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Université de Montréal

The Historical Modalities of the Intellectual

par

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Département de Littérature Comparée

Faculté d'Arts et de Sciences

Mémoire présenté à la Faculté des études supérieures
en vue de l'obtention du grade de

Maître ès arts (M.A.)
en Littérature Comparée

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Ce mémoire intitulé:

The Historical Modalities of the Intellectual

présenté par:

Meline Léna Takvorian

a été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

Terry Cochran:.....

Silvestra Mariniello:

Amaryll Chanady:

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Sommaire

Ce mémoire s'inscrit dans une réflexion sur la figure problématique de l'intellectuel contemporain, en Occident. A travers l'examen de paramètres épistémologiques et historiques, qui ont contribué à l'émergence du modèle classique de l'intellectuel, cette étude aura pour objectif d'analyser l'apparition d'un nouveau modèle d'intellectuel. L'hypothèse qui sous-tend cette étude, s'inspire d'une notion sociopolitique conçue par Antonio Gramsci. A partir de l'étude des deux textes -- "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" et le 12^e cahier de prison -- nous avons déduit la notion organiciste qui nous sert d'outil conceptuel. Cette notion distingue entre le groupe d'intellectuels traditionnels et celui des intellectuels émergents.

En terme de structure, le premier chapitre établit les bases conceptuelles et historiques du modèle classique de l'intellectuel. Ces bases seront prises par les biais d'une analyse étymologique d'une part, de l'examen du discours philosophique du siècle des Lumières de l'autre. Le second chapitre porte sur l'analyse des textes de Gramsci. Celle-ci en déduit l'outil méthodologique, qui nous permet d'évaluer les théories sur les nouvelles formations

intellectuelles. Le troisième chapitre étudie les hypothèses que Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, et Edouard Said avancent sur la figure de l'intellectuel contemporain. L'objectif d'une telle étude vise à démontrer les enjeux théoriques de l'intellectuel et à son engagement dans la société actuelle.

Mots clés: faculté d'intellection, intellectuel traditionnel/organique, Antonio Gramsci, idéologie, professionnalisme.

Résumé

Depuis les événements de Mai 1968 en France, la question des intellectuels se présente comme une problématique politique et culturelle urgente, à l'échelle mondiale -- le dialogue entre Michel Foucault et Gilles Deleuze datant de 1972, l'indique clairement (Foucault 1977). L'intérêt croissant, à l'égard de la figure de l'intellectuel s'exprime par la multiplication des ouvrages, des articles, des conférences radiophoniques, ainsi que des débats télévisés. Bien que cette prolifération de *textes* apporte une multitude d'approches et d'interprétations, il n'y a point de consensus sur ce qui constitue la fonction de l'intellectuel contemporain, ni sur les paramètres qui identifient la figure. En effet, le besoin de trouver une méthode analytique apte à nous orienter dans ce débat, et à évaluer la situation, est à la base de l'écriture de ce mémoire.

La recherche prend, en premier lieu, une orientation historique: elle part du modèle classique de l'intellectuel Dreyfussien jusqu'aux origines médiévales de la faculté d'intellection, puis revient en deuxième lieu, au siècle des Lumières. Dans le contexte du Moyen Age, il a été question de reconstruire, à partir d'une analyse étymologique, la conception théologique de la faculté

d'intellection. En quittant ce point vers le XVIII^e siècle, nous avons établi une comparaison entre la notion d'intellection médiévale et celle qui s'est forgée pendant le siècle des Lumières. La nécessité de ce parcours historique a été déterminée par le fait que, le récit philosophique des Lumières sous-tend les discours et l'engagement politiques de l'intellectuel classique. Exposer les origines médiévales de la faculté d'intellection, démontrer ses points d'intersection conceptuels avec ceux du siècle des Lumières, servent à établir la préhistoire du modèle classique de l'intellectuel, qui est l'objectif de notre chapitre.

Une fois cette base historique couverte, il est question d'étudier les enjeux théoriques et conceptuels reliés à la problématique actuelle de l'intellectuel. C'est pourquoi j'adopte une méthodologie qui s'inspire de la théorie de Gramsci, afin de pouvoir examiner la condition actuelle de l'intellectuel. L'analyse de certains textes du philosophe italien, les cahiers de prison en particulier, nous sont fort utiles pour étudier la question de la formation de couches intellectuelles. Le chapitre deux expose, à travers la lecture d'un article et d'un cahier de prison de Gramsci, les catégories conceptuelles nécessaires pour penser la question des intellectuels.

Ce chapitre établit les bases historiques et philosophiques des questions qui génèrent les débats actuels.

Le troisième chapitre entame les idées récentes de Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, et Edouard Said, afin d'en déceler les différences et les similarités. De même, elles nous servent à établir la fonction et l'identité de l'intellectuelle. Entre les intellectuels traditionnels, les experts, les créateurs d'un côté, la notion de "l'intellectuel spécifique" de Foucault et les problèmes de professionnalisation invoqués par Said, de l'autre, il existe une question commune bien précise, qui unit toutes leurs formulations.

Le choix de textes de Lyotard, Foucault, et Said, est déterminé par le fait qu'ils traitent tous du problème de la représentation, à laquelle l'intellectuel contemporain doit inévitablement faire face. Est-il toujours possible de représenter? Qui ou quoi peut-on représenter? Le chapitre tente d'apporter une réponse à ces questions tout en essayant également d'établir une distinction entre plusieurs couches d'intellectuels, qui émergent selon le principe Gramscien d'organicité.

L'écriture de ce mémoire, nous a permis d'identifier les intellectuels contemporains, de leur attribuer une fonction précise. En outre, nous sommes parvenus à établir les critères conceptuels

selon lesquelles ils peuvent s'armer de *valeur* telles: la justice, les droits humains, la vérité, sans tomber dans les affres idéologiques et discursives du siècle des Lumières.

In memory of my father ,
Gérard Takvorian
(November 11, 1935 - May 14, 1995)

*To Silvestra Mariniello,
with undying gratitude.*

Introduction

The following thesis traces the emergence of new intellectual formations in the West by way of textual analyses. The initial impetus animating the research originated in the desire to come to terms with the radical transformations besetting contemporary Western culture: the drastic reorganization of cultural modes of production and distribution produced by the increasing speed and virtuality of the circulation of capital, images and ideas. Against this backdrop, I gradually became concerned with the figure of the intellectual and its crippled potential to intervene in the sociocultural field.

As my research progressed, the intellectual figure began to emerge as a social actor intimately involved, ever since its inception, in a constellation of forces determining all aspects of civil society. Historically, the intellectual's representational role has been inextricably bound up with specific social groups formed at the conjuncture of cultural, political and economic configurations. The current economy of knowledge, characterized by accelerated globalization has, however, radically reconfigured the nature of intellectual production and resituated the venues where it takes

place. The thesis thus became an attempt to demarcate the mutations transforming the sociopolitical function of the intellectual figure in order to highlight the emergence of contemporary intellectual formations. My thesis sets up a historico-theoretical horizon within which I am able to define the principal characteristics of the newly emerging conception of the intellectual as a social actor. The Gramscian distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals serves as the overall methodological point of departure for delineating the problematic parameters of the contemporary intellectual. Always working from within the context of recent debates that analyze the concept of the intellectual in relation to a specific schema of issues, my project initially sets out to determine the historical basis of the modern figure of the intellectual. This entails sketching out the medieval notion of intellection: a classical theological concept bequeathed to secular modernity via the Enlightenment. Against this background, my project details the basis of the medieval concept of the universal intellectual -- that is, a sociopolitical agent acting in terms of essential ideas thought to exist in the the logos of God or reason -- in order to contrast it with modern notions of the intellectual that develop in the 19th century.

Gramsci's notion of organicity serves as the conceptual horizon within which to evaluate the inherited notion of the classical intellectual and to assess the emergent intellectual figure in light of our contemporary economy of ideas. The recourse to Gramsci is particularly relevant in this context, for his writings were generated by a relentless questioning of the creative possibility of a new type of intellectual. The prevalent historical perspective anchored in Gramsci's notion of organicity serves as the basis upon which to analyze some of the ideas that go into the production of the new intellectual type.

Structurally, my thesis is organized in the following manner. The first chapter is concerned with reconstructing the prehistory of the classical figure through an excavation of the medieval roots of the faculty of intellection. It then moves on to demarcate the secularization of this faculty in the Enlightenment, notably through Kant's distinction between the public and private spheres. The genesis of the Western intellectual as both a concept and a role in civil society, emerges as the historical elaboration of the medieval faculty of intellection -- that is, of the classical conceptual categories that have informed the political determination of the

traditional intellectual right up to the Enlightenment- dominated discourses of our century.

This sociohistorical background being established, in the second chapter I am concerned with isolating the analytical tools required for articulating the distinction between the traditional intellectual figure and more recent intellectual formations. This chapter therefore engages a close reading of central Gramscian texts: an essay, "Some Aspects of the Southern Question," and the 12th prison notebook, "The formation of Intellectuals." The chapter determines the course of the thesis by underlining the Gramscian observation that the distinction between traditional and organic social formations constitutes the central question underlying all problematizations of the intellectual figure.

My third chapter assesses recent intellectual formations that have come to supplement the traditional model, and attempts to isolate a set of alternative paradigms developed in response to the reconfiguration of power and knowledge in contemporary society. These paradigms engage the complex problematic of the contemporary intellectual on an abstract as well as on a practical level more appropriate for sociocultural criticism. They are articulated as a critique of the essentialist ideology that has framed

the sociopolitical engagement of the classical figure, and they question the historical pertinence of traditional intellectual formations that continue to uncritically act as agents of social transformation.

Through its encounter with contemporary theories, this chapter emphasizes how recent formulations of the Gramscian intellectual delineate new parameters informing her activity in the West and stresses the dangers surrounding the emerging model. Specifically, then, this double emphasis is based on an examination of three recent theoretical texts: an essay by Jean-François Lyotard, an interview with Michel Foucault, and a published lecture series by Edward Said. The intellectual, as readings of these texts come to suggest, is now diversified in terms of her sociopolitical function. She is situated in a specific cultural context, localized by a language, and limited, in each case, to a project of social transformation serving the interests of a particular social group.

Perhaps the most important force of social transformation effecting the intellectual's new vocation is the perpetually increasing technologization of society. Technology calls for the formation of an organic stratum of "conceptualizers" and "decision-makers," a new intellectual category that does not fulfill the same function as the

traditional intellectual. The task of social change is, instead, an imperative weighing on the Lyotardian category of "creators": writers, artists, and philosophers. If the social role of any intellectual activity, however, is to be revived in a modern context, civil society must be strategically reconceived in terms of the interactive notions of power/knowledge. In other words, rejuvenating the redundant figure of the classical intellectual requires the undoing of Enlightenment metanarratives. Redefining truth and power in Foucauldian terms is crucial for the configuration of emergent intellectual formations beyond the specters of essentialism.

Given the redefinition of epistemological and political criteria such as truth and power, the intellectual finds herself relocated in an semi-independent, public, and critical role. He redefines his vocation in contradistinction to the proliferation of institutionally defined experts selling their commodities on a globalized market. In conclusion, it must be remembered that newly emergent intellectual formations are limited by historical and cultural contingencies. Their sociopolitic function is a) informed by their struggle against or, in some cases, for institutionalized forms of power; b) inspired by loyalty to a vision of intellectual integrity which preserves inherited structures of classical intellectuality while reconceptualizing them in

relation to the imperatives of postmodern society; c) animated by "values" that are not abstract and otherworldly but are anchored in concrete conditions of production and social responsibility. The present-day intellectual has the duty, as Edward Said writes, of "universalizing" the particular and giving greater human scope to the localized experiences of a singular subject-group.

Chapter One

Prehistory of the Modern Figure of the Intellectual

"the whole of language is a continuous process of metaphor, and the history of semantics is an aspect of the history of culture; language is at the same time a living thing and a museum of fossils of life and civilizations" (Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 450).

The October 1996 issue of the French magazine *Lire* headlined in striking bold pink letters: "Nos intellectuels servent-ils encore à quelque chose? Depuis l'affaire Dreyfus les penseurs s'engagent dans la vie de la cité. Un siècle après ont-ils encore du crédit auprès de l'opinion?" (Rossi-Landi, 42).

The classical intellectual figure is a political and cultural product of late 19th century France: it emerged as the lengthy political tribulations surrounding Captain Dreyfus escalated into an infamous *Affair* of national magnitude. The neologism is first coined by George Clemenceau in the January 14, 1898 issue of *L'Aurore Littéraire* to identify a new category of French citizens: politically engaged professionals who took upon themselves a task of social justice (Clemenceau).

Armed with the social prestige attached to their professional standing -- the first intellectuals who rallied for a revision of the Dreyfus trials were without exception all professionals and included physicians, architects, scientists, and artists -- these *new* citizens strove to ensure that France did not stray from the pursuit of *truth* and *justice*. Their protests were accompanied by a readiness to alter the social structures that had led to the unjust imprisonment and sufferings of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. To wit, Leon Blum wrote: "Nous comptons bien transformer la coalition révisionniste en une armée permanente au service du droit humain et de la justice" (Blanchot, 14). How, then, was their political discourse legitimated against the *Raison d'Etat*?

These traditional intellectuals assembled in the name of universalizing Enlightenment values and ideas. In the manifesto of protest that launches the neologism, George Clemenceau, the editor of *L'Aurore Littéraire*, writes: "N'est-ce pas un signe, tout ces *intellectuels* venus de tout les coins de l'horizon, qui se regroupent sur une idée?" (Clemenceau 1) Shortly after, when Emile Zola, one of the signatories of the manifesto, voices his indignation in his open letter "J'accuse" to the president of the French republic, he also

evokes universal ideas and values. He speaks confidently in the name of justice, freedom, and equality:

... Vous vous préparez à présider au solennel triomphe de notre Exposition universelle, qui couronnera notre grand siècle de travail, de vérité et de liberté...quand on enferme la vérité sous terre, elle s'y amasse, elle y prend une force telle d'explosion, que, le jour où elle éclate, elle fait tout sauter avec elle (Zola 9, 26).

The emergent classical intellectual, paradigmized by the French model, supported a political discourse endorsed and shared by prominent representatives of the "professional" class and legitimated by proclaiming the universality of human values inherited from the Enlightenment.¹

Many contemporary theoreticians have attempted to explain why this model has become increasingly inoperative in the contemporary social, political, and artistic landscape.

In 1987, Bernard-Henry Lévy, adopting an ironically apocalyptic tone, writes:

Faudra-t-il écrire, dans les dictionnaires de l'an 2000 : intellectuel, nom masculin, catégorie sociale et culturelle née à Paris au moment de l'affaire Dreyfus, morte à Paris à la fin du XXe siècle; n'a apparemment pas survécu au déclin de l'universel (Lévy 29).

In 1972, Jean-Paul Sartre voices a parallel assessment of the intellectual with respect to universalizing discourses when he writes:

On annonce leur mort: sous l'influence d'idées américaines, on prédit la disparition de ces hommes qui prétendent tout savoir. Les progrès de la science auront pour effet de remplacer ces

universalistes par des équipes de chercheurs rigoureusement spécialisés" (Sartre 12).

Both Lévy and Sartre mention universality as the defining attribute of the classical intellectual figure. Universalism conceptually derives from Enlightenment structures of knowledge operative in Europe since the 18th century, and has been recently denounced as a philosophically inadequate grid for the interpretation of current postmodern culture. ² Sartre juxtaposes universalists with emergent scientific expert groups, thereby contrasting two distinct cultural contexts determining different intellectual types: the traditional universalist intellectual tied to European cultural history versus the contemporary scientist expert accompanying the growing popularization of American structures of thought and the technologization of the world. Sartre's and Lévy's *universal* intellectual is conceptually tied to the Enlightenment *Weltanschauung* resulting from still earlier sociocultural developments going back to the Middle Ages.

Intellectual activity before the 19th century, epitomized by philosophers, scientists, and artists, was closely associated with sociopolitical tensions between secular and religious institutions. This tension was the result of a complex historical process touching on all dimensions of social life since medieval times. One can

etymologically trace the development of this tension between the secular and the religious institutional expressions of social life.

From its inception as a theological and philosophical concept in medieval times to its crystallization as a sociopolitical category in the 19th century, the epistemologically arduous itinerary of the word *intellectual* develops concomitantly with the secularization of Western society and culture. The connotative secularization of the word *intellectual* results in the politicization of the intellectual faculty, relegating intellectual activity to a sphere distinct from theologically dominated discursive practices, a situation that gradually occurs with the emergence of lay social, political, and aesthetic orders.

Tracing the peripeties of the word *intellectual* constitutes a necessary preamble for any avowed discussion of the contemporary figure of the intellectual. It provides a historical understanding of the political exaltation of intellectual faculties in modern times. Furthermore, it shows how the faculty of intellection theologically defined in the Middle Ages still informs later secular, philosophical formulations of the concept in 18th century Europe. The Enlightenment period provides the retrospectively necessary

ideological grounds on which the classical intellectual model comes into being.

The Medieval Faculty of Intellectuality

The appellation "intellectual" was neither a conceptually nor sociopolitically fixed category before the 19th century. Nevertheless, various historians and sociologists have written about medieval social groups, whose activities were primarily organized around intellectual labor. The individuals making up these groups have been called *intellectuals*, albeit anachronistically.³ For example, Mariateresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri writes:

Un homme né entre l'An mille et 1400 aurait compris les termes "femme" (*mulier*), "chevalier" (*miles*), "citadin" (*urbanus*), "marchand" (*mercator*), "pauvre" (*pauper*): en revanche il n'aurait pas saisi la signification du mot "intellectuel" (*intellectualis*) appliqué à l'homme. L'adjectif "intellectuel" accompagnait différents substantifs, avec quelque variantes de sens. La "substance intellectuelle" (opposée à la "substance matérielle") était l'esprit ou l'âme, "la connaissance intellectuelle" (opposée à la "connaissance sensible") était ce genre de connaissance qui allait au-delà de l'instrument des sens pour atteindre les formes (Brocchieri, 201).

Brocchieri explains how the practice of some theoreticians to use the term *intellectual* and anachronistically isolate medieval scholastic figures derives from the meaning attached to the adjective:

La raison de l'adéquation du terme "intellectuel" à un groupe d'hommes "médiévaux" réside (...) dans une nuance précise (...) de la signification de l'adjectif "intellectuel"(...). Dans tout les contextes cités, "intellectuel" signifie quelque chose qui est considéré comme plus précieux et plus élevé que son contraire, et il exprime une qualité indiscutablement positive. (...) Leur [medieval scholars'] activité (ou profession) possède à leur yeux, un prix particulier par rapport aux autres activités ou professions. Il semble donc, de notre point de vue moderne, il soit tout à fait légitime de parler d'"intellectuel médiéval" (Brocchieri, 202)

In the philosophical context of 18th-century Germany, the faculty of intellection conceptualized in medieval times preserves its resonance as "quelque chose qui est considéré comme plus précieux et plus élevé que son contraire, et il exprime une qualité indiscutablement positive," despite the secularization of its meaning.

The etymological examination of the term *intellectual* will reveal the various connotations of the faculty of intellection, provide a sense of its development and show how the faculty of intellection, despite the secularization of its meaning, remains transcendently defined as an entity above and beyond human agency. Theology and philosophy are led to theorize means of acquiring and spreading the

use of this faculty among humankind, having posited it as teleologically necessary for human existence.

The secularized theological structures positing intellectuality as a superior faculty also inform -- after having been philosophically reformulated by the Enlightenment -- the ideals of truth and justice empowering the classical intellectual's discourse. The theological and philosophical theorization of the faculty of intellectuality, politicized in the context of the Dreyfus Affair, yield parallel hierarchical structures of interpretation and government with either religious or secular resonance -- the prophets epitomize ideal political rulers in medieval times, while the Monarch Friedrich II, seen as the embodiment of Reason, is Kant's model of the secular ruler. Both these ideal rulers derive from the primacy given to the intellectual faculty over other human faculties in the Middle Ages. However, after the consolidated emergence of the nation-state, and as a result of the philosophical climate created by the Enlightenment, *ideas* such as reason, justice, and truth, remain the pivotal parameters informing political practice in secular times. In the context of the Dreyfus Affair, they are placed higher than any possible human embodiment of intellectual faculty.

Etymologies

The OED traces the English word *intellectual* to the Middle Ages. The concept first emerges as an adjective and is related to the Latin *intellectuäl-is*. The English word partly derives from the French *intellectuel* which is also related to the Latin. In the earliest recorded entry, the adjective *intellectual* is used to designate "that which is of, or belongs to, the intellect or understanding." The word *intellect* as used in English texts from the 14th century onwards is also connotatively related to the Latin and Old French, and carries any of the following senses: a) one of the faculties of the mind, i.e., understanding -- often distinguished from memory, imagination, reason, skill; b) the capacity for recognizing truth; c) *grasp* of a subject, comprehension, knowledge; d) the act or process of comprehending; e) meaning, signification (Kurath). This faculty of intellection is not simply a free-floating philosopheme but has a specific theological origin.

In an entry dated 1398 the adjective intellectual is said to emanate exclusively from God: "God is ... welle of goodnes and of riſtiousnesse, intellecual siſt & vertue, þat comeþ of non oþer."⁴ Intellectuality originates in no other creatures: " þat comeþ of non oþer" (Kurath).

The alternate connotation also in circulation in the 14th century further removes the faculty of intellection from human agency. *Intellectuality* is conclusively understood as that which is apprehensible only by the intellect or mind, but it is universally assumed that the mind or intellect are not human attributes. They are not intrinsic to human nature but are ascribed to higher spiritual entities. In the OED we read: "An aungel is substancia intellectual, alwey menable, free, and bodiles, seruinge god by grace & not bi kynde." God and his angelic entities figure as the unconditional and exclusive emanators of intellectuality. The situation of man in a hierarchically structured cosmos in which the highest position is occupied by an omniscient entity, and the lowest by those lacking any consciousness, is the theological structure that historically informs the medieval model of the faculty of intellection.

The factors contributing to the emergence of Medieval scholastic and philosophical production⁵ also contributed to formation of the theological structures informing the medieval theory of intellectuality. The medieval concept of intellectuality was produced in concrete social and cultural conditions, and emerged as the result of the fusion of two distinct philosophical traditions -- the Greek and the Arabic.

Muslim theosophists,⁶ such as, Alfarabi (ca 872- 950)⁷ and Ibn Sina (980-1037) were formative influences on medieval philosophy. Their incorporation of Platonism and Aristotelianism was set against the social and philosophical background generated through Islam's sacred text: the Koraan. Their conceptions of truth and knowledge were structured by a unique combination of the Greek and Islamic traditions.⁸

Alfarabi's exposition of the task of the medieval philosopher in his "The Letter Concerning the Intellect," is structured by his understanding of the intellectual faculty (Hyman 215). This letter argues that the human intellect comes into being as a result of "spiritual activities," at the same time showing how the question of power or the privilege of governing is interpreted as the particular right of those accomplished individuals who can best employ their intellectual faculties in such a way as to cathect, via angels, with the source of omniscience and omnipotence.⁹ Prophets are privileged examples of such accomplished individuals.

According to Medieval theosophists, intellectual activity was thus a function of the spiritual otherworld. Everything in creation was said to derive from a transcendently assigned locus of intellectuality. The creation of the cosmos was not the expression of

divine will, but had contingently resulted from the self-contemplation of God and of his angels. Human existence, according to the hierarchical cosmology these theosophists posited, was directly derived from *intellectual* self-contemplation of the angels.¹⁰

The angel was the source of all knowledge accessible to man. Human beings were potentially omniscient even though they occupied the rung farthest away from God in the hierarchical structure of cosmic beings. Such omniscience depended upon the intercession of angels or "intellectual agents." The ultimate *telos* for humankind was to achieve a state of absolute connectivity with these intellectual agents, by incorporating the knowledge they diffused, because through such incorporation the receptor was transformed, spiritualized, and ascended closer to the ultimate divine source. However, the idea of the degree of receptivity of each individual varied. According to these theosophists, some were more prone than others to angelic emanations. The angelic transmissions flowed into the minds of those most susceptible to receive them, and from thence were to be transmitted horizontally, to other humans.

This theory of intellectual activity involved the concept of understanding, also defined as a function of the spiritual otherworld.¹¹ The medieval experience of understanding was constituted by the act of internalizing the emanations of divine origin. It also occurred solely through the intercession of spiritual entities. This made the act of acquiring knowledge into an event of acceptance. The very first usage of the noun *intellect* in English that encompasses the activity of "understanding" appears in 1308 in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Kurath). The English term "intellect" is borrowed from the Old French *intellecte* and derives from the Latin *Intellēctus*, meaning "discernment" -- or "understanding," from *intelleg-* (by assimilation of the *g* to *c* before *t*), stem of *intelligere*, to understand or discern (Barnhart).¹² The first "intellectual" individuals literally were those who made discriminations, who sifted through "reality," and were endowed with the capacity to recognize *truth*.¹³ These individuals which included philosophers and scholars, but mostly prophets, acted as *secular angels* moving between the world of intellectual and material forms.

The progressive secularization of intellectual faculties undermines the theological ground upon which the adjective rested, while preserving medieval parameters as the precondition of social

and political activity. The theorization of universal ideas comes to replace the theological spiritual *intellectual* forms animating medieval philosophy. The elitist idea of the accessibility of these forms to some rather than other individuals is, however, rigidly preserved.

The Roots of the Modern Intellectual

For medieval theosophists, the faculty of intellection was theorized concurrently with a cosmology of spiritual entities. In 18th-century Germany, the faculty of intellectuality is theorized in tandem with the institutional workings of emergent concepts such as culture and civilization.¹⁴ The secular theorization of the faculty of intellection is most evident in the context of a debate that develops around desacralizing the institution of marriage in 18th century Germany. This debate is conducted in an exchange of several articles, amongst which is Emmanuel Kant's "What is Enlightenment?"¹⁵

The article not only illustrates the theoretical implications deriving from the ideological tension between religious and secular powers, but also reveals Kant's attempt to resolve this tension philosophically by invoking narratives that involve, as well as extend beyond, State power. The article, despite Kant's primary objective of defining enlightenment in terms of an individual's responsibility towards herself, is primarily concerned with the workings of political and civil society whose functions are to effect enlightenment through the use of the intellectual faculty. Kant's discourse transcribes these concrete themes, without jeopardizing his espousal of the teleological movement of history towards the actualization of progress.

Kant's article was written as a response to a specific question. In the context of a debate triggered by a then provocative proposition advocating the necessity of a desacralized marriage institution in an age of *enlightenment*, a question is generated in a footnote :

Qu'est-ce que les Lumières? Cette question qui est presque aussi importante que : qu'est-ce que la vérité? devrait bien recevoir une réponse avant que l'on ne commence à éclairer! Et jusqu'à présent je n'ai trouvé la réponse nulle part!" (Mondot 51).

It is this question that provokes many philosophers to respond.

Moses Mendelsohn is one of the first.

Moses Mendelsohn's second article entitled " About the question: What does it mean to enlighten?" responds to this question by clarifying the word *enlightenment* in terms of two concepts: culture and civilization. *Enlightenment* and culture complement each other. Enlightenment is understood as an abstract theoretical formulation, while culture is seen to be pragmatically oriented. For Mendelsohn, the mutual workings of *enlightenment* and culture amount to civilization.

The recurrent central concern in Mendelsohn's article is the destiny of man: all human activity strives towards the actualization of the destiny of man as an individual and as a citizen :

Je pose toujours la destination de l'homme comme mesure et but de toutes nos aspirations et de tous nos efforts, comme un point vers lequel nous devons diriger nos regards si nous ne voulons nous perdre" (Mondot 68).

Mendelsohn does not specify what this destiny consists of, but what he defines as the absence of *enlightenment* and culture, and hence civilization, is an indication of what constitutes the failure to accomplish man's destiny. He writes:

L'abus des *Lumières* affaiblit le sens moral, conduit à la *dureté*, l'*égoïsme*, l'*irréligion* et l'*anarchie*. L'abus de la culture engendre l'*abondance*, l'*hypocrisie*, l'*amollissement*, la *superstition* et l'*esclavage*" (Mondot 70).

Kant's response, although different in scope and tenor, and more specifically centered on an exegesis of the term *Aufklärung*,

nevertheless reveals a similar concern in the progression of humankind towards a predestined ideal that constitutes its humanity. Kant defines *enlightenment* as the courageous act of making use of one's own intellectual potential and reason to emancipate oneself from the tutelage of another and to rise from the status of *minority*. He writes:

Les Lumières, c'est pour l'homme sortir d'une minorité qui n'est imputable qu'à lui. La minorité, c'est l'incapacité de se servir de son entendement sans la tutelle d'un autre. [...] Sapere aude¹⁶ ! Aie le courage de te servir de ton propre entendement : telle est donc la devise des Lumières (Mondot 73).

He calls for the freedom to use one's reason in all domains of public as well as individual life:

*[...] ces Lumières n'exigent rien d'autre que la *liberté* ; et même la plus inoffensive de toutes les libertés, c'est-à-dire celle de faire un *usage public* de sa raison dans tous les domaines (Mondot 75).*

However, as one reads further it becomes evident that the intellectual emancipation Kant is advocating, the freedom from mental servitude he upholds, is nevertheless to be framed by a rigid authority that demands unconditional obedience. All individuals are to be forced to adhere to a higher authority that they should learn not to disobey. The universally recognizable beneficence of autonomous thought is second in importance only to the State -- in this case incarnated by the monarch Frederic II -- for the State is

fictionalized as a synecdochic embodiment of popular will, and derives its legislative authority from such an embodiment (Mondot 81). Kant writes: "Il n'y a qu'un seul maître au monde qui dise : *raisonnez* autant que vous voulez et sur ce que vous voulez, mais *obéissez!* " (Mondot 75).

In order to explain the paradox, Kant introduces -- in a manner not dissimilar to Mendelsohn's distinction between the human being as a private individual and as a citizen -- the public and the private use of reason. The private use of reason is not to interfere with public allegiance to the State and to the community as a whole. When private interests interfere, they should be silenced. Kant's article reiterates Mendelsohn's statement calling for all human endeavor to be directed toward actualizing human destiny, for it argues that everything ought to be directed towards the public good. In order to attain this good, all means are acceptable except the ones that disrupt the harmonious functioning of the public sphere:

[...] bien des tâches qui concourent à l'intérêt du bien public nécessitent un certain mécanisme, obligeant certains éléments du bien public à se comporter passivement, afin que grâce à une unanimité artificielle, ils soient dirigés par le gouvernement vers des fins publiques ou du moins empêchés de les détruire. Dans ce cas, certes, il n'est pas permis de raisonner. Il faut seulement obéir (Mondot 77).

The further one reads the more complex Kant's proposition becomes. Since the initial debate was occasioned by a religious difference of opinion, Kant cites an example from the religious context. He says a priest has the duty to preach in accordance with the tenets of the Church he serves, yet, in public, and as a learned individual in full control of his own mind and voicing his *own* opinion, the priest has every right to criticize a position he would have earlier upheld.¹⁷ It is even part of his vocation to go against Church doctrine for he has the duty to criticize that which he sees as unfit. In preaching as a priest, he does so *in the name of another* and *according to the law of another*. He has every right not to be fully convinced of the veracity of what he preaches, even though he is free to believe that some truth might lie hidden in what he is transmitting to the populace.

Kant resolves this paradox by inserting it into a dialectic, a striving towards the actualization of constant progress ("la nature humaine, dont la vocation originelle réside dans ce progrès" [Mondot 79]). The progress in question consists in the dissemination of knowledge (*connaissance*), as well as the emancipation from one's "mistakes." Within the confines of this progressive metanarrative, individual reason serves as a critical evaluation of the traditions of

the past, and strives to amend and readjust them in relation to contemporary actuality. Critiquing the sacred and the canonical is acceptable to Kant only to the extent that it aids humanity in its ascension towards realizing progress. In fact, progress according to Kant seems to necessitate such a critique of the traditional. Improvement only takes place through criticism. In this context, those who have freed themselves from the tutelage of others and who live according to the dictates of their own reason, have a greater responsibility towards those who are still bound in unreason. The monarch, Friedrich II, is ultimately worthy of the highest praise because he embodies such intellectual emancipation.

In such a philosophical climate, existence's highest end consists in orienting individual actions towards the pre-designed purpose of intellectually coming of age. Since this ideal is, by definition, universal and exists outside temporality as a timeless and hence flawless category, the self-empowered and self-assigned individuals who are to actualize that ideal, in part by educating the masses, are legitimated in their actions beyond any power deriving from the temporal. These intellectuals subscribe to such Enlightenment ideals as truth, reason, justice. Their belief in these ideals authorizes them to act freely in the eyes of all the others.

Culture, as the expression of the cultivation of Reason, is invested with a specific function and becomes the priority of enlightened individuals. It remains the route toward actualizing the *telos* of humanity. Such enlightened individuals make up a class in their own right, independent of other existing classes.

This model reappears in other cultural contexts. Matthew Arnold writing in 1869 subscribes to such a view. He relegates to culture a similar task, and elaborates what is today considered an "elitist" conception of intellectual activity. In Culture and Anarchy, he argues that all classes -- namely, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the working classes are impotent when it comes to providing the "sweetness and light" that culture affords. *Lux et voluptas* can only be provided by a distinct class he calls "men of culture and poetry" (Arnold 57). Arnold's view of culture is what dictates his elitist conception of the *intellectual*:

culture indefatigably tries not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming (Arnold 50).

His discourse is also informed by ideals that act as the motor for a metanarrative of progress in which *intellectuals*, i.e., "men of culture and poetry," are the primary protagonists.

The politicization of the faculty of intellectuality as apparent in Kant's and Arnold's texts is fully actualized in the context of the Dreyfus Affair. The etymology of the term *intellectual* reveals that the transcendental legitimation Kant establishes and Arnold rearticulates are determined by conceptual parameters of *intellectuality* defined by a medieval life-world still reliant on a spiritual otherworld. The inclination to exalt intellectual faculties as Reason, and to posit the highest attribute of a ruling class or a monarch in intellectual terms, is a pattern remnant from Medieval times. Kant reiterates this transcendental structure in his metanarrative of a progress superceding the State form. Kant's condition and promise of progress is intellectual emancipation and the cultural benefits that are supposed to follow from it. The classical intellectual figure whose conceptual inception is related to the faculty of intellectuality as defined in the Middle Ages, and whose political discursive activities rely on Enlightenment metaconcepts, meets with new political and conceptual challenges at the turn of the century.

Notes

¹ Ironically, the pro-Catholic intellectuals of the Right, under the leadership of Edouard Drumont -- editor-in-chief of the anti-semitic newspaper *La libre parole*, and author of a best-seller, *La France juive* -- rallied for an opposite cause but in the name of similar universalizing concepts and values.

² One is particularly led to think of Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* where he explains how current structures of knowledge replace Enlightenment metanarratives that had informed scientific and academic discourses well into the 1970s.

³ In his seminal book on medieval *intellectuals*, Jacques Le Goff defines such a figure as: 'Un homme dont le métier est d'écrire ou d'enseigner -- et plutôt les deux à la fois, un homme qui, professionnellement, a une activité de professeur et de savant, bref un intellectuel' (Le Goff 10, 1965). In the preface that appears in the 1993 English translation of his book, Le Goff explains the various reasons that led to his borrowing the "idea of the 'intellectual'" from the "history, sociology, and epistemology of the Western world in the nineteenth century": "As in every pertinent comparatist perspective, if one does not separate the sociological approach, which sheds light on the coherence of types and structures, from the historical approach, which highlights conjunctures, changes, turning points, ruptures, differences, and the insertion of a historical phenomenon into the larger society of an epoch, then the use of the term "intellectual" is justified and useful (Le Goff xiii, 1993).

⁴ "Lit" derives from the Latin lumen intellectuale; § = German gh; ß = Old English "th."

⁵ According to Le Goff, Medieval *intellectuals* appear with the emergence of urban life (Le Goff, 6). The rise of medieval towns was informed and accompanied by several other factors that also contributed to the appearance of the medieval *intellectual*, for example, the conceptual reconfiguration of Western society under the influence of the Arabic translations of Greek philosophical texts. This Arabic influence brought about new *intellectual* disciplines that grew into professions. This movement was closely associated with the rise and development of the university as a cultural and sociopolitic institution competing with, but also complementing the

activities of religious institutions. Finally, a thriving economic activity accompanying the growth of urban life and influenced by an expanding trade route between the East and the West, eventually ensured the concretization of emergent fields of study into distinct social categories. These factors contributed to the formation of social groups whose members devoted themselves to intellectual activities on which their economic livelihood depended (Le Goff 15-30).

⁶ Even though one refers to these thinkers as philosophers, Henri Corbin explains in his chapter "Les philosophes hellénisants" (in Histoire de la philosophie islamique. Paris: Gallimard, 1964) how it is difficult to delineate between the appellations "philosopher" and "theosophist" when referring to the Muslim neo-platonic thinkers from the 10th century forward. The distinction between these two appellations indicates the theories of the knowledge involved. In his book, Corbin opts for "theosophist" as, he comments, it has become common to refer to these thinkers as "theosophists" in order to highlight their status as philosophers and mystics at the same time ("sage complet, a la fois philosophe et mystique" [216]). This is in relation to Muslim scripture that is to be interpreted on a dual level, since it is an expression of God's divine law (shari'at) in need of philosophical interpretation and second, it is the expression of a spiritual reality (haqîqat) which requires special exegesis in order to bring out the hidden truth contained therein. The appellation theosophist seems to reflect this dual nature best.

⁷ There are many spelling variants to his name: Al-Färäbi, al-Färäbi, Al Färäbi, Al-Farabi, Alfarabi, Farabi.

⁸ One can draw striking parallels between the connotations of the word *intellectual* in the English and the French and many of the ideas expounded in contemporary theosophical cosmologies. Due, however, to the absence of Arabic etymological dictionaries it is impossible to establish the linguistic connection between the Latin (informing the English and French) and the Arabic.

⁹ The role of the angels as messengers in IndoEuropean languages can be derived linguistically from the Sanskrit root. In Sanskrit, "agni" which is the root of the Greek "angelos" represents the spark, the fire, that acts as intercessor between man and the gods, through the sacrificial fire-pit "hotha" from whence the smoke rises up to the heavens. In the middle ages, one cannot conceptualize the "intellect" as a faculty or an attribute without

reference to angels. The linguistic connection Latin and Sanskrit extends to the function ascribed to angels in medieval cosmology. In a footnote in Hindu Myths (trans. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Penguin 1975. p.26) we read: "These youths are the 'angiraseas' mediators between gods and men, sons of heaven and progenitors of men, who distribute among men the gifts of gods [cf. Gk. angelos]. Agni is one of the angelos". Fire-natured beings acting as messengers to the gods appears in Antiquity, but also in Middle Age cosmology where angels, fiery beings, are not only the messengers that carry prayers and replies but are endowed with the burden of providing knowledge, and bridging the "existential" gap between man and God.

¹⁰ The various levels of self-contemplation have a direct impact on the "intellect agent." The Aristotelian notion of the "intellect agent" is taken up today by Pierre Lévy, in his L'intelligence Collective: Pour une Anthropologie du Cyberspace. Lévy borrows the conceptual structures organizing the faculty of intellection in medieval times to argue that the newly opened technological spaces relate to the medieval theory of the "intellect agent;" In other terms, he shows how various theological notions extant in medieval cosmology can be translated into contemporary anthropological notions. In this attempt, he reiterates the theosophical theory of intellection, inspired by Aristotle. In medieval times, theosophists conceived the creation of the world and humanity in terms of the intellectual faculty. This cosmological theory of intellection had the following schema. From God's contemplation emanates what is referred to as "first intelligence". This intelligence in immediate proximity to God undergoes three distinct moments of active contemplation that results in concrete creational acts. In a first movement, the first intelligence contemplates the principle of thought -- God -- on whose behalf it exists. From this contemplation emanates the "second intelligence". In a second movement, the first intelligence contemplates *itself* as a *necessary* emanation resulting from the self-contemplation of God. From this contemplation are generated the "moving souls" characterized by imagination and moved by their desire for the intelligence that brought them forth. This desire motivates them and causes them to animate the heavens eternally, since they never attain their object of desire. In a final movement, the first intelligence contemplates the possibility of its existence as *independent* from the principle that generates it, i.e. God. From this most "obscure" contemplation derives the materiality of the heavens.

Then, in its turn, the second intelligence contemplates its generating principle -- the first intelligence; in a second movement it contemplates itself as a *necessary* emanation, and finally as an emanation *independent* from God. The result of these contemplations by the second intelligence yields the third intelligence, the second heavens' soul and its materiality. This process of world-generating contemplations continues till the last(tenth) intelligence is created. The theosophists refer to this final intelligence as the "intellect agent". In his summary of this medieval cosmological narrative, Pierre Levy indicates that this "intellect agent" is referred to by theologians as the "angel". The angel's contemplation of its emanating principle results in the nebulous transformation of sublunar materiality generated earlier through the intelligences' self-contemplation. In the second moment, the angel's self-contemplation as a necessary emanation produces the matter of human existence and triggers the creation of human souls. Finally, as a result of the third self-contemplative moment of the angel as an entity independent from its generator(the ninth intelligence), comes forth the human body in its materiality, as well as all ideas and forms of knowledge that the human soul is capable of *receiving*.

¹¹ The English term *understand* appears as a verb in Late Middle English and has its earlier forms in Old English (*understandan* from O.Norse *undirstanda*, O. Frisic *undirstanda*) as well as Early Middle English. At this point (between 1300 and 1500) the term means to perceive, but also *to receive*. As a substantive it appears in its plural form in astrology (Ayenb. 24; §e xij understandings). The term *understanding* characterizes the activity of discernment and "realization" as one involving an openness, a state of reception.

¹² The rendering of the Latin *intellegere* into the English *understand* -- the Middle English *understanden* meaning to stand "under" or "among," and by extension "to comprehend," is directly related to the Latin *intel-ligere* (Skeat, p. 679). The connection, however, remains obscure. Tracing the etymology of the Latin *intellegere* one is referred to *dīligō* and then the verb *legō*. *Legere* from *legere* means to pick up, to pick. The *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue Latine* indicates that one of the derivative meanings of this verb is to *read*, yet the development of this meaning -- i.e. from *to pick*, *pick out* to *to read* -- has not been determined. One possibility is that the meaning might have been derived from *legere oculis* meaning to assemble the letters by picking them up with one's eyes

(Cf. Virgil, Aeneid 6, 34, *quin protinus omnia / perlegerent oculis*); another possibility is the meaning could have derived from the action of picking up something that is written (Cf. Cicero, Deiot 7, 19, *ut scriptum legimus*). The connection between *intelligere* and *understand* is thus similar to the extent that both identify an action of choosing; however, the English term "understanding" specifically highlights the state of standing under, and thus connects intellectuality directly with the transcendental topos preponderant in medieval times.

¹³ Tracing the etymology of the Latin *intelligere* one is referred to *dīligō* and then the verb *legō*. *Legō* from *legere* means to pick up, to pick. The term evolves and, relatively late, it juxtaposes the prefix *intel* (The prefix *intel* is a derivation of the Latin preverb and preposition *in*; this latter (*in*) develops into a number of formations amongst which is the preposition *inter* meaning *between*, literally *inside two (a l'interieur de deux)*; as a preverb, *inter* the *r* turns into an *l*, as for example in *intel-legō* and acquires the following meaning: "to choose between (through one's mind), hence, by extension, to understand, to know, to perceives. *Intellegēns* is the one who knows, who understands; *intellegentia* is the faculty of discerning, of understanding (a usage very common in Cicero's writings). The linguistic connection between the Latin *intelleger* and the English *intellectual* (as well as the French *intellectuel*) is confirmed by the entry in the *Dictionnaire of English Words: A Discursive Dictionary of Indo-European Roots* that traces the etymologic roots of the English word *intellectual* to the Latin *leg* (identical to the *legō* explicated above). *Leg* here also means "gather; choose" amongst other meaning. The connection of *leg* to the Greek *logos* can also be traced back to enhance even older resonances of meaning persisting in the medieval understanding of intellectuality.

¹⁴ The 18th century witnesses the conceptualization of the words *culture* and *civilization* in France, Germany, England. The French notions of *culture* and *civilization* are built on the philosophical principle that posits the universality of the ideas of progress, a secular becoming towards perfection in opposition to Christian hope in the new Jerusalem. The development of these concepts is accompanied by the growing interest in the human being as primary historical protagonist. Concurrently, attention is given to the concrete progress of life on earth. In Germany, in the second half of the 18th century, *Kultur* denotes the emancipation of reason,

and a state of refinement and sociopolitical advancement. It is different from *Civilisierung* in the sense that the former encompasses the idea of human forms of expression, such as the sciences and the arts, produced by civilization, or the refinement of human mores. The most prominent German theoreticians are, amongst others, Herder, Schiller, Kant and the Humboldt brothers.

More recently, Sigmund Freud, in The Future of an Illusion comments on the distinction between culture and civilization ("I scorn to distinguish between culture and civilization" [Freud 6]). By human civilization he denotes "all those respects by which human life has raised itself above its animal status and differs from the life of beasts" (Freud 5-6). Freud's definition of civilization/culture is reminiscent of Kant's formulation of enlightenment -- given that Kant's definition of enlightenment is inscribed in the context of a debate on the meanings of culture and civilization. In Freud's understanding civilization/culture provides a perfecting away from the "natural" beastly state humankind is initially characterized by. For Kant, the emancipation of human nature through the use of reason is akin to the control and refinement of the animal instincts intrinsic to human nature which Freud has theorized. However, yet another parallel that might be drawn between Kant and Freud resides in the way they characterize the masses, and their need for leadership. For Kant, civilization amounts to enlightenment as the expression of the courageous act of making use of one's own intellectual potential and reason to emancipate oneself from the tutelage of another and to rise from the status of *minority* without stepping beyond the law of the ideal ruler that provides guidance, (the monarch, in Kant's case). Interestingly, Freud has a parallel formulation: "It is only through the influence of individuals who can set an example and whom masses recognize as their leaders that they can be induced to perform the work and undergo the renunciations on which the existence of civilization depends" (Freud 8). Many more significant parallels could be drawn between Kant's and Freud's assessments of civilization's workings to show how Enlightenment philosophy has informed recent seminal theorizations.

¹⁵ Kant's article first appears in the 1784 December issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?. Ed., trans., and comp. Jean Mondot. Saint- Etienne: Publications de l'Universite de Saint-Etienne, 1991).

¹⁶ Horace, *Epistulae*, book 1, letter 2, verse 40.

¹⁷ Whether there exists an "outside-ideology" where individuals are able to voice *their* own opinions untainted by any system of thought is matter for debate, and Kant does not raise the issue. Nevertheless, Kant's distinction between the public and the private use of one's reason remains a pertinent one for delineating intellectual activity at his historical juncture.

Chapter Two

The Sociohistoric Basis of Organic

Intellectual Activity in the West

"The central point of the question remains the distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every fundamental social group and intellectuals as a traditional category" (Prison Notebook # 12).

The French intellectual who emerged during the political polarizations of the Dreyfus Affair was an *enlightener* -- the sociopolitic expression of elitist bourgeois culture. Informed by a political discourse paradigmatic of enlightenment philosophy, intellectuals spoke "the truth to those who had yet to see it, in the name of those who were forbidden to speak the truth: they were conscience, consciousness, and eloquence" (Foucault 207).

At the turn of the century, this model of intellectual engagement extends beyond France to become indispensable in Western ideological, scientific, and theoretical discourses ranging from sociology to history, cultural theory, literature, and psychology (Charle 7).

In the seventies, new discursive strategies appropriate the question of the intellectual. Cultural analysts -- including feminist

theoreticians -- study this question in conjunction with recent concerns touching on gender issues; the mediatization of popular culture in the information age; the changing role of civil institutions, such as the university, etc. The question remains a especially prominent theme in Marxist and neo-Marxist discourses.¹ These include the texts of Georg Lukàcs, Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, T.W. Adorno, Lucien Goldmann, Terry Eagleton, Michel Foucault,² Fredric Jameson and Gayatri S. Spivak.

A common conceptual imperative paradigmatic of materialist methodology underlies the epistemological premises of these theoreticians. Their analysis of the concept of intellectuality is conducted historically upon a social, political and economic horizon; it is theorized in conjunction with the complex of concrete social relations that informed the emergence of the intellectual as a sociopolitical category.

As a result, the work of this current of scholarship is generally characterized by the reevaluation of the inherited notion of the classical intellectual in light of a transformed economy of ideas. This reevaluation has generated further theorization concerning the historical pertinence of the contemporary intellectual.

Reconfiguring Intellectual Activity in terms of Culture

A number of issues problematizing intellectual vocations have emerged. These include the notion of agency and whether the intellectual can act as a historical agent catalyzing the actualization of classless society posited by Marxism -- much like the priest in Catholicism or the secular scientist-intellectual in progressivist theories of history. On the other hand, the current epistemological crises accompanying the socioeconomic shifts in the West are bringing about new structures of thought that make it theoretically impossible to posit history in terms of a teleological metanarrative informing human action -- to wit: to conceive of the intellectual's sociopolitical role in terms of the guidance towards a progressing humanity. Given the radical changes in the modes of production affecting the cultural structures of society, one can no longer think of the altering sociopolitical role of the intellectuals in terms of the classical model.

Another central issue concerns the autonomy of intellectual activity, and whether intellectuals are an independent social category free from sociopolitical allegiances. These issues suggest that the traditional model of the intellectual is no longer viable in

contemporary Western societies, and that one should delineate, according to new conceptual and historical paradigms, the emerging intellectual figure. If, as exemplified in the Dreyfus Affair, the appearance of new social categories is a historical index of the interaction between the cultural, political, and economic spheres,³ then one must derive new conceptual and material paradigms from our transformed state of cultural and economic affairs in order to think through emergent intellectual formations.

Contemporary Western culture is characterized by the radical remapping of a series of social and historical relationships that inform intellectual activity. This remapping is concomitant with the technological and media innovations affecting the organization of knowledge and its institutions. From its inception, the figure of the intellectual has been linked to the formative forces informing all aspects of society, and her representational role has been inextricably bound up with the social groups that exist at the juncture of cultural, political, and economic configurations. The current economy of knowledge, characterized by increasing globalization, has radically reconfigured the nature of intellectual production and resituated the venues where it takes place, leading contemporary theoreticians to approach the question of intellectual

activity in the West from the following perspectives: the role the media plays in redefining the intellectual figure; the significance of the much advertised decline of the university in relation to the formation of new intellectual strata; the engineering of information highways -- resulting in the creation of new trans-individual intellectual spaces -- and how it affects the conceptual and social paradigms through which one can think the contemporary intellectual. However, before attempting to grapple with some of these questions, it is necessary to elaborate the theoretical and analytical ground upon which such an examination takes place.

The Importance of Gramsci

Writing from within the Marxist tradition, Antonio Gramsci has elaborated the notion of the intellectual in the context of an extensive reflection on culture. His interest in the concept and workings of culture spans decades. It is recorded in letters and editorials he wrote as early as 1916, and extends to his *Prison Notebooks* written during his incarceration in the Fascist prisons of Mussolini.

The concept of culture, like many other concepts in Gramsci's work, is thought in conjunction with a set of sociopolitical categories like hegemony, ideology, and the interaction between civil and political society. Culture is analyzed as part of social reality and not as an abstract category. Gramsci thereby foregrounds culture's relationship to economic structures as being one of reciprocity *and* interdependence.

This propensity to concretize conceptual categories is present in his late and early writings. In the introduction to his new translation of Gramsci's prison notebooks, Joseph A. Buttigieg highlights Gramsci's theorization of culture in relation to his political revolutionary agenda. He quotes from an article ("Filantropia, buona volontà e organizzazione") from the December 24, 1917 issue of the Turin edition of *Avanti!* (Buttigieg 18).

The article is written in response to a trade union official belittling the importance of educating the proletariat. Gramsci's retort is straightforward: a socialist does not have the choice to acquire or ignore culture as culture is not a secondary addendum to the economic and industrial dimensions; rather, "culture is a fundamental concept of socialism because it integrates and concretizes the vague concept of freedom of thought." (Buttigieg

19). Such concretization derives from the fact that culture itself is *not* an abstract conceptual category, rather it has palpable origins in the diverse dimensions of social life. Cultural issues encompass contemporaneous political, religious, socioeconomic and philosophical factors. Culture is not a "secondary addendum" to the sociopolitical and the economic aspects of life. It is the dimension where changes affecting reality are carried out. The political emancipation of the proletariat has to be affected concomitantly with their cultural and philosophical education, since such an education will provide them with the conceptual tools to understand the ideological origins of their present social status. This will enable them to develop concrete means of changing their situation by taking into account the panoply of complex historical factors that have informed it. The education of the proletariat arms them with a historical awareness of their situation by revealing the concrete factors that have shaped their current situation. For, in order to transform their present, the proletariat needs to understand its genesis in the past. As culture is the context within which the various dimensions of a community interact, its study complements the interpretation of the present, as well as providing historically anchored insights in relation to the future.

Given Gramsci's widely acknowledged propensity to think each concept in relation to an ensemble of concepts, his convictions concerning the importance of culture in the socialist agenda are closely knit to his interest in the figure of the intellectual.

Intellectuals are bearers of a *Weltanschauung* informed by and reflecting the cultural customs -- as well as sociopolitical and economic status -- of a social group ("The foundation of a directive class is equivalent to the creation of a *Weltanschauung*" [SPN 381]). For several years -- both before and during his incarceration -- Gramsci is preoccupied by a kernel of problems generated around the possibility of creating a new class of intellectuals. A task which literally involves the creation of a new *Weltanschauung* informing a population's cultural and political activities. Gramsci's pre-incarceration interest in the formation of intellectual strata is attached to his project of bringing about a new *Weltanschauung* proper to the subordinated masses in the South of Italy as part of his attempt to resolve the cultural and economic cleavage between North and South.

Because of this explicit historical reference, a study of Gramsci's theory of intellectuals represents a great challenge in many ways. First, it requires a mastery of the historical and cultural

milieus that informed his writing: a knowledge of the (Italian) political context that frames his concern in the intellectual figure. Secondly, delineating the Gramscian intellectual calls for the consideration of many other central concepts accompanying his analysis and exposition of the intellectual figure.

These concepts, interspersed in his prison notebooks, involve a set of issues deriving from the complex historical interaction between political and civil society: hegemony and coercion; the *modern prince* versus the State; the sociopolitical function of education; the status of popular culture and problems involved in the dissemination and popularization of culture. In this sense, all of Gramsci's prison notebooks -- some more directly than others -- concern the intellectual figure. For they either analyze historical and cultural factors that inform his interest in the figure, or they deal with issues attached to the problem of the creation of a new stratum of intellectuals.

Hence, an exhaustive assessment of Gramsci's theory of the intellectual would require an extensive reading of *all* the prison notebooks, and invite research into the political situation of Italy in the first decades of this century. Much more modest in scope and intention, this chapter offers an outline of Gramsci's understanding

of organic intellectuals, primarily in reference to two of his texts: his essay on the Southern question (*Some Aspects of the Southern Question* -- 1926), and his twelfth prison notebook (1932).

Even though separated from Antonio Gramsci's writing by decades of economic developments accompanied by radical technological change, his contribution to thinking the intellectual in terms of the workings of culture remains theoretically pertinent. This is primarily due to his methodological rigour centered upon deriving conceptual criteria from the close historical analyses of Western societal structures.⁴

In what follows, this chapter aims to delineate the Gramscian criteria of analysis, in order to understand the workings of the organic intellectual. It will then go on to consider organicity as a theoretically pertinent category for describing emergent intellectuals on the contemporary Western scene.

The Gramscian Intellectual: The Southern Question

Gramsci's interest in the intellectual figure extends back to before his incarceration, and its articulation is not isolated from issues that animated his prolific journalistic writings before 1927.⁵ However, the *Prison Notebooks* reveal that even though this interest in the intellectual figure is embedded in a specific problematic springing from socialist concerns with revolutionary strategies for the peasant classes in Southern Italy, in the subsequent years of his confinement Gramsci develops conceptual paradigms that extend his reflection on the intellectual figure to include a more generalized discussion of intellectual realities. This development away from time-bound events on the Italian political scene is one of the reasons the wide interest his prison notebooks have generated for social theoreticians. Had Gramsci not moved beyond the particularities of the Italian political scene -- even though his unique journalistic style⁶ would have secured him a name in the annals of Italian history -- his legacy⁷ might not have contributed to cultural and theoretical studies as it has today. This willed but also compulsory distancing -- because of prison censorship -- from the political actualities of Italian life is mentioned by Gramsci himself.⁸

In one of his early letters from prison to Tatiana Schucht (March 19, 1927), he discusses setting up a plan for "intense systematic study" in order to counter the psychological strain of confinement and thus to organize his "inner life." In line with that plan, he expresses his desire to elaborate an issue he had touched on in an article written a short time before his incarceration. But he also adds his intention to carry that issue beyond the specific political context that had framed it:

I'd like to set up a plan for intense systematic study of some subject that would absorb and concentrate my inner life. Four ideas have come to me so far, and this is a sure sign that I haven't been able to get started. One is research on the history of Italian intellectuals, their origins and groupings in relation to cultural currents, their various modes of thinking, and so on. Naturally, I could only sketch out the major lines of this highly appealing argument, given the impossibility of obtaining the immense amount of material necessary. Do you remember that short, superficial essay of mine about southern Italy and the importance of B. Croce? Well, I'd like to elaborate the thesis I only touched on then, from a "disinterested" point of view, *für ewig* (Lawner 79).

Buttigieg's introduction to Gramsci -- in the first volume of the English translation of the prison notebooks -- focuses precisely on this issue. Comparing the question of the intellectuals as it appears in that "superficial essay" with subsequent prison notebook entries about the status and role of intellectuals will reveal just what he means by "a 'disinterested' point of view."⁹

That "superficial essay" he is referring to, entitled "Some Aspects of the Southern Question," was written only a few weeks before his arrest. Gramscian scholars refer to it as containing the generative core underpinning most of the theoretical concerns elaborated during his confinement (Buttigieg 21). The examination of that "superficial essay" constitutes a first step towards assessing Gramsci's theory of the intellectuals, as his prison notebooks are written around his desire to "elaborate the thesis" on the Southern question. What does that thesis consist of then?

At the time when Gramsci is writing about the Southern question in October 1926, Italy is cleaved by a territorial, economic, and cultural separation between Northern landowners and Southern peasant classes. This situation generates a polemic between the Milanese socialists and the Turin communists of the *Ordine Nuovo* movement; this, in turn, leads Gramsci to write an essay in order to clarify the communists' position. Thus, the essay constitutes a response to a critique directed at the Turin communists in 1920. The latter were accused by the editors of the Milanese socialist review *Quarto Stato* of having come up with a "magic formula" to resolve the Southern question -- namely, the redistribution of land owned by the big estates to the proletariat. In the essay, Gramsci

argues that the formula attributed to the Turin communists is a "complete invention." The essay proceeds by discussing the political and economic complexity of the Southern question, thereby revealing its cultural and ideological ramifications.

In a second moment, he discusses the economic and political alternatives that would foster a resolution. At this point, his examination turns to the intellectuals, a social formation crucial both in informing the Southern question, and to Gramsci's striving to organize the peasant masses' social cohesion through their coalition with the proletariat. More specifically, the article critiqued by the editors of the *Quarto Stato* proposed the creation of a worker's state as a possible solution to the crisis. The required economic and political regeneration of the peasants was to be sought through a political alliance between Northern workers and Southern peasants--that is, through the setting up a worker's State:

By introducing workers' control over industry, the proletariat will orient industry to the production of agricultural machinery for peasants, clothing and footwear for the peasants, electrical lighting for the peasants, and will prevent industry and the banks from exploiting the peasants and subjecting them as slaves to the strongrooms. (...) By setting up a workers' dictatorship and taking over the industries and banks, the proletariat will swing the enormous weight of the State bureaucracy behind the peasants in their struggle against the landowners, against the elements and against poverty (SPW 442)¹⁰.

The essay on the Southern question written years later builds on this proposal by examining the ramifications of such a takeover. In reference to the quoted article Gramsci writes :

That was written in January 1920. Seven years have gone by and we are seven years older politically too. Today, certain concepts might be expressed better. The period immediately following the conquest of State power, characterized by simple workers' control of industry, could and should be more clearly distinguished from the subsequent periods. But the important thing to note here is that the fundamental concept of the Turin communists was not the "magical formula" of dividing the big estates, but rather the political alliance between Northern workers and Southern peasants, to oust the bourgeoisie from State power (SPW 442).

In this unfinished essay Gramsci reformulates the earlier solution advanced by the *Ordine Nuovo* communists, since the posited political alliance between the workers and the peasants opens up many problematic questions deriving from the historically complex nature of the peasant question in the South. In fact, he observes at one point that the Southern question derives from the peasant question. And the peasant question involves further complications of an ideological and cultural nature that are deeply encrusted in the traditions of not just the South, but the North as well. Thus, attempting to resolve the Southern question means resolving the peasant question. What, then, does the peasant question consist of?

The South is the expression of a social disintegration:

The South can be defined as a great social disintegration. The peasants, who make up the great majority of its population, have no cohesion among themselves (SPW 454).

This situation in the South is accompanied by several economic, social, and ideological factors that catalyze and reinforce the status quo:

Southern society is a great agrarian bloc, made up of three social layers: the great amorphous disintegrated mass of the peasantry; the intellectuals of the petty and medium rural bourgeoisie; and the big landowners and great intellectuals.

Apart from the peasants, each social stratum -- the rural bourgeoisie and the big landowners -- has its group of intellectuals. This factor constitutes one of the crucial points in Gramsci's analysis of the Southern question. The passage also reveals that the South is an economically hierarchical construct, with the peasant masses occupying the lowest socioeconomic rung and the big landowners at the apex.

In conjunction with the socioeconomic subordination of the peasants, the absence of an intellectual stratum tied to the peasants results in some dire consequences, the most important of which is the following:

The Southern peasants are in perpetual ferment, but as a mass they are incapable of giving centralized expression to their aspirations and needs (SPW 454).

This situation is politically and ideologically reinforced by the big landowners through the mediation of the "great" intellectuals:

The big landowners in the political field and the great intellectuals in the ideological field centralize and dominate, in the last analysis, this whole complex of phenomena. Naturally, it is in the ideological sphere that the centralization is most effective and precise. Giustino Fortunato and Benedetto Croce thus represent the keystones of the Southern system(...)(SPW 454).

The Southern peasants' question, then, is a problem directly dependent on and deriving from the organization of intellectual activity in the South of Italy, and specifically from these "great" intellectuals. But who are they?

This is one of the most complex issues Gramsci deals with in his essay, but also one of the most significant: "the Southern intellectuals are one of the most interesting and important social strata in Italian national life" (SPW 454). Their formation is the result of a complex interaction between various historical and economic factors. In order to understand the "particular psychology of the Southern intellectuals" (454), Gramsci sketches out some of these factors.

The first one concerns the economic nature of the South, the fact that it is an agrarian society. In agrarian societies with a peasant and artisanal basis, the function of the intellectual is different from that in an industrial society where the intellectual is burdened with the task of organizing the State and commerce. Gramsci writes that "industry has introduced a new type of

intellectual: the technical organizer, the specialist in applied science" (454); however, as agriculture still has a predominant role in the South, the traditional type of intellectuals dominate. These are traditional in the sense of acting as intermediaries between the peasant and the administration and thus reinforcing and maintaining problems of socioeconomic subordination resulting from that particular social organization characteristic of agrarian societies.

Another important factor resulting in the state of events characterizing the South concerns the social origins of the Southern intellectual. Gramsci writes: "the Southern intellectual mainly comes from a layer which is still important in the South: the rural bourgeoisie" (455). This has two dire consequences for the peasant populace.

First, this rural bourgeois stratum ensures its economic subsistence as landowners: they do not work the land but lease it out on a sharecropping basis to the peasants. The bourgeoisie thus reinforces the economic subordination of the peasant through ensuring their economic dependence. This situation has its ideological repercussions, as the intellectuals that come from this social layer bear a "fierce antipathy to the working peasant." The peasant is:

regarded as a machine for work to be bled dry, and one which can be replaced, given the excess working population. They (the bourgeois intellectuals) also acquire an atavistic, instinctual feeling of crazy fear of the peasants with their destructive violence; hence they practice a refined hypocrisy and a highly refined art of deceiving and taming the peasant masses (SPW 455).

The peasant masses are thus politically isolated twice over: economically subjugated and ideologically reduced into inferior beings. Their reduction to inferior beings constitutes one of the stepping stones around which the bourgeois ideology catalyzing the Southern question revolves. This ideologeme -- the inferiority of the peasants -- is disseminated through the bourgeois press and their civil institutions. Furthermore, for reasons Gramsci does not elaborate, the socialist party is the vehicle for circulating these thoughts among the proletariat of the North. As Gramsci proposed the coalition between peasants and Northern proletariat, it was necessary first to counter this dominant bourgeois ideology and sensitize the proletariat so that they would "think as workers who are members of a class which aims to lead the peasants and intellectuals" (SPW 448).

In a third and final observation, Gramsci considers the clergy, "since they belong to the social group of intellectuals" (SPW 455) and thus contribute to the creation of the Southern question. On this point, he distinguishes between the Northern and the Southern

clergy by concluding that for various reasons the Northern clergy is more morally correct, more given to its spiritual responsibilities of social guidance, more democratic and tied to the lower masses. On the other hand, the Southern clergy is:

a land administrator, with whom the peasant enters into conflict on the question of rents; a usurer, who asks for extremely high rates of interest and manipulates the religious elements in order to make certain of collecting his rent or interest; a man subject to all the ordinary passions (women and money), and who therefore, from a spiritual point of view, inspires no confidence in his discretion and impartiality (SPW 456).

The distinction between the Northern and the Southern clergy helps clarify why in the South there are no networks of institutions or mass organizations, as these would at least contribute to raising awareness and to developing social and ideological cohesion among the peasants.

As mentioned above, the intellectuals coming from the rural bourgeoisie play a central role in preserving the status quo by acting as intermediaries between the big landowners and the peasants. They help bring about the social disintegration characterizing Southern society, for they have never formed a united bloc with the peasants. Such a coalition would help break the extensive control that the big landowners exert on the peasants. This had happened only once: during the War, when the "peasant-soldiers and the

intellectual-officers formed a mutual bloc that was more closely united, and that was to some extent antagonistic to the big landowners" (SPW 456).

Through these middle class intellectuals' mediation between the landowners and the peasants in the Southern mainland and Sicily is formed the "monstrous agrarian bloc" that "functions as the intermediary and the overseer of Northern capitalism and the big banks" (SPW 457). The attempt to break this "monstrous agrarian bloc" has been the concern of several Italian political activists with different ideological orientations. For example, "Sonnino and Franchetti were among the few intelligent bourgeois who posed the Southern problem as a national problem, and outlined a government plan to solve it" (SPW 457). Their plan stressed the need of creating, in Southern Italy, an economically independent middle stratum. This stratum would have a dual function: it would, "on the one hand, limit the cruel and arbitrary actions of the landowners, on the other, moderate the insurrectionism of the poor peasants" (SPW 457-58). This project is never actualized because:

the nexus of relations between North and South in the organization of the national economy and the State is such, that the birth of a broad middle class of an economic nature (which means the birth of a broad capitalist bourgeoisie) is made almost impossible. Any accumulation of capital on the spot, any accumulation of savings, is made impossible by the fiscal and customs system; and by the fact that capitalists

who own shares do not transform their profits into new capital on the spot, because they are not from that spot (SPW 458).

Gramsci's discussion and proposal of a plan for resolving the Southern question thus takes into account previous attempts, whether they come from theoreticians adhering to his political convictions or not. Since he takes these alternatives into account, his analysis constitutes a step beyond; nevertheless, it is also encumbered by problems that arise from within and without his proposal.

So far Gramsci had been discussing the Southern question from the point of the social and economic disintegration of the peasants in relation to the rural middle class and the Northern landowners. But his primary focal point for coming to grips with the "Southern question" is the role of the intellectual. In the last few pages of the essay, his analysis focuses directly on the strata of Southern intellectuals. His argument tightens and closes around the discussion of the "great intellectuals" as it revolves around an important observation, namely, the social disintegration of the intellectuals:

We have already said that Southern Italy represents a great social disintegration. This formula can be applied not only to the peasants, but also to the intellectuals. It is a remarkable fact that in the South, side by side with huge property, there have existed and continue to exist great accumulations of culture and intelligence in single individuals, or small groups of

great intellectuals, while there does not exist any organization of middle culture (SPW 459).

The absence of a middle culture, and thus of corresponding intellectual formations, leaves greater room for unique individuals to become sole protagonists of the intellectual scene. Giustino Fortunato and Benedetto Croce were such figures. Such intellectuals have played a crucial role on a national level, while refusing any local role that would counter the disaggregation affecting the South. Being the stratum mediating between the landowners and the peasant masses, "they have seen to it that the problems of the South would not be posed in a way which did not go beyond certain limits; did not become revolutionary" (SPW 459).

These intellectuals were extremely cultured, and were thus linked to European and international culture. Coupled with the absence of any other type of possible reform -- due to the backward nature of sociopolitical affairs -- Croce's philosophy held the role of bringing cohesion and a new conception of the world. He thus fulfilled an important social function that usually accompanies religious and other sociocultural reforms:

The so called neo-protestants or Calvinists have failed to understand that in Italy, since modern conditions of civilization rendered impossible any mass religious reform, the only historically possible reformation has taken place with Benedetto Croce's philosophy (SPW459).

However, Croce's role and that of other similar traditional intellectuals contributed to reinforcing the problem of the South not merely by perpetuating the economic subordination of the Southerners, but also by bringing about the absorption of emergent intellectuals into the "monstrous agrarian bloc," even while catalyzing a new unified conception of the world that would otherwise have been absent in the social context of Southern fragmentation. That conception of the world differed from the world view propagated by Catholicism and any other such forms of mythological religious ideology, thus helping the populace transcend the control exerted by the civil and religious institutions upholding such ideologies:

Benedetto Croce has fulfilled an extremely important "national" function. He has detached the radical intellectuals of the South from the peasant masses, forcing them to take part in national and European culture; and through this culture, he has secured their absorption by the national bourgeoisie and hence by the agrarian bloc (SPW 460).

Gramsci contrasts the ideological repercussions of Croce's intellectuals activities as a sociopolitical organizer with *L'Ordine Nuovo's* cultural and political function, -- that is, its importance as a tool for forging public opinion. Whether or not this group of young intellectuals was or had been influenced by the intellectual

formations of traditional intellectuals such as Fortunato or Croce¹¹ is not an issue for two reasons:

L'Ordine Nuovo and the Turin communists -- if in a certain sense they can be related to the intellectual formations to which we have alluded; and if, therefore, they too have felt the intellectual influence of Giustino Fortunato or of Benedetto Croce -- nevertheless represent at the same time a complete break with that tradition and the beginning of a new development, which has already borne fruit and which will continue to do so (SPW 460).

First, Gramsci highlights the fact that *L'Ordine Nuovo* as well has ideologically and culturally contributed in the formation of a new class of intellectuals and thus of a new awareness.¹² Second, and this factor derives from and builds on the first, the *Ordine Nuovo* intellectuals represent a "complete break with that tradition and the beginning of a new development."

This break and the fostering of a new intellectual climate helps sensitize others to the problems of the South: "the figure of Gobetti and the movement which he represented were spontaneous products of the new Italian historical climate" (SPW 461). People like Piero Gobetti were not communists but through their work with these new intellectuals had come to understand "the social and historical position of the proletariat, and could no longer think in abstraction from this element" (SPW460). Gobetti's efforts towards

the resolution of the Southern question serves the *Ordine Nuovo*

intellectuals as a link:

1. with those intellectuals born on the terrain of capitalist techniques who in 1919-20 had taken up a left position, favorable to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 2. with a series of Southern intellectuals who through more complex relationships, posed the Southern question on a terrain different from the traditional one, by introducing into it the proletariat of the North (SPW 461).

In the last passages of his unfinished essay, Gramsci turns to discuss some problems that might hinder the actualization of his plan: the coalition between proletariat and peasants that would resolve the Southern question. These problems emerge, as alluded to earlier, from within and without the plan, i.e., from the specificities of the plan, and from the historical, concrete conditions of existence. These hindrances are embedded in short but highly suggestive entries that Gramsci does not develop in his fragmentary essay. One such entry reflects on the intellectual in terms of the difficulties accompanying their process of formation; another touches on the traditional intellectual's adoption of a new ideology; and finally, on the necessary coalition between the proletariat and the peasants, and what such a coalition would theoretically and concretely entail.

The last three paragraphs of the essay also introduce the role Gramsci wants to ascribe to intellectuals in his attempt to resolve

the Southern question. Throughout his essay, his analysis of the Southern question distributes a prominent role to intellectuals, an importance that derives from his interpretation of what constitutes the social and intellectual disintegration of Southern society. But intellectuals also occupy an important position in his proposal for the resolution of the Southern question. Unfortunately the essay does not provide the answer to many questions that emerge in this context. Nevertheless, the general lines of its argument are readily evident.

That the resolution of the Southern question necessitates the intervention of intellectuals is not at issue. The question remains, however, as to what type of intellectuals. This group cannot be akin to the intellectuals that are appended to the bourgeois middle class; nor should they follow in the example of the great intellectuals. Furthermore, they have to be the propagators of a new *Weltanschauung* that replaces the predominant bourgeois ideology positing the peasants as inferior creatures, and reinforcing their economic and intellectual subordination. Gramsci mentions two possibilities for the actualization of such a shift in the ideological climate of Italy.

The first possibility concerns the traditional intellectuals: their espousal of a new conception of the world that recognizes the proletariat as an emergent national factor. But this point is immediately refuted as:

To think it possible that such intellectuals [the old type of intellectual: the intellectual born on the peasant terrain], *en masse*, can break with an entire past and situate themselves totally upon the terrain of a new ideology, is absurd (SPW 462).

Next, it is a question of the creation of a new stratum of intellectuals. But can the historically complex formation of such a stratum be artificially triggered? This is a question that Gramsci directly confronts in the notebooks.

If intellectuals are primarily the producers, propagators, and preservers of ideology, then, in this sense, their formation is one of the most complex in history and takes place very gradually:

Intellectuals develop slowly, far more slowly than any other social group, by their very nature and historical function. They represent the entire cultural tradition of a people, seeking to resume and synthesize all of its history (SPW 462).

Ideology, by definition, is always linked to a stratum of intellectuals and dictates the incremental, almost imperceptible rate of historical change. Ideology is the positing of a conception of the world in which historical contingencies are theoretically controlled and organized into a coherent and traceable system of causes and effects, thereby establishing an arbitrary representational

relationship between thought and reality. It acts as the cement for a social bloc by informing the cultural production of a community of people and is implicitly manifest in art, economy and political institutions, as well as in all activities encompassing individual and collective life.

Traditional intellectuals operate according to ideological structures framed by sociocultural, political and economic factors contemporary to their moment of emergence. In fact, they are traditional because their ideological standpoint derives from previous social structures that are superseded by newer ones. In that sense, traditional intellectuals cannot adhere to new ideologies that accompany the emergence of new social structures. If it is not possible to turn traditional intellectuals into the bearers of a new ideological movement, the alternative lies in the creation of a new class of intellectuals. However, that involves problems of an ever greater magnitude. But without a leading intellectual stratum, the emancipation of the peasants, and all the concomitant sociocultural changes necessitated in Southern Italy, will not take place. Hence, the creation of a new intellectual stratum is a must. Gramsci theorizes possible ways of bringing such a stratum about:

It is certainly important and useful for the proletariat that one or more intellectuals, individually, should adopt its programme and ideas; should merge into the proletariat, becoming and

feeling themselves to be an integral part of it. But it is also important and useful for a break to occur in the mass of intellectuals: a break of an organic kind, historically characterized, for there to be formed, as a mass formation, a left tendency, in the modern sense of the word: i.e. one oriented towards the revolutionary proletariat (SPW 462).

To recapitulate, the Southern question will be resolved by the coalition between the proletariat and the peasants. This desired alliance between proletariat and peasants can, however, only occur through the creation of a *mass* of new intellectuals characterized by an "orientation towards the revolutionary proletariat" (SPW 462), for the old type of traditional intellectuals born on peasant terrain cannot situate themselves in the context of a new ideology (SPW 462). But neither can these new intellectuals come from the proletariat as this latter group has been indoctrinated by the bourgeois *Weltanschauung* that views the peasants as inferior creatures. The proletariat must be "reeducated," for they have been led to believe that:

The southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric (SPW 444).

An important point is that the new intellectual stratum necessary for the resolution of the Southern question will have to be the result of "a break of an organic kind, historically characterized"

(SPW 462). In reference to the *Ordine Nuovo* intellectuals, Gramsci writes that *they* had, in fact, effected such an organic break with traditional intellectual formations (SPW 460). The unfinished essay ends by proclaiming the proletariat and the peasants as the "only two social forces [that] are essentially national and bearers of the future" (SPW 462). Even though intellectuals have a pivotal role to play, they are *not* a national force, nor are they the bearers of the future.

To think the new intellectual's sociopolitical function in the context of the Southern question inevitably leads one to reflect on the consequences of posing the proletariat as the central historical protagonist of the Southern question. The Gramscian model of the revolutionary intellectual as it is delineated in the essay on the Southern question derives from a specific conception of the world and of history based on conceptual criteria developed within Hegel's philosophy of history. According to this Marxist conception, the role of the proletariat as the class that will materialize the counter-hegemonic movement necessary for the ideological and political emancipation of the subordinated peasant masses is central.

The relationship between intellectuals and workers in Marxist social theory -- evocative of the epistemological tension between

theory and practice characterizing Marxism in general -- is a complex issue. Marx deals only rarely and indirectly with the question of intellectuals -- and when he does, his observations derive from the distinction between physical and intellectual labor.¹³ Nevertheless, Marxist social theory has helped crystallize sociohistorical and conceptual parameters necessary for thinking the figure of the intellectual in terms of the concrete social, political, and economic context. By providing a clear analysis of the intellectual climate contributing to the Southern status quo, and situating intellectual activity within the specific socioeconomic class to which they economically and ideologically adhere, Gramsci is actually working within that paradigm; however, he is also working against it.

Gramsci does not posit the mass of *new* intellectuals as an elitist class with respect to the proletariat and the peasants in a way other Western Marxists have when touching on the issue of leftist intellectual formations.¹⁴ Rather, he specifically mentions that he is not interested in intellectuals as individuals but as a mass since he sees individual status as a primary characteristic informing elitist formations. The intellectuals are to merge with the proletariat, "becoming and feeling themselves an integral part of it" (SPW 462). In the Southern question essay intellectual formations in Italy are

discerned in Marxist terms, yet the formulation also embryonically contains the terms that move beyond those paradigms.

There is, in the last passages of the essay, the impulse to erase the Marxist distinction between intellectual and physical labor by integrating the intellectuals into the proletariat. This aspect is further elaborated some years later in the prison notebooks.

The Gramscian intellectual: the 12th notebook

In the 12th prison notebook, Gramsci's distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals follows from the observation that "all men are intellectuals" (SPN 9). All "men" are intellectuals mainly because the characterization of human activity as intellectual or physical is an artificially imposed schema that does not fully reflect the complexity of human activity:

There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens* (SPN 9).

This thought has important consequences for the organization of society. The ideological categorization of labor as intellectual and physical has served as the theoretical basis for social division. It has helped establish hierarchies of labor by bringing about classes

whose primary social function consists in intellectual production, and others whose members are relegated to physical labor and material production. With Gramsci, however, the set-up of society acquires a radically different nature based on his redefinition of intellectual activity. Intellectual production ceases to be the prerogative of a privileged few. The political structure accompanying and reinforcing cultural and social divisions which allow a few to rule and keep the majority subordinate is undone. He writes:

Each man, (...), outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", and artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought (SPN 9).

If every man partakes in the intellectual activities that have thus far been attributed to an elite of intellectuals, then the conceptual criteria informing the traditional delineation of intellectual figures in society needs to be rethought. In fact, Gramsci directly questions the pertinence of traditional conceptual methods that have served to define and delineate intellectual activity in society:

Can one find a unitary criterion to characterize equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? (SPN 10).

There have been unitary criteria traditionally involved in the characterization of intellectual activity. Such criteria interpret mental

aptitudes as the natural endowment of a privileged few and crystallize sociocultural divisions. Gramsci works against these inherited criteria. His reformulation of such evaluative criteria constitutes one of the seminal methodological innovations for re-thinking the figure of the intellectual:

The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations (SPN 8).

After isolating what constitutes the "most widespread error of method," Gramsci shows the gratuitousness of the distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, and then introduces a historically anchored alternative for the characterization of intellectual activity:

When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals, that is, one has in mind the direction in which their specific professional activity is weighted, whether towards intellectual elaboration or towards muscular-nervous effort. This means that although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals (SPN 9).

Thus, social function constitutes one of the important criteria Gramsci highlights for defining the figure of the intellectual and delineating intellectual activity.

From this analysis derives a series of important observations detailing the formation and development of intellectual strata, henceforth primarily isolated in terms of their social function. This results, amongst other things, in a novel interpretation of intellectual and cultural history.¹⁵ However, this definition of the intellectual comes to bear upon notions of the personal (physical and psychological) make-up of the potential intellectuals as considered from a sociopolitical perspective. Since all human beings are intellectual by nature, their social function as intellectuals depends on the professional elaboration of that human propensity to think. Gramsci develops this point contextually with the problem of the creation of a stratum of new intellectuals -- an issue first presented in the essay on the Southern question:

The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in the critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone at a certain degree of development, modifying its relationship with the muscular-nervous effort towards a new equilibrium, and ensuring that the muscular-nervous effort itself, in so far as it is an element of a general practical activity, which is perpetually innovating the physical and social world, becomes the foundation of a new and integral conception of the world (SPN 9).

An intellectual's personal structures of thought and feeling ought to be considered a historical matter to the extent that various concrete physical factors influence one's muscular-nervous efforts. This

appears particularly pertinent when one considers changes brought about by contemporary technological tools and their influence on traditional modes of thinking and being.

If the thesis of the Southern question essay involved discussing intellectuals in the context of political, economic and cultural realities of Italy in the 1920s, the discussion of intellectuals in the 12th prison notebook develops "disinterestedly," free from direct reference to any specific political events, and has a much wider and immediate theoretical vigor. This, even though, as already mentioned, issues deriving from the context of the Southern question constitute the underlying sociopolitical problematic animating the writing of *all* the prison notebooks, and particularly the twelfth. One might even say that this notebook's analytical interpretation of intellectuality directly builds on his view articulated in the Southern question essay that the formation of intellectual strata is one of the slowest and most complex in history, for intellectuals "resume and synthesize" a people's history and cultural tradition (SPW 462). The specificities of the formation of intellectual strata -- not just in Italy and in view of the resolution of the Southern question, but rather in the Western world, and at distinct

and various historical moments ranging from antiquity to the 20th century -- constitute the primary concern of this notebook.

One can also venture to add how it becomes evident, in this notebook, that the essay on the Southern question supplies Gramsci with an analytic methodology: i.e., to think the intellectuals in conjunction with the economic and cultural workings of societies, but particularly in terms of class formation.

More specifically, the 12th notebook thinks the problem of the creation of a new *organic* stratum of intellectuals by taking into account the persistence of previous historical formations, namely, traditional intellectuals. It opens with a question succinctly summarizing the web of problems related to the formation of an intellectual stratum: "Are intellectuals an autonomous and independent social group, or does every social group have its own particular specialized category of intellectuals?" (SPN 5). The seminal distinction between social autonomy and sociopolitical connectedness derives from Gramsci's reflection on historical conditions accompanying the formation of intellectuals. This distinction serves to generate Gramsci's categorization of intellectuals into traditional and organic.

Intellectual organicity is a simple yet central concept. It helps define an intellectual's sociopolitical function in concrete rather than abstract terms, i.e., in relation to particular social formations produced by the economic matrix. Insofar as intellectuals always emerge in relation to an economically dominant social group, they constitute that group's organic intellectuals. Their social and political function is constituted on the basis of their socioeconomic attachment to that group:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields (SPN 5).

Their sociopolitical function thus consists in providing their social group with a socioeconomic and political awareness, and with a sense of homogeneity. However, a problem that emerged in his article on the Southern question in relation to the creation of intellectual strata, reappears here as well. There are some social groups -- for example, the peasants in the South of Italy -- who are not able to create their organic intellectuals. To the extent that it is up to intellectuals to bring socioeconomic and political awareness to social groups, the groups that cannot generate their organic

formations are open to political and economic monopoly and colonization.

Aside from cultural and political complications of a socioeconomic origin encumbering the peasant masses' organization into a homogenous class, the absence of organic intellectual formations aggravates their condition. This absence is due to a multitude of historically complex factors, the most important of which consists of the following:

every 'essential' social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms (SPN 6-7).

These always already present categories hinder the emergence of new formations. Even though the Southern question is a particular case with specific problems that do not apply in other contexts, this interpretation is paradigmatic of intellectual formations in the West.

In the South, all the factors that could have lead to the formation of an organic stratum of intellectuals were hindered by the presence of existing societal structures -- namely bourgeois -- that generated their organic intellectual formations. To illustrate how previous intellectual formations persist and interfere with present conditions, Gramsci gives the example of the ecclesiastics who are

an intellectual category that appeared with the landed aristocracy, and persisted long after the aristocracy stopped being historical protagonists (SPN 7).

The inability to recognize traditional intellectual strata for what they are is at the source of the misconception that moves intellectuals to think of themselves as autonomous and independent. These traditional intellectuals belong to societal structures that are the expression of a previous economic and sociopolitical organization. Hence, they carry an *outdated* conception of the world deriving from previous sociocultural structures. Allegedly free from the sociocultural specificities of their times -- since they are representatives of a previous world order -- their activities come to depend on ideological premises that authorize and legitimate their independence from current political allegiances.

The propensity to think independently from the concrete material context is accentuated when, over time and in the absence of the social group that gives intellectuals the concrete common grounds for such identification, these intellectuals come to rely on other factors such as an "*esprit de corps*" to ensure their uninterrupted historical continuity (SPN 7). Gramsci connects this propensity with idealist philosophy and philosophers who are the

propagators of "that social utopia by which the intellectuals think of themselves as "independent", autonomous, endowed with a character of their own" (SPN 8).

In a more immediate sense, in the cultural and historical context of Gramsci, Benedetto Croce represents such a figure. Gramsci has devoted many sections of his notebooks to Croce and idealist philosophy. The ideological and political differences between Croce and Gramsci are interesting to note, as their distinct world views can be brought to bear directly on the topic of the traditional and organic intellectuals. For example, in Croce's criticism of a volume of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* published in 1950, he dismissively writes:

(...) Gramsci could not create a new mode of thought nor accomplish the wonderful revolution attributed to him because (...) his only goal was to establish in Italy a political party, a function which has nothing to do with the dispassionate search for truth (Croce, 231).¹⁶

Years ahead of Croce's criticism, Gramsci analytically illustrates how and why such an objective -- the "dispassionate search for truth" informing the political agenda of traditional intellectuals -- cannot constitute the basis of intellectual activity.

Since the emergence of intellectuals accompanies new ascending social formations, the function of these intellectuals-- as

shown above -- consists in bringing sociopolitical cohesion and awareness to that group. From this it follows that the intellectual strata's function is *not* sempiternally fixed but depends on the nature of the activity of the group:

The "organic" intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part "specializations" of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence (SPN 6).

Organic intellectuals concretize -- textually or otherwise -- new conceptions of the world accompanying the socioeconomic activities new social formations introduce. Conversely, the socioeconomic and cultural reconfiguration of society indicates the emergence of a new type of intellectual, as such a reconfiguration forms the basis for new types:

in the modern world, technical education, closely bound to industrial labor even at the most primitive and unqualified level, must form the basis of the new type of intellectual. The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, (...) but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader" (...) (SPN 9, 10).

But what is the extent of the role played by the economic dimension in the formation of intellectual strata? Even if it constitutes an important basis, once intellectuals emerge as organic protagonists onto the historical arena, several other factors come to

inform and influence their activities, namely, public and private institutions:

The relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is not as direct as it is with the fundamental social groups, but is, in varying degrees, "mediated" by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the "functionaries" (SPN 12).

Gramsci distinguishes between two major superstructural levels, civil society and political society, that make up the State (SPN 12).

To the extent that the social group to which intellectuals belong has monopoly over other social strata, the intellectuals exercise the "subaltern function of social hegemony and political government" (SPN 12).

This functions as yet another element that delineates traditional and organic intellectual formations. In a letter to Tatiana dated September 7, 1931, Gramsci clarifies this point:

(...) My concept of the intellectual is much broader than the usual concept of "the great intellectuals". This research will also concern the concept of the State, which is usually thought of as political society -- i.e., a dictatorship or some other coercive apparatus used to control the masses in conformity with a given type of production and economy -- and not as a balance between political society and civil society, by which I mean the hegemony of one social group over the entire nation, exercised through so-called private organizations like the Church, trade unions, schools. For it is above all in civil society that intellectuals exert their influence (etc.) (Lawner 204).

Part of the influence that intellectuals exert in civil society consists in the restructuration of its institutions. Such restructuration intrinsically involves the assimilation of persisting traditional intellectual formations:

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer "ideologically" the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals (SPN 10).

The political party plays a central role in catalyzing the assimilation of such formations. In the essay on the Southern question, the political party was a silent yet omnipresent factor, whose role was more or less clearly defined. In this notebook, the role of the political party remains to be determined ("what is the character of the political party in relation to the problem of the intellectuals?" [SPN 15]). The political party is a more efficient political structure, even if the party and the State both fulfill similar functions. However, the party's tasks give it primacy over the State because it ensures the cohesion between organic and traditional intellectuals in civil society:

The political party, for all groups, is precisely the mechanism which carries out in civil society the same function as the State carries out, more synthetically and over a larger scale, in political society. In other words it is responsible for welding together the organic intellectuals of a given group -- the dominant one -- and the traditional intellectuals. (...) It can be

said that within its field the political party accomplishes its function more completely and organically than the State does within its admittedly far larger field (SPN 15, 16).

The dynamic between traditional and organic intellectual strata is a recurrent sociohistorical movement informing intellectual formations in the West in general. Is the political party, however, still a major civil institution within which traditional and organic intellectual formations are confronted? Are there other sociopolitical spaces that have opened up and which engage intellectuality? In conclusion, who is the emergent organic intellectual in the West today, and what are some of the new conceptual categories that inform its activity? A possible way of coming to terms with these questions can be achieved through comparing the Gramscian model with extant formulations today.

To summarize then, the Gramscian organic intellectual is a historically and culturally situated figure, whose role is informed by the economic and political specificities of society. Its sociopolitical function is not predetermined according to systematic ideological agendas. Since its emergence is concurrent with new social groups, its function is constructed around the needs and interests of that group. The Gramscian intellectual figure provides that social group with sociopolitical cohesion and awareness. The impact of its leadership has, however, cannot be evaluated in the same terms as

traditional intellectual activities. The organic intellectual does not fulfill the traditional function of leadership ascribed/associated with the classical figure. In Gramsci's understanding of intellectual activity, class formations represent an important historical factor necessary for the organic intellectuals' activities. The focus on emergent class or social group formations as a central constituent of intellectual organicity breaks the traditional paradigm within which the classical intellectual operates.

In the context of the organic intellectuals' activities, the political party plays a central role in the organization and dissemination of culture. Furthermore, it is the political party, what he calls *the modern prince*, that informs the movements of the proletariat by rethinking the relationship between traditional and organic intellectuals. The political party also reestablishes the relationship between proletariat and intellectuals on new grounds. The Gramscian intellectual does not bring about a social class awareness through leadership; rather, she contributes to the political formation of the class, the politicization of the masses from within the party, thereby allowing for group intellectuality to emerge.

Gramsci's organic intellectuals will not, like the traditional intellectual, manufacture the consent of the masses by mediating

between State and society. The organic intellectual's function is altered to the extent that it is the political party that ensures the cohesion of society; an activity previously exclusively relegated to intellectual formations.

Gramsci's organic intellectual constitutes a critique of the traditional model and of the network of sociopolitical and cultural configurations within which that figure operated, generated and perpetuated structures of thought and feeling. In contrast to the insular traditional (Crocean) figures caught in the quest for truth, Gramsci's organic intellectual is permeated by the social structures informing its emergence and ensuring its sociopolitical function.

Are organic intellectuals central historical protagonists on the Western scene given the political and conceptual changes occurring? The following chapter examines how the organic model of the intellectual fares in an age where computer technology and the mass media it empowers are reinventing the means of communication and social cohesion and moving beyond State informed cultural policies and social structures.

1 Notes

This does not mean that other theoretical approaches do not take up the challenge of rethinking intellectual activity in conjunction with current cultural and political affairs. Western Marxists' writings on the topic, however, remain most thought-provoking. I use the term *Western Marxism and Marxists* well aware of the dubious connotation it carries. According to Stanley Aronowitz: "The term "Western" Marxism is a signifier that connotes no particular body of doctrine. (...) Its theoretical status is not only ambiguous, it is problematic " (quoted in Martin Jay's book Marxism and Totality. Los Angeles: California UP, 1984, p. 1, n. 1).

2 The categorization of Foucault as a Western Marxist is a dubious matter, as with many of those listed here; however, his name has been associated to Western Marxism in view of parallels that are drawn between an existential streak running in Western Marxism and his work until the 1960s; such a categorization is also inspired by his involvement with the French Communist Party. See Mark Poster's Foucault, Marxism and History. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984.

3 Christophe Charle's book Naissance des intellectuels is particularly significant in this sense, as it retraces the cultural, economic, and political factors that catalyze the emergence of the intellectual figure in late 19th century France.

4 Given the harsh prison conditions that accelerated the deterioration of his health, and mostly because of the lack of proper documentation, Gramsci's writing was unfinished; nevertheless, all the observations entered in his notebooks were anchored in concrete historical reflection, making his approach rigorously analytic. This point is particularly clear in his private correspondence where, in contrast to the notebooks that are completely devoid of any personal entries, one finds interesting information concerning the demanding nature of the research. More specifically, see his letter of July 3, 1931.

5 From 1914 onwards there are a variety of newspapers within which Gramsci is active. From writing for the *Grido del Popolo* --of which he assumes direction in 1917-19; he writes as a cultural critique and polemicist for the Piedmont edition of *Avanti!*; he

launches a journal for young socialists -- *La Città Futura*-- that lasts only one issue; and he co-founds the *Ordine Nuovo*, the cultural weekly of the socialists founded on May 1, 1919. The *Ordine Nuovo* becomes a daily under his directorship by January 1, 1921; but by 1924 it appears only as a bi-monthly. In the same year (February 12, 1924), *L'Unità* becomes the daily paper of the working class. It still exists under the same name today (See Holub, p.153, note 4).

⁶ P. Gobetti in his *Storia dei comunisti torinesi scritta da un liberale* collected in his *Scritti politici* (Turin, 1920, pp.278-295) refers to Gramsci as the "inventor of a new type of socialist journalism;" and in reference to *L'Ordine Nuovo* says it is the unique serious example of revolutionary and Marxist journalism (quoted in Robert Paris' introduction to Gramsci's *Ecrits politiques*, Paris: Gallimard, 1974. p.44).

⁷ J. Buttigieg analyzes the theoretical ramifications of referring to Gramsci's writings as "legacy" in his article "The legacy of Antonio Gramsci" (in *boundary 2*, Spring 1986), especially since Gramsci never intended any of his writings to be published ("I've always refused to make even brief collections of my work'" [Lawner 203]).

⁸ In a sense, Gramsci welcomes the opportunity to finally be able to reflect on issues that interested him without the strain of journalistic deadlines, and beyond the immediate political context. On September 7, 1931, he writes to Tatiana: "In ten years of journalism, I've produced enough material to fill fifteen to twenty volumes of four hundred pages each; but these pages were turned out everyday and should have, I believe, been forgotten immediately afterwards" (Lawner 203).

⁹ For further discussion of the dangers of misinterpreting this phrase, see Joseph Buttigieg's article "The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci" in *boundary 2*, 14:3, Spring 1986.

¹⁰ Selections from Political Writings: 1921-1926. Quintin Hoare ed and transl. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978. Henceforth referred to as SPW.

¹¹ In his introduction to Gramsci's *Ecrits politiques*, Robert Paris discusses, amongst other things, the ambivalences of the relationship of Gramsci to Croce and idealist philosophy.

¹² Concerning the relationship between intellectual activity and mass awareness, Gramsci writes in his prison notebooks: "Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an elite of intellectuals. A human mass does not 'distinguish' itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is not organization without intellectuals, that is without organizers and leaders" (Selections from Prison Notebooks 334).

¹³ The distinction between manual and intellectual labour is generally treated in the context of Marxist social theory; however, the theorization of this distinction precedes the textual productions of Marx. It appears in the context of a discussion touching on capitalist accumulation and the industrial revolution in Adam Smith's An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. In fact, A. Asor Rosa reminds the reader (in "Intellettuai," *Enciclopedia*, VII (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), pp. 801-27) of Marx's indebtedness -- in his Les misères de la philosophie -- to Smith on this issue (pp. 802-03). Gramsci's conceptualization of the intellectual takes its impetus from Marx and, by extension, from Smith (their analysis for the distinction hinges on social criteria deriving primarily from the economic domain ("la divisione del lavoro nasce, secondo Smith, dalla ricerca dell'utilità e dello scambio(...) si potrebbe dire anche gli intellettuai nascono dalla ricerca dell'utilità e dello scambio, nel senso esattamente che la separazione delle funzioni e la specializzazione delle competenze rispondono all'esigenza di una piu generale economicità nell'organizzazione sociale e produttiva" Rosa 802), only to the extent that in the essay on the Southern question, Gramsci conceives of the progress of history in terms of the genesis of a new society organized on proletarian grounds. His reliance -- in that essay -- on the economic dimension for the isolation of sociopolitical problems is closely appended to problems of an ideological and cultural nature accompanying the economic realm and equally informing the Southern crisis. Gramsci's innovative break from strict Marxist theory will become more evident in his discussion of the intellectuals in the 12th prison notebook.

¹⁴ According to Christine Buci-Glucksmann ("Gramsci et l'Etat"), the role of intellectuals in Georg Lukàcs' History and Class Consciousness is akin to the bourgeois definition of their function as elitist leaders engaged in guiding the illiterate masses to higher and better lives. This motif appears in Lukàcs' text, even though his

interest resides in the dynamics of intellectual formations of and for the proletariat classes. The point Buci-Glucksmann makes is that the relationship between the proletariat and the intellectuals in the Lukàcsian exposition of the dynamics of revolutionary history conserves the bourgeois schema because intellectuals are posited as the consciousness of the proletarian classes, they provide the ideological impetus, while the masses are relegated to the role of passive actors, following in the footsteps of their leaders. The Lukàcsian intellectual, just like the bourgeois intellectuals, is the provider, the ultimate ideal figure, and the gap between leader and follows is never closed. While in alternative historicist approaches (Buci-Glucksmann specifically quotes Gramsci) this pattern is reversed: "Dans ses rapports avec la classe ouvrière, l'intellectuel, *en tant que tel*, n'a pas pour fonction de lui donner son homogénéité, son unité, en somme sa vision du monde, selon un modèle idéologique d'origine hégéliano-lukacsienne qui prolifère dans le "marxisme occidental" (de Sartre à Marcuse). En 1926, au congrès du P.C.I. de Lyon, Gramsci rejette avec une brutalité critique peu commune l'idéologie petite-bourgeoise de l'intellectuel qui "se prend pour le sel de la terre et voit dans l'ouvrier l'instrument matériel du renversement social, et non *le protagoniste conscient* et intelligent de la révolution" (Buci-Glucksmann 44).

¹⁵ Gramsci's reflection incorporates intellectual formations in antiquity, the Middle Age, as well as more recent times encompassing various continents -- extending from the American to the Indian.

¹⁶ The passage is from Benedetto Croce's "Un gioco che ormai dura troppo," in *Quaderni della Critica* (17-18 November, 1950). It is quoted in the introduction of Joseph A. Buttigieg for the special issue on Gramsci in the periodical *boundary 2* (Volume XIV, No. 3, Spring 1986, p. 14).

Chapter Three

The Contemporary Worlding of Intellectuals

"Is the intellectual galvanized into intellectual action by primordial, local, instinctive loyalties -- one's race, or people, or religion -- or is there some more universal and rational set of principles that can and perhaps do govern how one speaks and writes? I am asking the basic question about the intellectual: how does one speak the truth? What truth? For whom and where?"(Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*)

Magazines, newspapers, radio talk-shows, and televised debates participate in a discursive sphere that used to be restricted to academic scholarship in closed elitist circles. Contemporary *intellectuals* prominently voice their opinions and conduct their debates publicly through the media.¹ On the January 23, 1997 broadcast of the televised show *Cercle de Minuit*, Laure Adler's opening questions -- "Ou sont-ils? Qui sont-ils? Que font-ils? A quoi servent-ils? Sont-ils universels?" -- deftly introduces the current issues problematizing intellectuals.² The central question is elaborated in Gramscian/Foucauldian terms: is there a universal intellectual figure whose activity is independent of sociocultural and historical specificities, beyond the confines of national boundaries and ethnic identity, or is her construction of the world and

transmission of knowledge informed and bound by cultural situations? Adler's presentation of her guests -- Edward Said, Alain Finkielkraut, Jacques Julliard, and Vidosav Stevanovitch -- as "un palestinien, deux Français, et un Serbe," frames the debate in specific sociocultural terms at the outset, thus answering this question in the negative. Current conceptions of intellectual activity generated by prominent contemporary *intellectuals* working against the Gramscian paradigm define new historical parameters within which to conceive of intellectual activity. Through the examination of a 1983 newspaper article by Lyotard, a 1977 interview with Foucault and the 1993 Reith Lecture delivered by Said,³ this chapter will demarcate the divergent formulations of the intellectual as a sociopolitical figure and point out the parallels and disjunctions that inform the various positions.

The question of contemporary intellectual activity involves many issues. Lyotard, Foucault and Said not only attempt to understand the epistemological criteria through which the intellectual can legitimate her sociopolitical engagement, for they are all faced with the question of whether it is at all possible to deduce a model of current intellectuality. Said formulates the issue succinctly in the following passage:

With the increased number of twentieth-century men and women who belong to a general group called intellectuals or the intelligentsia -- the managers, professors, journalists, computer or government experts, lobbyists, pundits, syndicated columnists, consultants who are paid for their opinions -- one is impelled to wonder whether the individual intellectual as an independent voice can exist at all (68-69).

If the individual intellectual can exist at all, what role remains viable for him, given that the ideological grounds informing the traditional vocation have been superseded by new structures of knowledge. Each theoretician's formulations are generated by the attempt to find a new sociopolitical and cultural *raison d'être* for the intellectual. In this endeavor, Lyotard, Foucault and Said are all confronted with the question of representation: can the contemporary intellectual still represent? Whom and what does he represent?

Intellectuals, experts, and creators

In the first essay of Tombeau de l'intellectuel et autres papiers (1984),⁴ Jean-François Lyotard initiates his summary description of contemporary intellectual activities in the West by stressing how current intellectual formations are sometimes confused with the classical paradigm. The article is a response to Max Gallo, a representative of the socialist government, and his imperative, published in *Le Monde* of July 1983, that intellectuals discursively catalyze the mutation France needs to go through in order to transform its socioeconomic backwardness: "ouvrir le débat sur la «mutation» dont la France a besoin pour rattraper son «retard» en matière économique et sociale." Lyotard denounces Gallo's imperative as an all too typical melange of the distinctions that he believes should be made between different types of intellectual activity. Lyotard's response attempts to point out structural differences among various types of current intellectual activity, in order to reveal underlying ideological assumptions informing the distinct social functions each type produces.

His categorization of intellectual activity into various types derives from the observation that distinct social groups "use" the

faculty of intelligence for different purposes. In Western societies, he argues, intellectuality as a professional attribute characterizes the activities of three social types, and each type has a distinct sociocultural function: "les intellectuels, les *créateurs*, les cadres" (17). Gallo, according to Lyotard, seems to be unaware of these categories and thus inadvertently attributes the sociopolitical responsibilities incumbent on one of these groups to another. This category error results in an unnecessary confusion of roles:

L'appel de Max Gallo souffre donc d'une confusion dans les responsabilités. Il néglige des dissociations qui sont de principe dans les tâches de l'intelligence, et qui sont aussi en partie des clivages de fait dans les professions d'aujourd'hui (Lyotard 12).

In Gramscian terms, Lyotard distinguishes the intellectuals from other formations based on how they situate themselves in the world; intellectuals are:

(...) des esprits qui, se situant à la place de l'homme, de l'humanité, de la nation, du peuple, du prolétariat, de la créature ou de quelque entité de cette sorte, c'est-à-dire s'identifiant à un sujet doté d'une valeur universelle.

And in fulfilling their function they:

décrivent, analysent de ce point de vue une situation ou une condition en prescrivant ce qui doit être fait pour que ce sujet se réalise ou du moins pour que sa réalisation progresse(12).

Intellectuals are, by definition, powerful political figures who ascribe authority to themselves through discursive identification with a universal subject. The function they hold derives, in turn,

from their ideologically empowered status as representatives;
 however, their sociopolitic discourse modifies/ is modified by the
 addressee:

Les intellectuels s'adressent à chacun pour autant qu'il est le
 dépositaire, l'embryon de cette entité, leurs déclarations se
 réfèrent à lui dans la même mesure, et elles procèdent de lui
 pareillement. La responsabilité des "intellectuels" est
 indissociable de l'idée (partagée) d'un sujet universel (12).

These traditional intellectuals have been supplanted by emergent
intellectual formations. New techniques, primarily related to the
 technologization of communication, as well as the increase in civil,
 economic, social and military administrative activity, have altered
 the nature of intermediary and superior responsibilities and
 necessitated the introduction of new forces educated in the "exact
 sciences", the new technological fields, and the humanities (13).

The new intellectual formations do not follow the paradigm of
 traditional intellectuality for a specific reason:

L'exercice professionnel de leur intelligence a pour enjeu non
 pas d'incarner autant que possible dans le domaine de leur
 compétence l'idée d'un sujet universel, mais d'y réaliser les
 meilleures performances possibles (Lyotard 13).

The emergent intellectual formations' function is defined in
 terms of the technical criteria accompanying scientific innovations.
 The new intellectual formations, motivated by improvement and
 higher performance, are always questioning their environment with
 the goal of obtaining better results. However, they question neither

the nature nor the limits of their "performativity" as an *intellectual* would for they deal with reality without reconceptualizing it, or redefining its evaluative criteria (13-14).

On the other hand, "creators" --writers, philosophers, scientists, and artists -- are defined precisely by such a role: they are constantly reconfiguring the limits of language and thought, of the media within which they operate. Consequentially, creators cannot be criticized for their work in terms of existing standards because their activity consists in undermining the extant criteria of evaluation. Creators do not fall under the category of traditional intellectuality. They do not identify themselves with a universal subject, nor do they bear responsibilities towards human communities. Their activities, as creators, do not necessitate the positing of a universal subject.

Gallo's readiness to assign to intellectuals what is to be expected of other sociopolitical functionaries, namely experts, "conceptualizers," ("concepteurs"), decision-makers ("décideurs") is an unavoidable pattern when one thinks of culture in terms of traditional intellectual formations:

La tentation reste et restera toujours grande de mettre le nom qu'on a pu conquérir dans une responsabilité au service d'un autre. C'est probablement cette sorte de transfert qu'on attend en général, et Max Gallo en particulier, des "intellectuels." Il est en effet ce qui les constitue comme tels.

Cet empiètement cesse d'être une confusion et une indigne usurpation à une seule condition: qu'une pensée de l'universalité, la seule dont puisse se prévaloir l'"intellectuel," puisse ordonner les différentes responsabilités que j'ai évoquées les unes par rapport aux autres dans un système ou du moins selon une finalité commune. Or c'est précisément cette unité totalisante, cette universalité, qui, depuis le milieu du XX^e siècle du moins, fait défaut à la pensée (18).

For Lyotard, traditional intellectuals no longer exist because their function presupposes the dictates of a universal metanarrative legitimating their sociopolitical actions:

Il ne devrait donc plus y avoir d'"intellectuels," et s'il y en a, c'est qu'ils sont aveugles à cette donnée nouvelle dans l'histoire occidentale depuis le XVIII^e siècle: il n'y a pas de sujet-victime universel, faisant signe dans la réalité, au nom duquel la pensée puisse dresser un réquisitoire qui soit en même temps une "conception du monde" (Lyotard 20).

And if there still exist some such intellectuals even after the undoing of totalizing discourses and the proclaimed philosophical end of the universal subject -- Lyotard mentions Sartre -- it is because their interventions were misread as being universal while they were only local. In the case of Sartre, for example, the cause of "le plus défavorisé" that he espoused did not constitute a universal subject, but rather was an "entité négative, anonyme et empirique" (21). Max Gallo will not find what he is looking for: "ce qu'il cherche est d'un autre âge" (21).

On the other hand, the categorization of intellectual activity as the production of either *creators* -- artists, philosophers, writers,

scientists -- or professional technological analysts and administrators is not, Lyotard adds, a rigid frame. Rather, the decline and undoing of universal ideas inaugurates a freedom from totalizing obsessions and brings about a multiplicity of responsibilities that must lead, Lyotard insists, to tolerance and other such anti-enlightenment categories opposed to "rigor, honesty, strength" (22).

Lyotard's account of current intellectual activity is in contrast with Michel Foucault's formulation of the specific versus the universal intellectual.

Specific Intellectuals

Michel Foucault's discussion of intellectuals concomitantly theorizes epistemological categories interpreting the workings of contemporary culture in terms of power structures.

Foucault elaborates his idea of the "specific" intellectual in the context of an interview conducted in June 1976,⁵ in response to the following question: "quel est le rôle des intellectuels aujourd'hui? Lorsqu'on n'est pas un intellectuel organique, lorsqu'on n'est pas un détenteur, un maître de vérité, où se trouve-t-on?" (Foucault 154).

For Foucault, traditional universal intellectuals, *masters of truth* and representatives of the oppressed, have lost their authority

as a result of becoming localized in specific sectors such as their work environment, or the general conditions within which their lives are conducted ("le logement, l'hôpital, l'asile, le laboratoire, l'université, les rapports familiaux ou sexuels" [154]). The identification of the movement from the universal to what Foucault calls the specific intellectual, has been occurring on various fronts and results from developments in technoscience since the 1960s:

ce qu'il faut prendre en compte, maintenant, dans l'intellectuel, ce n'est donc pas le porteur de valeurs universelles; c'est bien quelqu'un qui occupe une position spécifique -- mais d'une spécificité qui est liée aux fonctions générales du dispositif de vérité dans une société comme la nôtre (159).

The universal intellectual was historically preceded by the figure of the juror, the powerful lawmaker who sought to preserve justice in the face of despotic rule and the abusive arrogance of wealth. The figure of the universal intellectual is epitomized, for Foucault, by the writer as bearer of meaning and values made accessible to the populace through writing. On the other hand, the category of specific intellectuals finds its succinct expression in scientist-experts ("savant-expert"), or absolute scientists ("le savant absolu"), and not the writer. These scientist-expert figures -- Foucault has in mind the physicist Oppenheimer -- paradoxically bring together the traditional and the contemporary specific

intellectual figures(155). As an atomist, Oppenheimer's social involvement paradigmizes the intellectual production of scientists as universally significant for humanity. However, the knowledge that the physician holds distinguishes him from the traditional intellectual. With Oppenheimer, a new mode of intellectualness is inaugurated, one involving knowledge as an important category.

The social function of the specific intellectual is, however, haunted by a range of new problems that appear with scientific and technological innovations. Foucault does not stop at these "external" manifestations of historical development, but strives to uncover the ideological structures prevailing in Western institutions that monopolize and alter the modalities of intellectual production.

Western society is the expression of a dynamic tension between truth and power. The new specific intellectual elaborates its sociopolitical function from within the specificities of the workings of *truth* in contemporary society ["une spécificité qui est liée aux fonctions générales du dispositif de vérité dans une société comme la nôtre" (159)]. Foucault's conceptualization of truth is closely related to his formulation of the specific intellectuals' function, for he defines truth in the following manner:

la vérité n'est pas hors pouvoir ni sans pouvoir(...). La vérité est de ce monde; elle y est produite grâce à de multiple contrainte. Et elle y détient des effets réglés de pouvoir.

Chaque société a son régime de vérité, sa politique générale de la vérité: c'est-à-dire les types de discours qu'elle accueille et fait fonctionner comme vrais; les mécanismes et les instances qui permettent de distinguer les énoncés vrais ou faux, la manière dont on sanctionne les uns et les autres; les techniques et les procédures qui sont valorisées pour l'obtention de la vérité; le statut de ceux qui ont la charge de dire ce qui fonctionne comme vrai (158).

The Foucauldian intellectual is animated by three distinct specificities structured around the dynamic between truth and power. The specificities tied to class; the specificities deriving from living and working conditions; and the specificities deriving from the politics of truth in contemporary Western society(159). The figure's inevitable implication in the last category keeps her from remaining engrossed in only local interests and situations, even though her activities are primarily informed by and generated through these. The intellectual's involvement with the political and institutional production of truth in society endows his position as an intellectual with a "general" significance extending beyond sectorial and professional limitations.

For Foucault, problems attached to intellectual activity are articulated in terms of "truth/power" rather than in terms of "science/ideology." Truth, however, is strictly not a matter of revealing *a priori* hidden structures of meaning that await revelation and dissemination. Foucault redefines truth as 1) the production and

circulation of articulations effecting diversified power networks 2) interwoven with the structures of power that it informs and by which it is reciprocally informed, 3) a historical condition (rather than an ideological or superstructural category) emerging with the development of capitalism. In relation to this conception of truth, the sociopolitical function of the specific intellectual is not to be the critic of ideologies -- authorizing her/his critical discourse in the name of a correct ("juste") ideology. The task incumbent upon the Foucauldian specific intellectual is the construction of a new politics of truth ("nouvelle politique de vérité"): the intellectual's task is not to alter and raise the people's consciousness, but to rearticulate the political, economic, and institutional structures that produce truth. Finally, it is not a matter of freeing truth from systems of power -- since truth represents power in and of itself -- rather of separating power from the hegemonic expressions of truth (whether social, economic, cultural) within which it presently operates. This results from Foucault's premise that the primary historical political problem is not the alienation of consciousness, nor historical complications accompanying the workings of a particular ideology, nor the problems of illusion or error, but truth itself.

Said's Representative Intellectual

The notion of truth is exposed to yet another reconfiguration in Edward Said's work and yields a different understanding of intellectual activity. Said's notion of the contemporary intellectual, anchored within a Gramscian perspective, takes into account the professional categories Lyotard invokes, as well as the Foucauldian specificities framing the figure's sociopolitical engagement. However, his formulation differs from Lyotard and Foucault on many issues, mostly concerning the question of representation. In Lyotard's and Foucault's terms, it has become philosophically impossible to legitimate the representative role of the intellectual. Said's take on the matter focuses on the institutionally imposed necessity for intellectuals to invest themselves in representational activity. Said, however, does not ignore the philosophical problems that accompany the issue of representation, rather he redefines the intellectual's sociopolitical role in relation to these.

Said's theorization of the intellectual concurrently emphasizes a number of issues, including linguistic and historical specificities and problems of representing self and community. He localizes intellectual activity in concrete reality by characterizing it with three primary factors: a) intellectuals work in language; b) discursive

interventions are conducted on specific sociopolitical sites; c) they address specific audiences. These points raised during the *Cercle de Minuit* debate are discussed in greater detail in Representations of the Intellectual. On the issue of linguistic situatedness, Said writes:

No modern intellectual writes in Esperanto, that is in a language designed either to belong to the whole world or to no particular country and tradition. Every individual intellectual is born into a language, which is the principal medium of intellectual activity (27).

The question of the situatedness of the intellectual is tied to linguistic determination. However, linguistic situatedness alone does not define the intellectual. The intellectual associates herself with a cause, a people, a situation:

The intellectual's voice is lonely, but it has resonance only because it associates itself freely with the reality of a movement, the aspirations of a people, the common pursuit of a shared ideal (102).

Once the intellectual is thus situated, his political activities are anchored by the reality of an audience, and modified to operate within the cultural and political space the audience generates. However, in this context, how does Said's understanding of the contemporary intellectual's role differ from the traditional paradigm, given that the association with a cause, a people, is characteristic of traditional intellectual vocations and ideology? His formulation of the intellectual is situated between the figure of the traditional and the more recent expert intellectuals, in the sense that it preserves

elements from the classical model to give them a contemporary resonance.

The intellectual for Said, is a critic, a "consensus-builder," and an analyst of the epistemological structures informing Western culture, as well as a politically engaged figure whose activities are informed by the interests of a particular social group. On the private level, the intellectual vocation is conceived in terms of an isolated individual facing the world:

maintaining a state of constant alertness, of a perpetual willingness not to let half-truths or received ideas steer one along. That this involves a steady energy, an almost athletic rational energy, and a complicated struggle to balance the problems of one's own selfhood against the demands of publishing and speaking out in the public sphere is what makes it an everlasting effort, constitutively unfinished and necessarily imperfect (23).

However, these individual efforts are concretely enhanced by the intellectual's sociopolitical engagement; the intellectual figure's activities resulting from a "complicated mix" between the public and private worlds ("there is no such thing as a private intellectual, nor is there only a public intellectual" [12]).

In public terms, the intellectual's vocation is framed by several factors. The primary characteristic of intellectuals is that they are individuals with a vocation for the art of representing. This

distinguishes them from the "anonymous functionaries or careful bureaucrats" (13):

The intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug (11).

As the overall purpose of intellectual activity is to "advance human freedom and knowledge" (17), Said's intellectual engagement is empowered by "universal principles" working towards that objective; however, these "universal principles" do not derive from totalitarian metanarratives, rather, they are the expression of concrete human needs and interests:

all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behavior concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and (...) deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously (11-12).

Does Said's intellectual figure represent the ideals of enlightenment and emancipation? Yes, but never as abstractions (113). As the title of his lecture series, "representations of the intellectual," indicates Said is interested in mapping out the possible domains of representation as a primordial activity of the intellectual. Who or

what can, or should, an intellectual represent? And what are the epistemological consequences of the act of representation -- given that representation has become a philosophically problematic category after the erosion of the Cartesian concept of subjectivity?

For Said, intellectuals are representatives not of "some subterranean or large social movement but of a quite peculiar, even abrasive style of life and social performance that is uniquely theirs" (14). Representation for Said does not involve the traditional concept of an authority taking the place of a subordinate voiceless entity. The intellectual figure does not stand for the conscience, nor the consciousness, of a group or a class. Rather, she represents a people to the extent that she discursively epitomizes that people's struggle against hegemonic structures of power. The intellectual's allegiance is only to himself, to his own critical abilities. The intellectual checks her activities not in reference to the State, nor the people, nor any abstract category of thought:

There are no preestablished rules of conduct, no set ideological agendas. The intellectual does not represent some statuelike icon, but individual vocation, an energy, a stubborn force engaging as a committed and recognizable voice in language and in society with a whole slew of issues, all of them having to do with a combination of enlightenment and emancipation or freedom(73).

The sociopolitical intervention of intellectuals has to proceed from an adherence to the concepts of justice, fairness, truth, without

assigning those with a normative status, but rather by concretizing them, by *relativizing* them through actual situations. Intellectuals will then be able to "speak the truth to power":

to speak of consistency in upholding standards of international behavior and the support of human rights is not to look inwards for a guiding light supplied to one by inspiration or prophetic intuition (97).

What are some of the situations Said's intellectual has to fight against? What animates his intellectuality as a "spirit in dissent"? For Lyotard, the intellectual has to be an alert and informed critique of social reality, reconfiguring the limits of culture. For Foucault, the reinforcement of societal structures informing the monopolization of truth for specific hegemonic ends is to be specifically confronted by intellectuals. For Said, the situation is articulated in other terms:

the particular threat to the intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and publishing houses, but rather an attitude that I will call professionalism (73).

The contemporary technologized environment exerts certain pressures upon intellectuals moving them away from their vocational responsibilities. Professionalism, the primary threat, specifically operates through the lures of specialization and expertise that lead to the entanglement of intellectuals within institutional structures of power and authority figures. The intellectual has to come to terms

with professionalism by countering it with a "different set of values and prerogatives, (...) *amateurism*, literally, an activity that is fueled by care and affection rather than profit and selfish narrow specialization" (82).

In contemporary Western society, traditional intellectual strata coexist with new formations. The dynamic between the traditional and emergent intellectuals yields different interpretations. For Lyotard, new intellectual formations fulfill a limited function in society in comparison to the category of creators-intellectuals he isolates. For Foucault, the theorization of the specific figure of the intellectual allows him to conceive of a relatively new sociopolitical function informed by the struggle against the institutionalized expressions of power. For Said, the contemporary intellectual is still driven by loyalty to a vision of intellectual integrity. She preserves, in this sense, the structures of classical intellectuality, yet these are reconceptualized to correspond to the needs of postmodern society. The "values" the contemporary intellectual adheres to are not abstract and otherworldly, rather are anchored within concrete conditions of production and articulation. Upon the current intellectual, specified by sociocultural factors, is incumbent "the task of universalizing, giving greater human scope to what a

particular race of nation suffered, to associate that experience with the sufferings of others" (Said 44).

The task of the contemporary Western intellectual is defined by the critical spirit of dissent she embodies at all times, in her function of representing the *truth* as a sociopolitical category of production. Contemporary intellectuals' activities are mediated and framed by institutions and political parties to the extent that intellectual activity cannot exist outside the structures of civil society, even though the relationship between intellectuals and the institutions of civil and political society are being radically reconfigured.

As shown, all three formulations of the intellectual, Gramscian in their historical and cultural situatedness, diverge on several points while intersecting on others. However, given the current configuration of culture, there cannot exist one type of intellectual, nor a unique intellectual vocation. Communities will generate their own types given their socioeconomic and cultural specificities. As intellectuality has expanded to encompass various dimensions of cultural production, so the intellectual's sociopolitical function is inevitably modified and placed on the threshold of an unprecedented diversification. A major problem that befalls this

diversification is ghettoization -- that is, when the intellectual becomes enclosed within an extremely situated subject-group operating on local level for specific benefits. Just as so called "trade union" opportunism derailed the universal Marxist project -- an eminently enlightenment endeavor to emancipate the proletariat class of a nation-state by working in concert with proletariats belonging to other nation-states (the dream of the international), so too ghetto-intellectuals place the possibility of working in concert towards enlightenment emancipation *en abîme*. Irregardless of whether the specific intellectual serves a subaltern sector or a technological or corporate lobby-group, his activity is set adrift in a decentralized whirling of wor(l)ds. If intellectual groups are to carry on the enlightenment tradition of both material and cultural emancipation, they must exploit the practice of "networking," of establishing relays, connections, and circuits with other intellectual strata, that would problematize and effectively intervene in the present conditions and relations of cultural and material production. It is only in terms of a big optic such as this that the intellectual can remain a viable figure and not an antiquated relic of enlightenment universalism.

Notes

¹ This is generally true of most intellectuals, even though some hard-core academic intellectuals snob the new spaces of mediatic intellectuality by refusing to take part in its activities. The October 1996 issue of the French magazine *Lire* lists some of the "hauts lieux de l'intelligence" putting side to side the Sorbonne founded in the XIIIth century and the newspaper *Le Monde* founded in 1944. Amongst these institutions and new spaces also figures Laure Adler's televised show Le Cercle de Minuit about which one reads: "Un noyau dur d'intellectuels boude la télévision, qui rétrécit trop leur pensée. Mais la plupart sont ravis de s'y pavaner. Chez Laure Adler, ils se sentent entre eux et refont le monde, tard la nuit"(51).

² Cercle de Minuit. FRANCE 2. TV5, Montréal. 23 January 1997.

³ Lyotard's article was published in 1984 by Galilée (Lyotard, Jean-François. Tombeau de l'intellectuel et autres papiers. Paris: Galilée, 1984). Michel Foucault's interview is documented in volume three of his collected works (Foucault, Michel. Dits et Ecrits. vol. III. (1976-79). Paris: Gallimard, 1994). Finally, Edward Said's lecture series was published in 1994 (Said, Edward. Representations of the Intellectual. New York: Pantheon, 1994).

⁴ The article after which the collection of essays is entitled, first appears in the September issue of *Le Monde* in 1983. Here I refer to the 1984 publication by Galilée.

⁵ Dits et Ecrits. Vol III (1976-79). Paris: Gallimard, 1994. (p.140 -161).

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