that the only thing the narrator sees fit to share with the reader is also the only thing—sad and farcical infidelities notwithstanding—that Leo and Michela seem able to hold on to: each other.

[†] For example, when the narrator professed his ignorance of the ozone crisis, it was *Leo* who asked the question “in che mondo vivi?” (149). An earlier question framed in reverse shows just how disjointed

built the Ferrari's house, and, like the contested project, its setting is picturesquely rural rather than urban.[*] As if to further confound the Ferrari's action, Ginsborg writes of

> the new villas on the peripheries of the small cities of central and northern Italy, complete with their iron railings, their water-sprayed lawns, and flotillas of various-sized cars, the animal spirits of Italian capitalism found their kingdom. In the past these spirits had to some degree been tempered by the Catholic subculture of the North-East and that of the Communists in central Italy. (46)

There are many other examples of the well-off[†] Ferrari's credulous naïveté, but none demonstrate how it verges on hypocrisy as well as Castellaccio.

Much as Castellaccio damages the Ferrari's postmaterialism, their noble but too-credulous humanism weakens the viability of Leo and Michela's universalism. For his part, Leo is convinced that "dobbiamo accoglierli tutti. È un dovere di solidarietà tra esseri umani . . . Non bisogna giudicare le persone dalla faccia…o da come sono vestite. I pregiudizi portano al razzismo, che è la cosa peggiore che ci sia. Non le dico altro!" (122-23). Accordingly, Castellaccio is 'staffed' with former mental patients[‡] and is generally spilling over with outcasts and refugees.[*]

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the two's world-views are: "Cosa credi? Che tutti possano vivere come vivi tu, combattendo I fantasmi? Nel mondo delle cose reali, anche gli ideali hanno un prezzo…" (89)

[*] He writes: "La ristrutturazione del cascinale dei miei amici è stata la prima opera di una certa importanza che ho firmato con il mio nome; è durata piú di tre anni, ed è anche servita a rafforzare l'amicizia con Leo e con Michela . . . è costata un mucchio di soldi . . . Soltanto allora mi sono accorto che erano ricchi, e che per vivere non avrebbero avuto bisogno di fare gli insegnanti nell'Istituto technico "G. Marconi," o in un'altra qualsiasi scuola di ***. Michela possedeva dei terreni agricoli nei dintorni di B. . . Leo, invece, era proprietario di un palazzo in città . . . il fatto di essere ricchi non impediva ai miei amici di considerare immorale ogni genere di rendita, e di essere contrari in via di proncipio alla proprietà privata; e non gli impediva di entusiasmarsi per quella rivoluzione che, se davvero si fosse fatta, li avrebbe ridotti sul lastrico" (36-7).

[†] The narrator's brother presents another indicator of their status: Leo's costly style of dress. "Era vestito, mi disse, con una maglietta azzurra "Lacoste," e con un paio di calzoni di tela leggera" (119). Like the revolutionary cannibals in *Weekend*, Leo preaches what he does not practice.

[‡] "c'erano un nuovo giardiniere, l'ex matto Camillo, e una nuova domestica, la signora Domenica . . . [che], in un momento di follia, aveva ucciso il marito soffocandolo nel sonno. Ora era guarita, ed era una donna straordinariato e dell'attentato al Papa" (28). The Ferrari's will was in some cases imposed on them as well, for according to "l'ex matto Camillo..."Non volevo nemmeno venirci, a questa riunione! Sono stati loro che hanno insistito, come al solito..."" (59)

Also accordingly, it was thanks to the Ferrari's failure to draw the reasonable limits required to reconcile universalism with particularism that they eventually had their murdered corpses trod upon by a demented sociopath (it is also why they were robbed[†] and repeatedly raided). While the narrator's description of Albanian immigrants—"Volevano gli abiti firmati e le automobili di lusso, e naturalmente li volevano gratis" (122-23)—is too harsh,[‡] it does not follow that the Ferrari's have a moral obligation to harbor probable murderers. The case of Chang Li stands out in particular:[§]

> Mentre la nostra amica ci parlava della pena di morte, io guardavo Chang Li che mangiava gli spaghetti prendendoli nel piatto con le dita e succhiandoli, e sembrava indifferente ai nostri discorsi e alla nostra stessa esistenza. I suoi occhi erano invisibili: due fessure, e la sua espressione era impenetrabile . . . "la accusano di avere ucciso con il veleno un'intera famiglia: suo marito, i suoi due suoceri, la sorella del marito...Forse è davvero un'assassina: chi può dirlo! Ma, finché nel suo Paese non verrà abolita la pena di morte, bisogna aiutarla" (136).

The Ferrari's concern with the empowerment of marginalized peoples is in itself just, but their blind faith in antipsychiatry and human solidarity rejects the reasonable category by which some among the truly deranged are often incapable of moral discernment.

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[*] In the 90s, "Castellaccio era diventata un campo profughi dove approdavano bosniaci, macedoni, kosovari, albanesi, curdi" (130).

[†] The two Albanian refugees "si ferro dare dalla domestica, puntandole un coltello alla gola, tutti i soldi e tutti i guielli che c'erano in casa" (123).

[‡] Particularly coming as it does at the end of an astute and self-incriminating 'attack' on internationalized Western consumerism: "Eravamo, ormai, dentro agli anni Novanta. Finito il sogno del paradiso socialista e della felicità universale . . . Ripresero forza i nazionalismi, i fanatismi religiosi, i particolarismi di ogni genere . . . In Italia sbarcarono in massa gli albanesi, che da anni guardavano i programmi della nostra televisione, pieni di pubblicità commerciale, e credevano di venire a vivere nel Paese de Citrulli, dove tutti si lavano i capelli con il famoso shampoo "X alle vitamine" e, dopo aver gustato il famoso budino "Y" o il famoso liquore "W" guidano le famose (e velocissime) automobili "Z"" (122).

[§] That of Youssef the Armenian is also a good example: "una sola volta gli agenti portarono via un certo Youssuf, cittadino sovietico di nazionalità armena, che diceva di essere un combattente non violento per l'indipendenza del suo popolo, e che era sospettato di avere ucciso una prostituta dalle parte di Rimini: ma anche quella faccenda, per quanto ne so e per quanto mi raccontarono I miei amici, finí bene" (81).

The best way to describe the problem with the Ferrari's idealism is to distinguish between what *will* happen and what *can* happen. Especially on this issue, it is vastly preferable to fall closer to the idealist camp (to be "ancora convinti che alla fine il bene sarebbe riuscito a prevalere sul male"[*]) than to the fatalist one (to believe that "*il mondo va dove vuole lui e non dove vorremmo che andasse*"[†]). Engineer Gianfranco D.'s wishful words best portray the too-idealistic extreme, "Fra trent'anni, – confermò, – tutti lavoreranno in modo creativo, secondo le possibilità e le esigenze di ciascuno. Il lavoro alienato, cioè separato dalla vita, non esisterà più" (32). Unfortunately, being too sure of future success is an excellent way to ensure present failure.

Such is the case, for example, with Leo and Michela's setting the bar so unattainably high for Marlon that he instead becomes a menace to society. The Ferrari's failed attempt to understand Marlon's hateful racism is telling: "cosa dici? Non sai che tutte le razze umane, entro pochi anni, dovranno fondersi in un'unica società multietnica, dove gli individui non verranno piú considerati per il colore della pelle o per il Paese d'origine, ma soltanto per cio che valgono?" (138). This argument tends towards pipe dream projects in which the ideal, too far divorced from the attainable, is presupposed as a necessary end without any real justification. Although such pontifications clearly *did* have a part in the '68 mentality, the application of the

[*] An earlier description is rather different in content, and is closer to the positive ideal mentioned below: "Rimase l'uomo che avevo conosciuto nelle aule dell'Istituto tecnico "G. Marconi": assolutamente convinto, fino all'età di quaranta-quarantacinque anni, di dover cambiare il mondo per renderlo perfetto; e poi, dopo i quarantacinque anni, di doverlo cambaire per salvarlo" (83). What is here problematic, however, is Leo's tone of despair and the implied necessity of self-sacrifice.

[†] Even following the scientific Gospels of Aspirin this is unsound; following Darwinian biology—which, like Moore's thesis, is both abhorrent and compelling—the world itself doesn't 'want' to go anywhere. His argument, rather, could feasibly be interpreted in a more positive Darwinian (see for example Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*) light: the world goes where its species' want it to go.

moral ideal renders a more empowering form that is only present in *Archeologia* as a hybrid of the narrator and the Ferraris: that a better world *can* be possible, but it *will* finally be what we make of it. From this axiom reasonably follows the idea we should make the best of it that we can without irrevocably damaging our own well-being.

By immolating his own good at the altar of the global good, Leo unreasonably fails to avail himself of one the fundamental unities which the '68 movement embraced: that universalism cannot but coexist with individualism. Instead, he was "sempre divorato dall'ansia: di partire, di arrivare in tempo . . .Fumava molto, due pacchetti di sigarette al giorno e anche di più" (82). "Leo . . . era sempre in giro per il mondo" (79), all the while alienating himself from Michela—who was forced into being a full-time *casalinga*[*]—and warping his egalitarian intentions into a reinforcement of patriarchal domination.[†] Too busy 'saving the world', every day Leo "vide le prostitute nigeriane e slave sul ciglio della strada" (120), only to finally stop there when he felt the need to prove his manhood.[‡]

Because of this uncalled-for self-denial, both of the Ferraris "erano stanchi, e la loro stanchezza, ormai, si rifletteva anche nel loro aspetto fisico. Michela . . . era diventata davvero brutta e grassa . . . Leo, invece, era sempre piú somigliante, anche nell'aspetto fisico, al personaggio di don Chisciotte . . . Era alto, magro e pieno di tic" (134). Although Don Quixote and his trusty subordinate Sancho Pancha were living the heroic dream of chivalric days past and not the utopian dream of imagined days to come, Leo is indeed Quixotic just as Michela is indeed subordinated.

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[*] "Michela si lamenta di dover badare da sola al piccolo Marlon, e di dover sacrificare il suo impegno per la pace in favore di quello del marito . . . "Mi costringe a fare la casalinga"" (82).
[†] And again demonstrating the counter-productivity of uncompromising blind faith.
[‡] "volevo che qualcuno mi vedesse in quelle condizioni. Sí, è cosí. Volevo avere dei testimoni!" (121).

Undermining the narrator's self-presentation as materialist, it is centrally important that Leo is effectively the narrator's conscience (saving him from the particularist realism of which he is 'accused'[*]). It is only thanks to Leo that the narrator utters the following words: "Quasi ogni giorno mi capita di ripensare all'effetto serra e al buco d'ozono; ai ghiacciai che si sciolgono e al clima che cambia; al Diluvio, alla desertificazione e agli animali che si stanno estinguendo" (94). And, at the basic level, one of the narrator's professed goals in writing *Archeologia* is to "conservare il ricordo di Leo e di Michela e delle loro imprese straordinarie, almeno per me" (164).

No, if *Archeologia* is to have a 'bad guy', it is neither Leo nor the narrator: it is Marlon[†] Marlon blends a hedonistic materialism (lust, television, irresponsibility) with the worst of the far Right (racism, exclusionary particularism). When asked what he wants to do when he grew up, Marlon responds: "Continuerò a stare con papà e mamma e non avrò bisogno di niente, perché penseranno loro a tutto! . . . Guarderò la televisione, tutto il giorno! Dormirò fino all'ora di pranzo! Non andrò piú a scuola!" (98). As a youth, his interests included women, video games, and playmates (in that order) and his 'infractions' were many: "A quattordici . . . film pornografici . . . A

[*] Such an accusation cannot be substantiated, even if only for the reason that the narrator was not as economically well-off as the Ferrari's. He writes, "Ero poverissimo, e i guiai degli altri mi interessavano sempre meno, perché dovevo far fronte ai miemi guiai personali. (I veri poveri pensano a se stessi. Sono gli altri, i benestanti, che vorrebero fargli fare la rivoluzione)" (20). As Pasolini highlighted when referring to the policemen as the son of the poor—Giordana's Matteo does the same—the economically disadvantage clearly cannot be *blamed* for holding their values; rather, the value of the postmaterialist thesis, in my view, is to provide a theoretical basis justifying higher education for as many people as possible as a means to gradual social and environmental improvement.

[†] Both Leo and the narrator have a morally valid basis for their too-extreme views, whereas Marlon does not. Also, while an argument could feasibly be made—following my earlier analysis—that the Ferraris are themselves responsible for Marlon's outcome, one individual cannot *at the basic level* be wholly responsible for the actions of another.

sedici [Enrica][*] . . . A quindici anni, il giovane Marlon rubò un orologio . . . a diciassette anni, il nostro eroe distrusse l'automobile di sua madre e mandò all'ospedale due ragazzi che erano con lui, guidando senza patente" (101). Exactly where a healthy sexual interest becomes a destructive fetish cannot be easily determined, but Marlon is clearly meant to portray the latter.

More disturbing to the peacenik Ferrari's is Marlon's violent racialism. With his newfound friends Andrea and Cristiano,

> Marlon andava in discoteca e ai raduni delle "Guardie padane": che sono un'associazione di donne e di uomini convinti di discendere dagli antichi abitanti della pianura del Po, i Celti, e di dover tenere lontani gli stranieri dalla loro patria. Quando poi ebbe finito il servizio militare . . . si fece disegnare in testa dal barbiere la croce celtica . . . e si riempí le spalle e le braccia di tatuaggi che rappresentavano scorpioni, sirene, draghi e altri emblemi di virilità . . . con al collo un fazzoletto verde e viola, che sono i colori della squadra di calcio di ***, il ragazzo incominciò a inveire contro gli zingari, i negri e gli immigrati di tutte le razze. (137)

And, as the narrator would find out from the Corriere di ***,

> Marlon e il suo amico Andrea . . . avevano aredito due fidanzatini ventenni, una certa Gigliola commessa in un supermercato e un certo Matteo studente universitario. Avevano picchiato a sangue il ragazzo . . .; e, dopo avere trascinato la ragazza sulla loro automobile, erano scomparsi nella notte . . . e costretta ad avere rapporti sessuali con uno degli aggressori, cioé con Marlon. (139)

It eventually becomes clear that Gigliola[†] and Marlon had planned beforehand to beat and humiliate Matteo. Later, while the hedonistic Marlon is high on amphetamines,[*] he and Gigliola eventually murder the Ferrari's and their adopted daughter.

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[*] Enrica was a transvestite who, like so many other, marginalized individuals, would up at Castelaccio. For a brief history (and some more sexual details): "Una mattina, Marlon non si alzava e la signora Domenica che era andata a svegliarlo lo trovò nel suo letto, addormentato e bracciato ad Enrica! I due giovani, dicevano le cronache, erano nudi, e avevano stampata in viso la beatitutdine di una notte d'amore. Dopo quell'episodio, Enrica scomparve . . . A nove anni, Marlon rubava ai genitori le riviste dove c'erano fotografie di donne nude, e se le nascondeva in camera da letti. A dodici, faceva certi esperimenti sul corpo di Aria" (100).

[†] "Gigliola era (è) come me l'ero immaginata. Aveva (ha) le labbra un po' troppo gonfie e rosse per i miei gusti, e le poppe e le natiche un po' troppo sporgenti; ma, per Marlon, certamente andava bene cosí. . . . I suoi occhi, truccatissimi, erano inespressivi come quelli di Marlon; e io ricordo di aver

Thus only Marlon is 'rejected' in *Archeologia*, and even his faults have potential origins in the Ferrari's method of child-rearing (the faults themselves, however, remain his). Instead, a balanced reading of Vassalli's novel argues for the integration of '68-era concerns into a changing post-'68 world. But while the charge of reaction cannot—following this line of argumentation—be laid against Vassalli's carefully-constructed book, the novel's pervasive cynicism is, as a point on the slippery slope toward nihilism, highly problematic. That said, my reading of Vassalli's argument supports moderate universalism but acknowledges the quandary by which the moderate often requires the extremes to obtain self-definition. Citing Moore's apology for revolutionary violence and Walzer 'supreme emergency' clause as caveats to warily justify the situated demand to break moral boundaries, the Ferrari's—and the '68 movement they microcosmically emulate—were in the long run a force for good.

La Meglio Gioventú

Marco Tullio Giordana's *La Meglio Gioventú*, a six-hour film made for Italian television, uses a very different tack to effect much the same end. If *Archeologia*'s only real shortcoming is its depressing cynicism, *La Meglio Gioventú*'s is its heavy-handed and possibly too optimistic use of melodrama (and the related sympathetic identification it creates). Both 'shortcomings', however, are contextually integral to the artists' respective goals. Like *Archeologia*, *Gioventú* simultaneously tracks the

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pensato che, quando quei due si guardavano, era come se uno specchio riflettesse un altro specchio. (Un grande amore! Una coppia davvero perfetta)" (144).

* "quattro pastiglie di anfetamina . . . aveva sparato ai genitori adottivi e alla sorellastra perché gli era capitata tra le mani la pistola del padre, e gli era venuta una voglia irresistibile di sparare a qualcuno" (154).

development of the central characters' world views as they progress over a generation. Unlike *Archeologia*, writers Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli provide what approximates to a moderate ideal as well as near-archetypes[*] of two opposed extremes.

The tale begins in 1966 with the matriculation of brothers Nicola (Luigi lo Cascio) and—younger by one year—Matteo (Alessio Boni) Carati. Many friends and family members are central to the six-hour film, but most important for my purposes is Nicola's relationships with his brother and with his partner, Giulia Monfalco (Sonia Bergamasco), a musician-cum-activist-cum-terrorist. Along with sisters Giovanna (older) and Francesca (younger), the brothers are the children of Angelo and Adriana Carati. Although Nicola more than anyone else embodies all that is good about 'the best youth', the motives both for Matteo's pathologically structured life and eventual suicide and for Giulia's descent from student activism to BR-style terrorism are sympathetically related and have grounds that can be reasonably understood.

Upon completing their exams,[†] the brothers plan a trip to Scandinavia. But when they discover that Giorgia[‡] (the mental patient Matteo had kindly been visiting) had been receiving electroshock therapy in her mental institution, he illegally breaks her out. Stuck with the consequences of his actions, the brothers eventually decide to bring her to Norway. A breakdown then places her in the hands of the police, and the distraught brothers part paths: Nicola continues north, Matteo returns home to sign up

[*] Although I refer to the film's protagonists as 'ideals' and 'archetypes', it should be said that Giordana attempts—to varying degrees of success (for example: a single angry outburst in six hours doesn't do much to damage Nicola's otherwise laudable behavior)—to present complex and nuanced individuals and not just dramatic types.

[†] Nicola receives a perfect 30 in medicine, and the extremely well-read Matteo walks out on his condescending literature examiner.

[‡] An enigmatic and highly symbolic character who could be said to represent the marginalized sectors of society that are unjustly trod underfoot by monolithic visions of modernity and of the greater good.

for military service. While Nicola is meeting peacenik American war deserters, growing a beard, and going group skinny-dipping under waterfalls, a montage cut shoots to Matteo *sans* the previous long hair and with a newly tucked-in look. What for Nicola are communal readings of Allen Ginsburg's *Howl* in an Edenic natural setting is for Matteo a voluntary choice to stay (alone) in the barracks and read. When they converge on Florence during the disastrous flood of the same year, it is as substantially changed people who are divided by more than just uniforms.

In Florence Nicola meets Giulia, who dramatically first appears while playing piano for a lunching crowd of relief workers. Nicola and his best friend Carlo then join her at the university of Torino, where, when the brothers meet next, it is as official (but not personal) opponents. Matteo's break from Nicola's moderate ideal is by this point clear: his is a reaction to the daunting freedom of '68, and it is brought about in part by his failure to save Giorgia and by the discrediting of his own moral agency that resulted.

The film's only substantial conversation between Giulia and Matteo (with Nicola as arbiter) highlights both of their extremities, but it reveals in particular the flawed logic, which Pasolini rightly pointed out, that inheres in Giulia's argument:

> MATTEO- In uniforme siamo tutti uguali . . .Tutti quelli del reparto sono miei amici
> GIULIA- Male
> MATTEO- Davvero? E perché?
> GIULIA- Perché state dalla parte sbagliata.
> MATTEO- Sicura?
> GIULIA- Si.
> MATTEO- E quale sarebbe la parte giusta? Quella dei poveri?
> GIULIA- Esatto.
> MATTEO- Luigi* lo sa meglio di lei lo che significare stare dalla parte dei poveri. Lui è povero! Quello che lo ha colpito non è povero. Tu sei povera?
> GIULIA- Ma che vuol dire? Io non sprango la gente. . . .

* A policeman friend of Matteo's who was paralyzed by protesters.

GIULIA- Devo stare qui ad ascoltare queste stronzate?
NICOLA- Giulia, per favore! (Giordana; disc 1, ch. 14)

It is in part for his ability to see beyond the blind falsity of these black-and-white arguments that Nicola represents the best of '68.

Instead of joining with Leo Ferrari in calling for a vague and practically unsound emancipation of all mentally ill individuals, within Nicola's first sixth months working at a mental health clinic he spearheads a trial to criminalize electroshock.[*] Nicola reveals his excellent motives while speaking to his mother afterwards: "mi basta un giorno solo; è una questione di principio" (Giordana; disc 1, ch. 16). The guilty party received five years and had to pay full reparations. Working from the liberating doctrines of his master Franco Basaglia—a psychologist who believed that the clinically insane were not 'defective' as human beings but rather were rejected and pushed to the brink by the constricting forces of society—Nicola effects positive and concrete change with the best of intentions to boot. It is eminently true, as he writes to Carlo, that "è complicato lavorare dentro le istituzioni, cercando di cambiarle poco per volta" (Giordana; disc 1, ch. 19). But from homosexuals' rights to humane treatment, he is doing it.

However, as he goes on to write, it is Giulia he is concerned about: "è diventata ostile, agressiva, insoddisfata di qualcosa che non riesco a capire" (Giordana; disc 1, ch. 19). By divorcing her own satisfaction from the imagined good of humanity, Giulia is too unfulfilled herself to be able to impart any well-being upon others. The couple's sex life had become nonexistent. Angelo had briefly managed to get her to start playing the piano again—"Ma io non ti ho chiesto perché non suoni in

[*] And it is not Nicola's nervous patients who potentially endanger the proceeding's results: it is the BR pamphlets that one of the claimants unwittingly finds stashed behind a statue.

pubblico. Ho chiesto perché non suoni qui—in casa—per te." Giulia responds, "per me?" (Giordana, disc 1, ch. 18)—but Nicola was too caught up with his noble conception of freedom to realize that people don't always ask for what they need.[*]

The following scene lays out for Giulia and Nicola what the above argument did for Giulia and Matteo: one day in the early '70s, Nicola arrives home early only to find Giulia operating a BR cell from his living room. All the while, their daughter Sara is drawing in the kitchen. A man who is later shown being arrested makes a speech that captures the ills of their brand of communism, and Nicola's response is an excellent one:

> Bisogna disginguere i desideri dai bisogni. I bisogni sono una cosa seria. I bisogni sono quelli che ti portano a mettere tutto in discussione, a rischiare tutto. E anche a morire e a combattere. Il bisogno del communismo, per esempio . . .
>
> NICOLA- Andiamo a fare una passeggiata. I posti chiusi fanno male alle bambine, e anche al cervello della gente. Il bisogno del comunismo! Io ho bisogno di bere e di mangiare. Tu, Sara, quando senti queste cazzate . . .
> SARA-Ma le parolacce non si dicono.
> NICOLA-Si dicono e come! . . . (Giordana; disc 1, ch. 20)

Nicola does a Charlie Chaplin walk on their way out (juxtaposed to the Chaplin poster in the living room), and the message is clear: so-called desires are, at some level, needs too, and the needs the BR member speaks of are themselves undesirable.

Even regardless of the end, the methods prove untenable: to simplify greatly, Giulia is eventually asked to kill Carlo[†]—who was becoming ever more important in

[*] When Nicola responds to his father that Giulia had only played as a favor to him (which, judging from the smile on her face, was not true), Angelo has the following to say: "Non è che non vuole. . . . Alle donne bisogna dire che sone brave, che sono belle, che sono la cosa più importante che abbia . . . suona per me. Suona per noi due" (Giordana, disc 1, ch. 18).

[†] Who, quoting the BR placard ('colpirne uno per educarne cento'), notes: "ci vogliono educare. Secondo me vogliono solo terrorizarci" (Giordana, disc 2, ch. 5).

the Italian bank[*] (paralleling, say, Romano Prodi pre-politics)—and when the information eventually gets to Nicola he preventatively decides[†] to use himself and Sara as bait to have her arrested. After her incarceration, he sends her packages with sheet music ("qualcosa che puoi leggere soltanto tu") (Giordana, disc 2, ch. 13) that she joyfully begins but—thanks to guilt or to the tenets of her skewed indoctrination—then asks for them to be taken from her. Later, upon her eventual release, Sara criticizes her mother for being reluctant to play a church organ: "bisognate rivoluzionare il mondo—fare il fuoco—e adessso ti serve il permesso per suonare?" (Giordana, disc 2, ch. 21). Bach ensues.

Whether she is truly rehabilitated is doubtful, but Nicola remained how Giulia had derisive framed him: "Ma così è Nicola. Lui non vede la differenza: giovani, vecchi, pazzi, sani. Sono tutti uguali per lui" (Giordana, disc 2, ch. 3). That this universal humanism can be taken too far is clearer for Nicola (he had Giulia arrested) than it is for the intentionally stereotyped Leo, but Giulia's implied beliefs hinge on that faux egalitarianism whereby everyone is *not* (or shouldn't be) equal.

Giulia may only ambiguously be said to win her long struggle of rehabilitation, but it is important to note that her actions parallel an historic reconciliation: in the mid 1980s, a number of events took place which helped heal the wounds of Red terrorism. In 1986 Antonio Savasta sent a letter to the wife of Giuseppe Talercio (whom he had murdered five years before) in which he wrote,

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[*] Carlo's vision is of transparency in the banks and in the economy, from which he argues political transparency would follow. Whether or not one agrees with this view, it demonstrates that his actions have their own reasonable justification and moral foundation.

[†] It deserves noting that a Sor sonata and a glass of whisky accompanied his deliberation; but one example of many (incidences of friendship and camaraderie are legion with Nicola), this for me is meant to indicate his ability to take a certain degree of pleasure in life even in difficult times.

> Suo marito in quei giorni è stato pieno di fede, incapace di odiarci. Era lui che tentava di spiegarci quale era il senso della vita ed io non capivo da dove prendesse la forza per sentirsi così sereno. Lo so... questo non le restituirà molto, ma sappia che dentro di me è la parola che portava suo marito che ha vinto. Anche in quei momenti suo marito ha dato amore; è stato un seme così potente che neanche io, che lottavo contro, sono riuscito ad estinguere dentro di me... Se non ci foste stati voi a donare per primi questo fiore, io sarei ancora perso nel deserto. Io sono in debito con voi e spero soltanto di colmare questo vuoto restituendo e insegnando ad altri quello che voi avete dato e insegnato a me. (Corriere della Sera, 6/7/1986)

The next year a law was approved

> granting substantial reductions in sentences to those who had definitively abandoned violence as a method of political activity and had admitted their own crimes, or who would make a declaration to this effect in the form and within the time limits set by the law. By July 1987 over 560 persons had made the requisite declaration, including some who had been on the run. (Meade 237)

Drawing on these and other signs, Giulia's gradual awakening paralleled an important sea change in a once-terroristic mentality.

The emphasis here has been more on Nicola and Giulia than on Matteo only because Matteo's particular psychopathology (for his state is surely a disorder) is more a manifestation of deep personal anxieties than a result of '68. Like Giulia, he is unable to satisfy his desires. Unlike Giulia, his solution is to retreat into a job that controls his actions and a literary world that he controls. The grey area that understands complication—and which is central both to the '68 ideal and to Rawlsian philosophy—is alien to Matteo. It is relatively accurate to call Matteo a more extreme version of what for *Archeologia*'s narrator was a reasonable and understandable though not an ideal world-view: that is, both more extremely caring (originally) and more extremely ordered.[*]

[*] Matteo's New Year's suicide is a paradigmatic case of 'helpless control'. Having excused himself from the family party on false pretenses, he stands on his balcony with his back to the fireworks, drinks

But like the Ferraris, both Matteo (too much) and Giulia (too little) fail to properly balance—or, for Giulia in particular, to properly define—their *desideri* with their *bisogni*. To close with some advice Nicola gives to a grown Sara when she asks whether she should forgive her mother: "Si dipende da quanto ti senti forte. Sei felice?" "Certo." "Allora è venuto il momento di essere generosa" (Giordana, disc 2, ch. 21). Happiness without generosity is less than ideal, but generosity without happiness is demonstrably unsustainable.

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water rather than champagne, and is sure to take off his shoes before falling ('leaping' or 'plummeting' would be too strong a way of putting his powerfully nonchalant self-negation) to his death.

-Afterword-
Identity Politics and the French Front National

> La France a expérimenté tour à tour le colbertisme giscardien, le socialisme mitterrandien, le pragmatisme fabiusien, le néo-libéralisme chiraquien. Il en naît un scepticisme contagieux vis-à-vis des doctrines et des mythologies, des totems et des tabous. L'alternance, ell, a tué net la crédulité résiduelle à l'égard des programmes.
>
> - Alain Duhamel, 'Une élection charismatique: Campagne présidentielle sans programmes' (qtd. in Dartnell 37)

I have focused my post-'68 analysis on Italy, but recent developments in French politics deserve mention. The Marxist terrorism of the 1970s was less prevalent in France than in Italy and Germany;[*] instead, the main parallel is the rise of the insular new Right and the fragmentation of the plural Left. Whether the legacy of France's '68 is more or less positive than Italy's remains untraced here, but it is clear that postcolonial immigration has confounded universalist ethics in France far more than in Italy.[†] Demonstrated in particular by the Front National's (FN) polling

[*] The German Bader-Meinhoff group paralleled the BR in many respects, but the French terrorist organization Action Directe (AD) was both less active and less purely Marxist than were its Italian and Germany contemporaries. "AD emerged in a period in which ideologies were changing and political consensus growing. The alteration was a highly significant one in twentieth-century French political history. It was embodied by the Mitterand presidency, a focus on the EC, racism, immigration and the social power of money, and expressed by terms such as *alternance*, *cohabitation* and *ouverture*. Like the extreme-right *Front National* (FN), AD believed that the shift was a threat to an authentic set of national values. Both groups feared marginalization, distrusted politicians, were deeply anti-American and tried to exploit racism, anti-immigrant sentiments and fear of EC integration" (Dartnell 12). Extreme-left French terrorists thus targeted individuals far less than did their Italian counterparts: "regionalists and extreme-leftists were less likely to attack individuals. International, racist and extreme-right terrorists were more likely to attack persons. Only two per cent of extreme-leftist attacks hit individuals as opposed to 22 per cent of extreme-right and 17 per cent of international terrorist attacks" (Dartnell 161).

[†] A look at French film since 1968 demonstrates this unrest. Whereas *Romuald et Juliette* (Serreau, 1987) offers an optimistic but critical vision of interracial France, *La Haine*'s (Kassovitz, 1995) brutal portrayal of urban inequality pulls no punches. Of the former, Dina Sherzer writes: "Serreau points out instances of racism to which black people are subjected in everyday life and their awareness of being treated as different. When Juliette brings a message to the tennis club, Romuald's son asks her who she is. She answers: 'in fact I am nothing.' She knows she does not count for these people, because she is black and a cleaning lady. During a crucial interaction in Romuald's office, Romuald's secretary behaves in a condescending fashion to Juliette. Although she does not say anything overtly insulting, the child feels her hostility and asks his mother: 'Why is the lady nasty?' Aimé, the oldest son, who gets involved with drugs and is sent to jail, expresses his despair by rejecting the white world of his mother. He tells her, 'your money stinks whites' housekeeping', to which she responds, 'your money

in the 2002 elections, the social and religious identity politics of contemporary France show disturbing signs that the new Right's xenophobic particularism may be undermining the '68 generation's message.

'68 was clearly responsible for Gaullist reformism,[*] but the *gauchiste* self-definition as anti-Gaullist, Mitterand's 'betrayal' of 1983, and the blurring of the political spectrum all kept the political extremes from integrating with the mainstream parties as well as they did in Italy (where only the *most* extreme-minded turned to terrorism).

> The left's revolutionary orientations diminished after it made a strong 1965 presidential challenge and gains in the 1967 legislative elections. However, left-wing reformism helped spark *gauchisme*, an extreme-left movement that rejected compromise with Gauillism. *Gauchisme* introduced new issues (feminism, environmentalism, regionalism and gay rights) and was embraced by Maoist, Trotskyist and anarchist organizations . . . However, the Fifth Republic proved able to integrate discontent: contraception, abortion, urban reform, open government, decentralization, regionalization and telecommunication reforms soon became mainstream policies. (Dartnell 30)

While the right co-opted the left's agenda, the socialist left was itself forced to abandon the welfare state: two years after its first ever electoral victory in 1981, a growing international trend towards free trade and the EU's convergence criteria forced Mitterand to pursue a decidedly un-socialist austerity program. Under attack both from the right and from the left, the French public began to question the political legitimacy of the 5th Republic's crumbling bipartism. Hence the 'protest vote' of 2002.

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stinks of the whites' clink'. These dialogues capture the harsh contemporary reality of racism in France, undermining the fairy-tale ending of the film" (153).

[*] And possibly also for the rise of a reflexive middle class (as defined by Ginsborg's above-cited two middle classes): "In France, paradoxically, both '68 itself and the Gaullist reaction to it (a considerable increase in social spending in the 1970s) contributed to the formation of a reflexive middle class" (Ginsborg 43).

As a protest vote, the elections of 2002—both presidential and parliamentary—demonstrate the French voters' disgust for watered-down mainstream politics.[*] And, as a protest vote, it is important to note that the Le Pen's first-round victory may in large part be attributable to the failure of 'politics as usual', and not to the FN's xenophobia at all. If true, this weakens the argument that New Right and its followers are fatally suffocating the '68 interpretation.

Arnauld Miguet sums up the key factors of the election in what he terms the "fragmentation of the system and volatility of the electorate, a growing political apathy manifesting itself in a low turnout and an extremist, populist vote" (210). Or as Edward DeClaire writes, "the French continue to vote *against* the incumbents, while failing to vote *for* anything" (174). A record 16 candidates ran for president (nine previously) (DeClaire 211), and socialist candidate Lionel Jospin, obtaining 16.18 per cent of the vote, had lost 2.5 million votes in seven years (DeClaire 208). Equally relevant were the unprecedented rates of abstention: 28.4 percent[*] in the 1st round of the presidential election (13 points up from 1974) (DeClaire 208), 40 per cent (14.5 million people) in the parliamentary election.

After nine years of cohabitation, the public apparently saw little difference between Chirac and Jospin. In the words of Mark Kesselman:

> Popular support and political stability increase when elections represent a choice between alternative political coalitions. In recent years, however, the decline in ideological distance between the Center-Left and Center-Right has reduced the importance of the electoral outcome; many French citizens feel unrepresented by *both* of the two major alternatives. (289)

[*] Before the election, political commentators/cartoonists commonly lampooned Chirac and Jospin for running what essentially amounted to the same platform.
[*] The abstainers would form the election's largest party.

Although Chirac's newly-formed UMP won an absolute parliamentary majority of 355 seats (Miguet 217), the lack of voter representation[*] is apparent: "in terms of votes [the UMP and the PS] represent only one voter in two (47 per cent of those registered), they occupy 80 per cent of the seats in the new Parliament, the other parties having been wiped out in the ballot" (Miguet 217).

Unlike the student protests of May '68, the protest vote of 2002 ousted Jospin only to propel Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National to the second round. Thus it is disturbing to find that the FN is—both ideologically and demographically—the polar opposite of '68's 'best youth'. It is: traditionalist, ultra-nationalist, regionalist, (sometimes) economically liberal, and xenophobic. There are many examples of Le Pen's inflammatory speech,[†] but what is most fundamental is his Manichaean agreement with Carl Schmitt's too-simplistic dualism. Although the FN elite and the French electorate differ ideologically on some key issues,[‡] their popular support is the inverse of the postmaterialists'. Of his original 17%,[§] "Mr. Le Pen won the support of of only 8% of those with a college education, but 30% of blue-collar voters and 38% of the unemployed" (DeClaire 6).

Which is not to say that the election was demographically a victory for the right: Chirac and the moderate Right lost more votes than did the *Gauche plurielle*

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[*] "According to a SOFRES poll conducted in 1992, 70 percent of respondents said they did not feel well represented by even one political party, and 71 percent said they did not feel well represented by even one political leader" (DeClair 183).

[†] Citing his assertion that the holocaust was but a 'detail' of WWII as one of the most telling.

[‡] "The core leadership of the Front and the general public express surprisingly similar views with respect to such issues as immigration and crime . . . On the other hand, when the Front's political agenda turns to economic and moral concerns, the degree of issue convergence decreases" (DeClaire 136).

[§] The amount he polled on April 21, the first round. In the second round he gained 17.79% against Chirac's 82.21%. Writes Miguet: "this unprecedented result meant that the candidate who had obtained fewer votes in the first round than any other incumbent President beat every record in the second" (213)

(Miguet 210), and political fragmentation[*] was more to blame for April's results than a Left-Right shift.[†] The mainstream political taboo on the problematic 'social question' of urban ethnic unrest, itself out of touch with much of the voting public, is probably more to blame than the rise of far right popular support. Still, the fact remains that the much talked-about phenomenon of current French politics is particularist populism, not the *gauchisme* of yesteryear. Contrarian afterword notwithstanding, I maintain that the '68 movement—as manifested in France and played out in Italy—was both a force for positive moral progress and a critical element in assuring the empowering notion of secular moral agency's continued longevity.

[*] A 1988 law—by which "any party fielding 50 candidates across the country obtains 1.68 Euro for every vote it receives"—gives further incentive to vote for otherwise hopeless candidates (Miguet 216).

[†] "The relationship between Left and Right had not really changed since the 1995 election . . . On the right of the Right, Le Pen and de Villiers achieved 20 per cent in 1995; in 2002 Le Pen and Mégret obtained 19.5 per cent. On the extreme Left, the PC and Arlette Laguillier received a total of 14 per cent in 1995. This year Hue, Laguillier, Besancenot together obtained 14 per cent. Lastly, in the first round in 1995, Lionel Jospin received 23 per cent of the vote. In 2002, the total share of the vote for Jospin, Chevènement and Taubira was 3 per cent" (Miguet 210).

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