

LOVE IN ADVERSITY: ON
THE STATE AND THE
INTELLECTUALS, AND THE
STATE OF THE
INTELLECTUALS

Zygmunt Bauman

But the species complains; Therefore it exists.

Paul Valéry

The question “who are the intellectuals” is notoriously difficult to answer in a way which would not invite contention. But to answer the question “who is an intellectual”, in anything approaching an operationally effective form, is virtually impossible. The first question is about a role, a function, a systemic location. The second is about personal qualities that permit (or entitle) their bearer to perform such a role and to occupy such a position. The link between the first and the second has been throughout the century a matter of hot theoretical contest, and of a practice which seemed to continually explode any theoretical propositions. Why it should be so, is easy to comprehend once one remembers that whatever the intellectuals are, it was they and they alone who designed the definitions and who contested them. Any attempt to define intellectuals is an attempt at self-definition; any attempt to accord or deny the status of an intellectual is an attempt at self-construction. Defining, and quarrelling about the definitions, is the core of the self-production and self-reproduction. Indeed, as Valéry paraphrased Descartes — they complain; therefore they exist. . .

Otherwise, intellectuals constitute a “social nebula”. What holds for all nebulae, holds for this one as well: “the more closely it is looked at, the more

its contours dissolve and its form melts or shifts away".¹ What Valéry failed to mention, however, is that as far as this particular nebula is concerned, no look from a distance is possible: all reports of sighting come from inside and — for better or worse — stay there. The nebula is never looked at otherwise but closely; its contours are divined rather than found, in the end drawn arbitrarily, and one may wonder whether they would be there at all if not for the relentless urge to draw and redraw them.

We remember that Hegel told us: the owl of Minerva spreads its wings at dusk. Intellectuals came to see themselves as intellectuals (as distinct from being just journalists, novelists, poets, artists, or university professors) only at the twilight of the 19th century, when their unity of function (if it ever existed) was but a memory; perhaps a dream. Seeing themselves as intellectuals, and talking about themselves as intellectuals, was an invitation to join now disjointed forces. It was a postulate for the future, disguised as restoration of the past; and a *programme*, masquerading as the state-of-the-game *report*. It was a declaration of intent to make the group greater than the sum of its parts; to claim and to gain *collectively* a role which cannot be reduced to the specialized, professional roles carried *singly*; to win and retain, again collectively, the function of spiritual leadership of the nation, of the guardian and the censor of its values — which neither poets nor philosophers nor actors could demand on the ground of their separate excellence. Such a function was once had, now lost. It needed to be had again — but this time it must be wrenched out of the selfsame hands which once offered it willingly. Then and now, the hands in question were those of the State.

THE MODERN STATE, THE BIRTH-PLACE OF THE INTELLECTUALS

In his recent study,² Robert Muchembled has convincingly demonstrated that the notorious "civilizing process", which since the pioneering study of Norbert Elias has been seen as the guiding socio-cultural mechanism of modernization, consisted above all in "cultural desynchronization" between the elites and the masses. More precisely, from the 16th century on, Western Europe was a scene of a cultural self-separation of the elites, an acutely selfconscious drive that congealed the rest of society in a "mass" — defined mostly in terms of its "vulgarity", impaired humanity, insufficient emancipation from animal nature, and thus being in need of either domestication or taming.

Though birth and wealth deeply split European society for centuries before, it was only at the threshold of modern times that the dominant and the dominated had become *culturally* estranged, with the dominant defining their own way of life as "cultured" and thereby superior. This designation constituted the dominated mass as a prospective object of either a protracted civilizing crusade or of close surveillance, control, and — as an ultimate measure — of confinement. Whichever of the two latter strategies would be chosen,

the humanity of the “masses” was conceived of as incomplete, and the masses themselves as incapable of completing it by their own efforts. One should observe therefore that the self-separation of the elite had split society into three (and not just two, as Muchembled would suggest) wide social groupings: the *elite*, serving as a self-appointed model of *l'honnête homme*, *l'homme civilisé*, or *l'homme des lumières*; the *masses* (“The Other” of the elite), accordingly raw, uncivilized and unenlightened; and the *trainers* meant to refine, civilize and enlighten the masses (this third category came, with some delay, to complement the guardians of order appointed to disarm and neutralize “unrefined”, and thus unpredictable, “dangerous classes”).³

The trainers were destined to become the major vehicle of the new order; this was, after all, an order unlike any other known in the past. This was to be an order conscious of itself as of human product; an artificial form to be carved in a recalcitrant raw stuff of society; a self-monitoring order, viewing meaningless nature as its only alternative, and itself as the only — forever precarious — protection against chaos. Such an order had to stay unsure of itself, mindful that any lapse of vigilance may restore natural anarchy. Above all, such an order would not trust the natural endowments of its human objects. The latter have not been equipped by nature to co-habit in peace. Society was a house into which they had to be goaded by force; or an art they had to be taught and drilled to practice.

It is the last precept that opened a functionally significant social space for the producers and distributors of ideas. In their turn, the latter did their best to assure that the precept is assigned the most crucial strategic role in the order-building and order-servicing processes. Culture as a theory of social order and as a social practice was a product of that mutual reinforcement. The *theory* assumed that men and women by themselves are unfit to coexist peacefully and unprepared to face the harrowing demands of social life; that they would not overcome that handicap without qualified help and that they must be therefore assisted by “people in the know”: they ought to be educated, and educated so that they embrace the ideas and skills which the knowledgeable people guarantee to be right and proper. The *practice*, on the other hand, was to establish the rule of the *men of ideas*; elevate the indoctrination to the position of the decisive mechanism of production and sustenance of social order; in short, to transform social *domination* into a cultural *hegemony*, and render it firm and invulnerable in the process. Once theory is accepted and put in practice, one may repeat after Ernest Gellner: “at the base of the modern social order stands not the executioner but the professor. Not the guillotine, but the (aptly named) *doctorat d'état* is the main tool and symbol of state power. The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence”.⁴

It may seem that the stage is set for a mutually gratifying love affair between the professors and their employer, the state. They need each other:

power without knowledge is headless, knowledge without power is toothless. They see the world from the same vantage point: as the shapeless virgin expanse to be cultivated and given form. They perceive themselves in similar terms: as form-givers, designers, legislators, gardeners. Each is incomplete without the other; only together they may view themselves as spokesmen and guardians of society as a whole, as carriers/practitioners of society's supreme values and destiny. There is little room for friction. And if there is no friction, one would expect little chance for either side to stand aside and "objectify" itself as a separate entity. The performers of the intellectual task would not set themselves apart from the fabric of social order. They would not set themselves off as *intellectuals*. They would not claim to be a group saddled with a unique mission and unique, group-related grievances. Most certainly, it would not occur to them to say what Valéry were to say a century or so later: "the sting of all intellectual life is the conviction of failure, of abortive character, of insufficiency of past intellectual lives".⁵ To say that, they must first become *critical* of the current managers of social order from whom otherwise they would not mentally separate. They must conceive of themselves as solely responsible for the promotion of values the managers of society either cannot or would not instil or protect. They can constitute themselves as intellectuals (a separate group, with qualities, responsibilities and tasks all of its own) only in the activity of *critique* (that is, an activity now socially perceived as critique because it turned against the officially sanctioned order — not the order the official agencies of society wish to sap and replace).

It is perhaps for this reason that the self-awareness of intellectuals as a group both internally united and externally separate matured first in the countries where modernity was not an unplanned outcome of social change but a consciously embraced goal; that is, in the countries embarking, or facing the possibility of embarking, on the managed and monitored process of *modernization*. These were "relatively backward", "late developing", "left behind" countries, that is, countries whose condition, yesterday seen as normal (or too normal to be noticed at all) had been suddenly re-defined as backward, or retarded, or "in the grip of tradition", or otherwise contemptible, humiliating and unbearable — once exposed to "modern" forms of life developed elsewhere and rapidly gaining in competitive strength, authority and confidence of universality. The newly conceived distance set off the process which the anthropologists called "stimulus diffusion": a process in which an *idea* of a "superior" social form travels on its own, unaccompanied by the socio-economic conditions which gave its birth, having thus acquired the status of *utopia* — of a dream to be reformed into reality by conscious human effort. If in the case of "leading" countries, where the stimulus originated, the manmade provenance of the new pattern could pass unnoticed, or be confused with the appearance of a new reality theorized retrospectively as an outcome of nature-like process, no room was left for ambiguity as far as the "led" countries were concerned.

There, the process could not be conceived in any but blatantly cultural form: a product of revolutionary legislation, of vigorous and purposeful human activity, of “breaking” old forms and “building” new ones — all leading to, and depending on, the construction of the “New Man” fit to sustain, and to live in, the “New Order”.

Embracing the foreign pattern by which from now on the local conditions were to be measured (and to stand condemned) cast those who embraced it in the position of the critics of their own society. They stood themselves as if outside native reality, and that mental distance condensed both the “reality” and their own condition into “objective beings”, sharply opposed and at war with each other. “Reality” was constituted from the start as an object of thorough and deliberate transformation; their own condition, as that of a civilizing agent, cultivator, legislator. Reality was wanting, imperfect, devoid of authority; raw material on which future action was yet to impress its form — in no way an agent in its own right.

The stimulus reached first Eastern Europe — the territory closes to the birthplace of modernity. No wonder that it was there that the concept and the practice of *intelligentsia* were first coined and tried (the word itself entered the international vocabulary in its Russian form) — thus setting a pattern to be endlessly rehearsed later in countless, less or more distant places of the globe affected by the missionary zeal of the civilization confident of its universality. The true meaning of the new concept (and the determinant of the ensuing practice) can be best gleaned from the opposition in which the idea appeared from its beginning: one between “intelligentsia” and “the people”. “Intelligentsia” was, so to speak, the defining agent in the opposition; “the people” was construed as *The Other* of the intelligentsia. The people were the inert clay to the intelligentsia’s active zeal, the slothful against the energetic, the superstitious against the educated, the benighted against the enlightened, the ignorant against the knowledgeable; in short, the backward against the progressive.⁶ The people were as yet unformed, ready to receive in any shape the well-informed, skilful action which the intelligentsia may bestow; and they would never reach such shape were the intelligentsia to fail in its mission.

Arnold J. Toynbee suggested that the intelligentsia, as a “class of liaison-officers”, and by the same token “a transformer class”, is born to be unhappy. It is bound to be viewed in its own country as a “bastard and hybrid”, “hated and despised by its own people”, while “no honours are paid to it in the country whose manners and customs and tricks” it has mastered “and is whole-heartedly devoted to”.⁷ This fate is inescapable, as the intelligentsia lives in a no-man’s land between its own society, from which it has decided to alienate itself, and the “pattern society”, which would never agree to accept it as an equal partner (one would say that the best appreciation the exotic intelligentsia may earn from the metropolitan elite, is that of a clever ape which scratches itself like a human being. . .). The intelligentsia finds itself in a virtual double-bind:

derided by “the people” whom it has chosen to make happy, while at best condescendingly tolerated by the elite whose authority it helped to build up and believed to be unquestionable, it may well end up wishing the plague on both houses. Its critical stance is, so to speak, over-determined; and so is its acute awareness of its own uniqueness and solitude.

THE EXPROPRIATORS WILL BE EXPROPRIATED...

We have noted before that in the north-western tip of the European peninsula, where patterns of modern life and modern society first emerged, the functions later to be articulated as the defining attribute of intellectuals were hardly separated from the general thrust of the modern powers, set to penetrate the nooks and crannies of social life which old powers left happily to the rule of custom and the communal reproductive mechanisms. The work of intellect merged with the practical operations of the nascent modern state; finding the shape of the laws best serving the construction of social order gave meaning and animus to intellectual effort — while the state waged its war against parochialism and sectarianism of all and any *pouvoirs intermédiaires* in the name of the final victory of reason. Viewed in retrospect, the persons engaged in intellectual work — be they scholars, educators, politicians, civil servants or lawyers — all seem harmoniously accommodated within one, as yet undivided, elite of the nascent modern society. Such controversies as could occasionally shake the unity of the elite cut across the elite as a whole and were but poorly correlated with professional or functional divisions. There was hardly an experience from which the awareness of the separate status and mission of *intellectuals* — as distinct from the functions and duties of *professions* — could be moulded. Not for long, though. Two parallel and not necessarily inter-connected processes spelled the imminent end to harmony.

One was the gradual replacement of ideological mobilization (crucial in the period of “primitive accumulation of legitimacy”) by the panoptical system of rule and control — one that put a much smaller premium on the articulation and dissemination of “central values” and hegemonic beliefs (that is, by a system whose efficiency depended much less on what Parsons made belatedly salient by articulating it as the “central value cluster” or “systemic consensus”). As Max Weber noted, the ascending type of legitimacy deployed by the modern state was “legal-rational” — that is, *unideological* and *wertfrei*, one that made the personal convictions of the subject irrelevant to the duty of obedience. With such a technique of power at its disposal, political authority could be — and was — much more dangers lukewarm towards the possible uses and harms of ideas. It could afford to graciously surrender its old right of censorship. It could grant an unheard of freedom of thought in all its manifestations. This act of grace was not, however, an evidence of ascending influence and rising esteem of ideas and their creators. The opposite was true: freedom was granted

because the ideas became irrelevant to everything the political powers stood for and considered important. Speakers could be free because words did not count. Emancipation of culture-creators felt suspiciously like expropriation. . .

The second process divided intellectual work into ever more narrowly circumscribed specialisms. Gone forever are the times when Dickens or Ruskin reviewed Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, when educated men of the time shared their reading and their concerns and their thoughts and their debates — each one knowing most of what was there to be known and — by standards they all shared — was *worth knowing*. No doubt the dismantling of wholes into parts and of those into smaller parts still was that strategy of modern science, technology and practice, which can be justly given credit for modern civilization's most spectacular achievements in expanding the pool of know-how and of material artefacts. It had, however, its price: the dismembering of that social and intellectual space from which a general overview of social purposes and destinations could be made. In terms of the personal role and intellectual potential of newly specialized practitioners this meant blurring the "general" in the "particular", expanding the technically expeditious at the expense of eliminating the culturally relevant. The outcome, as Georg Simmel astutely observed, was that in each separate field of expertise a variety of products is generated "for which, properly speaking, there is no need. It is only the compulsion for full utilization of the created equipment that calls for it". And so an "artificial demand" is created "that is senseless from the perspective of the subject's culture". The practice of the learned specialists is fully consumed in "an elaboration of the unessential into a method that runs on for its own sake, an extension of substantive norms whose independent path no longer coincides with that of culture as a completion of life".⁸

Simmel could add that the course of specialization disavows and delegitimizes the style of criticism which the above statements represent. Phrases like "completion of life" sound hollow once life has been successfully disassembled into a finite quantity of manageable problems, each safely in the hands of expert specialists; and with the capacity of specialist equipment being the only remaining criterion to separate the "realistic" from "ideal fantasy", can usefulness be measured in any other way, particularly with such wobbly, technically useless categories like the "subject's culture"? This circumstance did not escape the attention of Valéry: society has become more like a machine, and "the machine neither will nor can recognize any but 'professionals' . . . Anyone who cannot be replaced by another — for the reason that he is unlike any *other* — is also one who fulfils no undeniable need. So we find in the intellectual population these two remarkable categories: *intellectuals who serve some purpose* and *intellectuals who serve none*".⁹ The logic of specialization saps all other logics; left alone in the field, it streamlines the would-be "general thinkers" as teachers of philosophy, literary critics or journalists; while those who would not fit it threatens to make into incongruous figures ripe for ridicule. Most

certainly, it would make them useless — in every sense of “use” it allows.

The self-assertion (or was it, rather, self-formation?) of the intellectuals was therefore an act of rebellion; and a rebellion against at least two enemies, that demanded engagement on at least three different battlefronts. First of all, one had to oppose the political regime that hermetically sealed itself against any discussion of ethical principles or cultural values and downgraded — as politically irrelevant — those who insisted on the social importance of such discussions; one had to re-assert the political relevance of culture. Secondly, one had to brace oneself against the indifference or resentment, if not active opposition, from the majority of the educated elite well settled in their respective niches of functionally divided society and unlikely to risk the privileges attuned to professional membership and expert status; one had to re-assert the rights of *vocation* (what one *does*) against the institutionalized rights of *professions* (what one *is*). Thirdly, one had to make a new bid for leadership over “the people” — over those many whose assumed need to be guided justified the intellectuals in their desire to guide. Such a leadership has been wrenched from the hands of those to whom it rightly belonged. Now the expropriators must be expropriated. The self-assertion of intellectuals implies ultimately “a conviction shared by the speaker with at least that part of society to which the speech is addressed: conviction that the speaker has authority” of the kind teachers have over pupils.¹⁰

“We, the intellectuals” — makes sense only in as far as “they, the people” need our guidance and we are ready to give it, consciously embracing their *need* as our *responsibility*. “We” is in this case an open invitation to all those qualified to answer the call and prepared to do so; the act of answering the call effaces the boundaries life has drawn between professions and their functions. The call to arms reveals anew the pristine unity of vocation concealed by the fragmentation of professional concerns. After publication of Émile Zola’s open letter to Felix Faure, the President of the Republic, in *L’Aurore Littéraire* of 13 January 1898, protesting against the mistrial of Dreyfus in the name of the superior values of truth and justice, the paper went on to publish, in two dozen subsequent issues, *protestations* signed by hundreds of prominent and publicly known names. These were, above all, the names of distinguished university teachers, each followed by a string of academic titles and honorary distinctions; but among the academics, there was also a generous sprinkling of artists, architects, lawyers, surgeons, writers, musicians. Already in the 23 January issue the editor, Georges Clemenceau could announce that a new, powerful political force has been born, and that rallying around a political idea was the act of its birth: “N’est-ce pas un signe, tous ces *intellectuels* venus de tous les coins de l’horizon, qui se groupent sur une idée?”.

Once set in motion, the avalanche proved unstoppable. Its speed and extent showed that the critical mass had been long accumulated, only waiting for a push — of the sort eventually offered by the Dreyfus *affaire*. The amassed

wrath must have been considerable, since — as Ory and Sirinelli note — the new social force was born “tout armée” and rushed headlong into polemical battle. Polemical engagement was to remain the defining feature of intellectuals as a self-conscious social category; one may say that such a category was a social reality only in as far as it maintained this engagement — taking up public causes, pushing forcefully values ostensibly threatened by public neglect, promoting *truth* against *error* and the cause of public *good* against the powers of *evil*. That engagement seemed to be the only force sustaining the togetherness, the commonality of intellectuals; without it, they would fall apart again, retreating into the many shelters of functionally separated professions.

This is not to imply that the intellectuals have been (even less, that they must necessarily be) united politically, ideologically, or in any other respect except the shared embattled stance and equally shared sense of vocation (that is, aspiration for spiritual leadership over *the people* and the conviction of their own responsibility for the choices and the destinies of society as a whole). Quite on the contrary, a ferocious sibling rivalry, leading to the radicalization of the extreme political positions, accompanied the whole of the intellectuals’ history — to the extent that being rent right in the middle and expending much of their militant energy in internecine warfare seems to be their indispensable, perhaps a defining, attribute. Intellectuals were born already divided and the war in which they joyously immersed themselves had all the marks of a fraternal strife. The initiative of the Zola/Clemenceau duo and the hundreds who joined the cause triggered off an immediate response from Maurice Barrès — one of the most influential minds of the generation — who questioned not so much the right of great intellects to speak up in matters of grave public importance, as the qualifications of that particular group of thinkers to speak the truth the nation needed: those who expressed themselves on the pages of *L’Aurore* wrongly supposed that “society is based on logic”, and overlooked the fact that it rests instead on “anterior necessities”, which may be contrary to reason. Justice, Barrès insisted, makes sense solely within one and the same species, while Dreyfus was a specimen of a different species.¹¹ To the creation of the *Ligue pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen*, Barrès immediately responded by establishing *La Ligue de la Patrie Française*, with a specific brief to fight tooth and nail the inroads of the proDreyfussard league — so that “no one would believe any more” that all the intellectuals seemed to manifest throughout a clear aversion to all “centrist” attitudes,¹² showing a tendency to congregate instead closer to the extremes of the ideological spectrum: there tended to be always two camps, and both camps “united in the same rejection of the established order, for which each camp held responsible someone else. For one group, those responsible were foreigners, Jews, cosmopolitans, internationalists; while for the other, those held responsible were reactionaries, bigots, colonel Blimps, big capital”.

The first clarion call to unite around the special mission and to shoulder a unique responsibility assigned to the intellectuals alone was sounded at the turn of the century in France; responses to the call varied however from one country to another and from one time to another. There were periods, and places, where the identity of intellectual vocation was acutely experienced and manifested in vehement public activity carried under the banner of the "intellectuals". There were other countries and/or times, when one heard little or nothing at all about "the intellectuals" and public debate was conducted without invoking the separate identity and task of intellectuals as a simultaneously united and separate class. Neither the intensity nor invisibility of intellectuals' public presence correlated with the numbers, or even with the socio-cultural weight of the learned professions from which "the intellectuals" are normally recruited. They showed instead an intimate connection with the degree to which the educated professions in their totality were accommodated within the current socio-political order; in particular, with the degree to which the managers of that order were (or were not) trusted to promote and secure the conditions deemed imperative for the performance of professional functions. As Nicole Racine-Furlaud has, for instance, found out, in the aftermath of the Great War discussions of the role and duties of intellectuals almost totally disappeared; yet from 1925 on, the term "intellectuals" again "figures prominently in the manifestoes, extinguishing other terms like 'the Spirit' or 'Reason'". This lexical change seems to mark the end of hopes entertained immediately after the War — hopes that a new international order will arrive soon, or that the world will return to the traditional values of the Christian West".¹⁵ The post-war armistice between the educated classes and the political powers and the dominant culture lasted as long as the hopes remained credible. The hopes served, so to speak, as a collateral for credit offered to the powers that be. Once the collateral disappeared, the selfmobilization of intellectuals took off again, with increased zeal.

It is all too easy at the present time, when the intellectuals rally in the defence of individual rights and freedoms, to assume that the conflict between political leaders and wouldbe spiritual ones was at all times about liberty of thought: the culture-makers alerting the public to the threat of freedom constantly emanating from the seats of government. In fact the texts of unwritten armistice agreements, much as the texts of anti-establishment manifestoes, vary. The see-saw of self-effacing consent and contestant self-assertion does not seem to have a fixed axis — unless one accepts that the true (the only?) issue at stake is that of the social and political status of the educated classes as the selectors of values and managers of their dissemination. It was cultural leadership that mattered; if the state seemed to guarantee conditions for such a leadership — there was no reason left to object. Calls for freedom were aimed against the establishment once the state reneged on its promise and trespassed on the territory the educated classes saw as their family heirloom.

To complicate the matter still further: there is a constitutive affinity between the political rulers and the cultural leaders — the guardians of law and order and the guardians of truth, goodness and beauty: both are *legislators*, both adjudicate between right and wrong, both set standards which they want to be obligatory and which they expect others to obey. Far from being natural enemies of power (a dominating, high-handed, intolerant power), the educated classes need power to perform their duty as defined by the nature of their competence and social function. The relation between the educated classes and modern state is not for that reason one of a perpetual contention.

The relationship is, rather, of a *Haßliebe* type. Suspicion and dissent constantly alternate with a powerful attraction — nay, fascination — with the power of the state. Sometimes, they succeed each other with a breath-taking speed. Most of the time, they cohabit uneasily within the same intellectual community; often inside the same “split personality” of a single intellectual — even if many an intellectual does not like to be reminded of it. As Roland N. Stromberg found out, “the enthusiastic approval accorded by almost all intellectuals of all sorts to the war of 1914 seems to be one of history’s better kept secrets”¹⁴ (in most of intellectuals’ “house histories” we read instead of the glorious 1917 Zimmerwald anti-war gathering). Tony Judt reminded us recently of the truth which, so it seems, ought to have been by now well learned: “it was precisely the intelligentsia, men like Malraux or the British lawyer D. N. Pritt, who were least troubled by the destruction of freedom in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It was *intellectuals* who made the Revolution there, and it was intellectuals to whom they appealed for recognition and legitimacy through the medium of terror, logic, and the intoxicating power of words. As for the victims, they too were intellectuals, some of them with imperfect records of their own (Slansky was a notorious bully and ideologue, and it was Bukharin, ‘the darling of the Revolution’, who joined in the description of Zinoviev and Kamenev after their trial as ‘dogs, traitors, and murderers’).”¹⁵ That was neither the first nor the last time that the intellectuals, pleased with the established sponsorship of their professional ambitions, rallied to the defence of the powers that be against the sappers of standards and dogmas. A recent intellectual manifesto — distributed last year by the *National Association of Scholars* in the USA, warns that “the banner of ‘cultural diversity’ is apparently being raised by some whose paramount interest actually lies in attacking the West and its institutions” — and though it acknowledges the presence of “other cultures, minority subcultures, and social problems” and grudgingly agrees to allowing them some room in the curriculum, makes it clear that “mere acquaintance with differences does not guarantee tolerance”.¹⁶

Intellectuals are the staunchest knights of freedom. But it is their own freedom that is extrapolated as “freedom as such”, as universal liberty — when it comes to a test, one discovers immediately that it does not extend to those who would not unconditionally surrender to the intellectual dictatorship over

culture. The kind of liberty preached and defended by the intellectuals is first and foremost their own freedom to choose the contents, the form, the style of their creation; the right to disavow and disregard all such interest that may constrain that choice and thus force the intellectuals to share their sovereignty over truth, goodness and taste. This casts the intellectuals in a position which cannot but be threatened on two sides at the same time. They are permanently embroiled in two conflicts, have two enemies and two battles to wage: there is the awesome power of the State, with its instruments of coercion, censorship, economic blackmail and whimsically conferred favours; and there are "the masses", or "cultural consumers", insisting on making their own choices and disregarding the choices of their selfappointed cultural guardians, and for this reason denounced by the latter as philistine, vulgar, or ignorant. Intellectuals cannot defeat and subdue both enemies deploying solely their own resources. They must enter alliances, seek support of one enemy against the overwhelming might of the other. They have to compromise, even to make declarations of loyalty — only to find out after a while that dependence on the friendly embrace of the putative ally may be no less hard to bear than the feared oppression by the enemy of the moment.

One can glean the incongruence of the intellectual plight from the perceptive analysis (though not entirely free from self-deception) of the ambivalent relationship between culture (and culture-makers) and the State administration, offered by Theodor Adorno in 1960.¹⁷ Adorno wants everyone to recognize that "that which is specifically cultural is that which is removed from the naked necessity of life". Culture is "what goes beyond the system of selfpreservation of the species". He proclaims, proudly and uncompromisingly, "the sacrosanct irrationality of culture". Such statements are meant to ward off in advance the charges of "uselessness", "unproductiveness", "detachment from *reality*", which the powers that be, the self-proclaimed guardians of rationality and purpose, are notoriously keen to raise against the culture creators whenever the latter clamour for social support for the work for which the powers have no evident use. Adorno knows, of course, that his argument would not cut much ice with those for whose ears it has been aimed. But he cannot stop arguing, because culture cannot do without state sponsorship and assistance: it needs power to make its judgment binding. "The paradox could be developed as follows: culture suffers damage when it is planned and administered; when it is left to itself, however, everything cultural threatens not only to lose its possibility of effect, but its very existence as well". Whence the threat? From "the man in the street", distrustful "that culture does after all have something to contribute to the life of man". It is this "state of consciousness" of "the man in the street" that "would have to be overcome by any culture sufficient to its own concept". Cultural creators therefore cannot but view the "plebiscite form of democracy" with suspicion, as "an offshoot of the totalitarian technique". And so should the government, if it wants to promote (as it is obliged to) a

cultural policy “which has rid itself of social naïveté”; it must proceed with no fear “of the mass of majorities”. “Spiritual progress” always “proceeds at the beginning against the will of the majority”. When translated into the language of current practicalities, this well known general rule means that “the spirit in its autonomous form is no less alienated from the manipulated and by now firmly-fixed needs of consumers than it is from administration”.

What an ideal situation of the intellectual culture-makers would look like, we may gather from the single occasion on which Adorno applies the proposed principles to a practical suggestion:

Administration which wishes to do its part must renounce itself; it needs the ignominious figure of the expert. No city administration, for example, can decide from which painter it should buy paintings, unless it can rely upon people who have a serious, objective and progressive understanding of painting.

The omniscient pretensions of political powers and the all-devouring ignorance of cultural merchants translating as “market demand”: these are Scilla and Charybdis of the contemporary cultural creator. None of these two earthly powers would gladly grant hegemony to the intellectuals; while between themselves, they all but exhaust the territory on which such a hegemony could be conceivably established. The only escape route from the dilemma Adorno can think of leads onwards to the well tried (yet, alas, as a rule disappointing) dream of the “enlightened despot”. One that is despotic enough to sweep aside the *vox populi*, yet enlightened enough to admit his own ignorance and humbly leave decisions to those in the know. And — let us add — one that has been already persuaded that dabbling with cultural choices has been worth his attention in the first place.

“REPOSSESSION” AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The inherently ambivalent relationship between the educated classes and the political administrators of the established order explains the current coincidence of two apparently incompatible trends which otherwise could seem puzzling. On the one hand, we observe all over the world an unprecedented rise in status and influence of all professions which for a better part of this century served as the recruiting pool of the intellectuals. On the other, the tendency of the intellectuals to self-assert and to seek a voice of their own, to speak in their own name, to claim a collective right to adjudicate in the matters of paramount public interest — seems all but to have fizzled out. Much less frequently than before one hears of new “intellectual manifestoes”. The feeling of cross-specialist intellectual unity happens to be resuscitated but sporadically, and mostly when professional prerogatives come under threat when a fellow practitioner of an intellectual profession has been somewhere subjected to a

treatment the protesters would not wish to be applied to themselves. The principles which are still likely to prompt a wide spectrum of professions to rally in their defence seldom reach beyond specifically intellectual concerns and interests. On the other hand, the professions are preoccupied, daily and routinely, with public defense of their own carefully fenced plots. The surgeons and consultants defend hospitals, professors defend universities, and the teachers protect schools, artists demand more funds for the theatres, symphonic orchestras or film industry.

In an interview with Alessandro Fontana and Paquale Pasquino, first published in 1977,¹⁸ Michel Foucault composed what amounts to an obituary to the “universal” intellectual, so called to set him apart from the “specific” intellectual, one that “got used to working not in the modality of the ‘universal’, the ‘exemplary’, the ‘just-and-true-for-all’, but within specific sectors”, “at the precise points” where his own conditions of life or work situate him. The now defunct “universal intellectual”, Foucault suggests, was first and foremost a *writer*, whatever his professional assignment; but “the activity of the writer” is “no longer at the focus of things”. The stage is taken over by the “specific intellectuals”, who are first and foremost *professionals* — magistrates or psychiatrists, doctors or social workers, laboratory technicians or sociologists — whether or not they write and whatever they may write. The universal intellectual was also an offspring “of the jurist, or at any rate of the many who invoked the universality of a just law”. The specific intellectual, on the contrary, is “quite another figure” — an *expert*. If he intervenes in public, he does it “in the name of a ‘local’ scientific truth”. Universal intellectuals are for all intents and purposes extinct; the day belongs to the specific intellectuals. Does this mean, however, that the specific intellectuals *replaced* their universal predecessors? That they took over their function, and thus the right to their title?

Foucault is aware that the assertion of the public role of specific intellectuals may be greeted with incredulity. Indeed, it may be denied on the ground that specific intellectuals are concerned, as it were, with specialist matters which do not much concern the masses, and even if they did, the crusades waged by professionals could hardly appeal to the masses as a struggle calling for their participation; or on the ground that such intellectuals serve by and large the interests of State or Capital, or the narrowly circumscribed, somewhat parochial, interests of the profession. And yet Foucault insists that “it would be a dangerous error to discount [the specific intellectual] politically” on these or any other grounds. Even when concerned solely with their “local” truths, specific intellectuals cannot but engage willy-nilly political power as such, in as far as the regime of truth and that of power overlap, simply because “truth isn’t outside power”, and for this reason the politics of truth cannot be detached from politics in general.

One can think of a “weak” and a “strong” interpretation of Foucault’s apologia of professionals, now promoted wholesale to the rank of intellectuals,

even when branded with the mark of specificity. A weak interpretation would amount to the assertion that any member of the educated class is one way or another involved in the pursuit, articulation and dissemination of some partial truth, but since this activity is political by nature, they are unknowingly and certainly unintentionally “doing politics” (much like Molière’s M. Jourdain spoke all his life prose). This may be so, but by itself it hardly justifies positing the “psychiatrists and laboratory assistants” as contemporary successors and equivalents of intellectuals — not on the strength of their “unconscious politics” alone. A “strong” interpretation would suggest that because the performance of purely professional roles tends to bring the practitioners again and again into an explicit conflict with political rulers and their bureaucratic agents, psychiatrists, laboratory assistants and other learned experts will inevitably discover the link between the “local” truth, close to their hearts and minds, and the more general “regime of truth”, intimately intertwined with politics. They will then become “intellectuals *für sich*”, and take up arms in the conscious political struggle, engaging by the same token the public issues in their totality (much like the proletariat of Lukacs, expected to shed “false consciousness” and embrace the truth of its own historical mission, complete with the necessity of a *total* engagement, while learning from its always partial, sectional and localized struggles). This interpretation, however, has the form of an empirical statement and thus needs to be tested against whatever is known about the tendency of contemporary professionals to “acquire political consciousness” and blend into a more or less integrated political force. Such evidence, however, is hard to come by. There seems to be, on the other hand, a growing evidence of a tendency opposite to the one predicted (hoped for?) by Foucault.

One could well deduce such contrary evidence from the existential condition of “specific intellectuals”. The transformation of “universal” into “specific” intellectuals meant two seminal changes in the way educated classes are constituted. First, they are now cast as *experts*, and that means that even those among them who deal directly with men and women rather than with material objects are related to the lay public (“the people”) not as teachers, guides, and wardens, but operators: they manage human conduct according to knowledge they possess but which is meant to remain esoteric and not brought to the “objects” of management as “enlightenment”. The distance between enlighteners and enlightened is destined (this is, at least the *theory* of enlightenment) to be made continually narrower and bridged in the end, and enlightenment itself is defined as the process of building that bridge. The breach between the expert and the recipient of expert services is meant (*both* in theory *and* practice) to remain forever wide and unbridgeable; indeed, each successive exercise of expertise is to further underline the enormous difference between the know-how of the expert and the incapacity of those dependent on his knowledge and action. Second, educated classes are now cast as *specialists*, and that means that the exercise of their professional duties divides them instead of unifying.

Each specialism is bound to remain esoteric (and, indeed, a closely guarded secret, to be used as an instrument of downgrading and keeping away the “uninitiated” and protecting the “insiders” against outside impostors) not only for the non-educated, but also in relations with others specialisms, which are now, actually or potentially, competitors in the constant struggle for the more favourable division of scarce resources. If the concept of the “intellectuals” invokes a relatively united class with a common mission and a tendency to a unified action — the term “specific intellectuals” seems to be a *contradiction in terms*.

In his profound study of the history and inner tendencies of professionalization and professionalism, Harold Perkin¹⁹ found that the prevalent attitude of professionals to the human “objects” of their expertise is one of arrogance and mental disdain: he notes the “collective condescension of the professionals for what they perceive as the uncomprehending masses incapable of understanding their message”. The “masses” are an aggregate of the objects of action, not partners of conversation — an image one would only expect to represent mute, inarticulate objects of (as Bakhtin would say) *monological* practice. The practice of expertise, after all, is about deepening the dependence, the “reification” of its objects, and it can admit of “dialogical” relation with the object only at the risk of its own demise. Professional secrecy, enforced either by an explicit code of behaviour or thanks to an impenetrable wall of esoteric language, is the most trusty defence of the elevated status and an effective way of freezing all movement threatening to undermine it. Professionals *act* towards the lay public; they *converse* solely with each other, by the same token constituting other professionals as their equals and setting them apart from the reified mode of the rest. But Perkin did not find the *mutual* relations between experts to be any more forthcoming or friendly than their collective attitude towards the lay public: to convey the spirit of the vehement sibling rivalry, he paraphrased Shaw: “one professional cannot open his mouth without being despised by another one”. Each specialism does its best to undermine the authority of another, as if seeing in other experts’ discreditation the surest way to elevate one’s own prestige. The collegial critique is on the whole soaked with malice and envy, meant to harm rather than help, while the opinion of other fields of expertise — particularly those closest to the home territory — could hardly be more disdainful and downgrading. Thus one hears, Perkin notes, that “physics is fundamental knowledge; chemistry is only applied physics”; that “natural science is science, social science is organized prejudice”; that “economists deal in facts; political scientists think the plural of anecdote is data”; that “social science produces testable theories; history is mindless empiricism”. Each reader could easily extend *ad infinitum* Perkin’s list without straining her/his memory too much. The scarcer are the university funds, the more a single off-guard moment may cost and thus less love is left to be lost between academic colleagues. . .

SILENCE IN THE WILDERNESS

Since 1983, when Max Gallo, a spokesman for the Elysée Palace, complained about the “silence of the intellectuals”, the sudden conspicuous absence of the intellectual voice from the public scene had been repeatedly noticed in one Western country after another, and everywhere debated with a mixture of bafflement and anxiety. It seems that the public announcement of their own demise has been the last remaining public service rendered by the intellectuals of the type one remembers from the heady days of giant ideological battles. There are some acute observers, to be sure, who suggest that the impression of absence reflects not so much the silence of the intellectuals, as the loss of public interest in whatever intellectuals may say or do: intellectuals do not talk less, they are less listened to. Perhaps one could still find (if one wanted to seek) a good measure of *franc-tireurs* of the Absolute and no lesser a quantity of the “terrorists of the Relative” — the two “general specialisms” in which the intellectuals of yore traditionally excelled; but it may be the case that fewer people than ever find any use for the absolute, and fewer still feel frightened by the relative. . .

One can go on arguing which has been the cause, which the effect: did the educated classes, allured by the attractions and tangible benefits of their new, comfortable offices, betray their mission and teach the public not to expect anything exciting from their quarters? Or did they rather grudgingly retreat into their respective professional shelters, put off by the growing indifference, nay dissipation, of their ancient public? Most likely, the current “invisibility of the intellectuals” has been a joint product of both processes. I suggest that the processes in question have been but psycho-social effects of a deeper, structural change to which both of them can be ultimately traced: to the passage from the *panoptic* to the *seductive* technique of social control and integration.

The “panoptic” — surveilling, disciplining, oppressive — power of the kind described by Foucault has been for the last half century or so receding into the background, reduced to the defence of the outer boundaries of an expanding society of consumers and to the disposal of human waste such a society must necessarily sediment. So has been as well the corollary and the supplement of panoptic power — one pondered nostalgically by Habermas: the state desperately seeking “substantive” legitimation, the state wishing the oppressed to love their oppression and approve of their oppressed state. Between themselves, the two twin attributes of “classic” modern politics — coercion and ideological mobilization — tended to collectivize social conditions into “joint causes” and politicize resulting strategies, forging grievances and desires into political programmes invariably addressed towards the state as the ultimate manager and executor of all effective social change. This opened a vast space for the activity of “intellectual power” — articulation and dissemination of “universal (societal) values”, linking group interests to “public

issues" — as an indispensable factor of systemic reproduction. But this does not seem to be the case anymore; at least not to the extent it used to be at times retrospectively portrayed by Foucault and Habermas.

For most members of consumer society, seduction tends today to replace oppression as the main determining factor of conduct and life concerns. The consumer market is now the main site for self-building and self-assertion, as well as of social approval and confirmation of private projects. The market setting differs from the panoptic one by the *privatization* of efforts, their frustration and the resulting grievances. That the market produces less misery and dissent than did the overt oppression of a norm-imposing, surveilling and punishing power, is — to say the least — debatable. What is not contentious, however, is that dissent generated by the dashing of market-focused hopes tends to be diffuse and resistant to cumulation. If it can be integrated at all, the emergent collective causes are as a rule partial and local, and hardly ever put on the agenda the very principle of market-guided privatization of tasks and responsibilities, or challenge the values the consumer market exemplifies and claims to implement. Unlike in the work-centred settings, in the settings that evolve around consumer choices "public causes" are unlikely to arise, while the value-discourse seems to bear little relevance to the "real issues" which haunt mundane day-by-day life business.²⁰

This is why there is little left in the public sphere to draw out into the open the educated elite comfortably settled in their professional retreats. As we have seen above, their own concerns (privatized like all the others) are no less than other concerns resistant to cumulation; and there are few, if any, collectivized concerns in what used to be the public realm which would command their attention and cast them collectively in the role of spiritual leaders. The logic of professionalism may therefore work its way undisturbed and undistorted.

Russell Jacoby has offered an incisive analysis of the impact of professionalization on the dissolution (and, eventually, disappearance) of the New York intellectual *milieu*. The former free-lance leaders of public opinions have been promoted to university chairs of history, political science or sociology. They are now distinguished professors and speak from the lecture and seminar rooms (though their voice seems to be somewhat muffled by the walls and seldom reaches beyond the university campus). Indeed, today "to be an intellectual requires a campus address". But having a campus address, Jacoby suggests, is more than a topographic shift: "While the Marxists and radical critics of the past — Lewis Mumford, Malcolm Cowley — never deserted the public, Jameson never sought it; his writings are designed for seminars". All in all, "colleagues have replaced a public, and jargon has supplanted English". Not that old war horses have deserted the battlefield altogether. They do rally under banners, that of academic freedom remaining by far the most popular. But "for many professors in many universities academic freedom meant nothing more than the freedom to be academic".²¹ Social engagement of the

academics, if it happens at all, becomes an incestuous affair. Their battles, often ferocious and cruel, seldom make the blood of the uninitiated “outsiders” run faster. However overblown in the minds of the warriors, the stakes of the holy wars are mostly nothing more “universal” than access to university funds, jobs, and house distinctions.

For France, Régis Debray dated the end of the “university cycle” (that is, the period when intellectual careers were made and broken predominantly within the academic institutions) at about 1930; in his view, an “editorial cycle” followed, to be replaced around 1968 by the “media cycle”. What the New York intellectuals went through in the course of the latest generation, happened to their French equivalents a few decades earlier: confinement to the university becoming tantamount to the exile to esoteric places “where colleagues replaced a public”. The road to the limelight shifted them to great publishing houses, only to shift again to the media — above all, to television. With each shift, the rules of the game, the standards of promotion, the tools of public influence and the meaning of notoriety underwent profound changes. Above all, with each step the job of mediating (granting?) intellectual influence was taken over by different managers entrenched in different institutionalised sites; already by 1930, it slipped from the intellectuals’ own hands and became largely independent collegial evaluation. By now, it is “the market that makes laws”, and the universities have long lost their monopoly over the production of intellectual reputations stretching beyond the committee room and annual gatherings of esoteric professional associations. Every intellectual recognizable as such is constructed, so to speak, at two levels: “en bas, la légitimité (le savoir); en haut, l’effectivité (le faire-savoir)”. More important than the certificate of competence or a learned title is the possibility “to make it function” — and that possibility is not decided by academic caucuses. This circumstance could not but radically reverse the traditional criteria of public influence: no more need of *l’école, la problématique, l’enceinte conceptuelle*; “the truth value of pronouncements disappears behind the spectacle value of the announcers”.²²

Debray dubs the current cycle “mediocratic”: the managers of the media preside over the formation of the “intellectuals”, that is, of the publicly visible and potentially influential segment of the educated classes. If they do not have full control over the content of the message — they certainly decide how the emphases are to be distributed, and see to it that only such messages are likely to get a share of the limelight as carry a potential “spectacle value”.

There is little doubt that what is now clearly seen as the “spectacle value” (or, to put it more bluntly yet, the entertainment value) of a potentially public debate has always played a non-negligible role in securing the access of intellectual messages to public influence. The advent of mass media gaining a virtually exclusive ascendancy over the public attention (indeed, over the public world vision) only changed the priorities. But that small change has farreaching consequences. Intellectual manifestoes, as far as they go on being

written, are reduced to the level of other “news”, none capable of ascertaining their relative importance in any other way than by recording the audience (spectatorship, to be more exact) ratings. And the issues raised must, like other media items, prove their *raison d'être* by showing the merits of public spectacles.

Public attention is today the scarcest of resources. Clearing sites for new objects of consumption is the most mind-boggling of tasks faced by the economy organized around needsand-desires-formation as well as the major service that economy demands to be rendered by the State (a most striking example having been provided by the Gulf War, coming close on the heels of the “Cold” one, and having as one of its main tasks, perhaps also its main motives, the “liquidation” of the contents of overstocked armament warehouses). Among many marketed goods, information is arguably the most plentiful, most multipliable and easiest to replenish — hence the crucial importance of public attention, which in the case of information decides the volume of consumer capacity and customer demand (much as the degree of arousal of sexual drive or desire of public approval determines the demand for cosmetics). Whatever their content and however one measures their “objective” importance, intellectual messages must vie for their “share of the market” (that is, the share of public attention) with other competitors, following common rules of the competitive game. Like other products, they need game experts (the specialists in advertizing or “hard selling”) to stand a chance of success. Like other commodities, they must pass the test of the market — demonstrate (win) their saleability. It is the passing of that test that weighs much heavier than any other conceivable trait on the destiny of the intellectual engagement with social reality.

The crucial question is, therefore, what issues (if any) stand a chance of passing such a test, and therefore to be picked up by the marketing experts. Ory and Sirinelli²³ are right when they imply that the absence of “big issues” is a lame excuse, since traditionally intellectuals themselves made issues big by writing them large on their banners and whipping or cajoling the public into paying the attention they thought they deserved. But what was traditionally true is not necessarily true today, in a world specializing in dismantling habits before they ossify into traditions. Intellectuals, if they wish, may still write slogans on their banners, but they do not anymore control the gathering of followers. Their issues become “big” not for the strength of argument which backs them, but because they *sell well* — the one element of destiny intellectuals control but poorly. What they may count on most (and what quite a few of them sincerely enjoy), is to be invited by the managers of the media to read out a line or two in a scenario they did not script; for the managers, they are of use as experts, lending some of their esoteric authority to the “spectacle value” of performance. Each appearance of an intellectual in public view exacerbates therefore the collective “desintellectualization” of intellectuals as a category: it reinforces the extant professional split and strengthens the grip in

which the “expert role” holds the status and the public image of the educated classes.

With the institutional setting being a liability rather than an asset, the odds are clearly against the possibility of the intellectuals of the post-modern era re-asserting the collective role they played to popular acclaim at the height of modernity. Somewhat cryptically and not without falling into an error of hypostasis, André Gorz gave vent to the resulting sentiment of prospectlessness, when he declared a few years ago that “à la différence des précédents, la crise présente n’annonce rien”. Baudrillard, true to his style, sounded harsher still; there is no “social”, no society, no history — and thus, by definition, no more intellectuals. What both seem to say, is that unlike in the relatively recent past, the intellectuals lack an Archimedean point on which the lever of history could be based; one by one, the alternatives to “what is” have been discredited and had to be discarded. To make things more depressing yet, they are not sure in which direction they would wish history to move, were the lever strong enough to move it. With too many successive dreamworlds remembered mostly for the painful scars they left, the very activity of dreaming has been cast into disrepute. Ours is a world bereaved by defunct certitudes, but also a world unsure of the purpose certitudes may serve. In the words of François de Closets, “in Paris like in Moscow answers are sought without being able to ask the questions”.²⁴ In retrospect, the famous May 1968, hailed as the historical encounter between those who think and those who suffer, seems more like a grand dress rehearsal of the postmodern *rebellion without a cause*.

Were Voltaire revising today his *Candide*, would he change the ending to “mais il faut regarder le télé”?

Notes

1. Paul Valéry, *History and Politics*, trans. Denise Folliot and Jackson Mathews (New York, Pantheon Books, 1962), p. 80.
2. cf. Robert Muchembled, *L'invention de l'homme moderne: Sensibilités, moeurs et comportements collectives sous l'Ancien Regime* (Paris, Fayard, 1988). According to the author, ‘à partir du XVII siècle il intensifie la coupure entre les deux planètes mentales séparées. Les gens civilisés ne savent plus sentir le peuple, au sens propre du mot’ (p. 13). Though by the 18th century newly introduced means of social control over the uprooted, the “masterless”, the “mob” and the uncouth villagers made considerable advance and society on the whole “apparaît de plus en plus policée”, the dominant groups “ne s’écartent pas moins des masses populaires, jugées brutales, sales et totalement incapables de refréner leurs passions pour se couler dans un morale civilisé” (p. 150). Muchembled opposes the somewhat benign view of the “civilizing process” bequeathed by Elias: “Contrairement à certaines opinions, la civilisation de moeurs en marche, sous ses diverses formes, n’est pas une machine à niveler les différences. Au contraire, elle produit des êtres divers, situés sur différents barreaux de l’échelle socio-culturelle” (p. 220). The elites prided themselves

on the polished manners as the sign of not just cultural, but social distinction: "Ce savoir-vivre porte de valeurs qui se veulent universelles. Son objectif n'est pourtant nullement de niveler la société: les automatismes et les interdits profondément assimilés servent en fait de fonctions de différenciation. Ils produisent la distinction par l'isolement culturel. Ils inventent le 'moi' et le surmoi par opposition à la puissance du sens collectif qui organise la vie du plus grand nombre" (p. 230). The elevated way of life that the elites developed for their own use was not meant to be shared. The dominated masses are not trained in the manners of their betters. No one seeks "à les faire ressembler aux bien nés ou aux gens aisés"; instead, they are "encardés, punis, modifiés" so that they are forced to "jouer le jeu de la soumission" (p. 201). Indeed, the century was marked by the virulence with which the upper classes and their moralist spokesmen attacked and condemned the "popular superstitions" — but with few, if any, signs of the impending proselytizing campaign which, in the form of universal education and moral crusades, was to dominate the next century. Muchembled suggests that if the elites were slow in coming round to the idea of "converting" the masses to their own image, it was because at the early stages of elitist "self-refinement" "le danger n'est pas uniquement extérieur, il est aussi intime" (p. 234).

3. From the vantage point of the second half of the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche was already able to note that the weapon of dominations was two-pronged: "The Governments of the great states have two instruments for keeping the people dependent, in fear and obedience: a coarser, the army, and a more refined, the school". Nietzsche sensed the exclusive mobilizing (incorporating, integrating) potential of the second instrument: with its help, the rulers "win over gifted poverty, especially the intellectually pretentious semi-poverty of the middle classes. Above all, they make teachers of all grades into an intellectual court looking unconsciously toward the heights" (*Human All-Too-Human, A Book for Free Spirits*, Part 2, trans. by Paul V. Cohn (Edinburgh, F. W. Foulis, 1911), p. 152).
4. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983), p. 34.
5. Paul Valéry, *Mauvaises Pensées et Autres* (Paris, Galimard, 1943), p. 9.
6. Russian radical members of the intelligentsia of the Lacroix, Tkachev or Lenin kind were not entirely original; set in extreme conditions propitious to the conception of laboratory-style formulations, they only sharpened the beliefs which elsewhere surfaced but seldom and on the whole in a somewhat milder form. Remember, for instance, Matthew Arnold's famous injunction: "The aspirations of culture... are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they say what they like, is worth saying... Culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like it" (*Culture and Anarchy* [orig. 1869] (Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 50). Or Ernest Renan's fulminations against liberty of education — an ideal which he considered a contradiction in terms and an absurdity. "Des imbeciles ou des ignorants auront bien se réunir, [mais] il ne sortira rien de bon de leur réunion... Il est certain

- qu'avant l'éducation du peuple toutes les libertés sont dangereuses et exigent des restrictions" (*Pages Choisis* (Paris, Calman Levy, 1896), pp. 27–28).
7. cf. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 5 (Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 154–155.
 8. "On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture" in *The Conflict of Modern Culture and Other Essays*, trans. K. Peter Etzkorn (New York, Teachers College Press, 1968), pp. 42–44.
 9. *History and Politics*, pp. 82, 84. Those condemned as useless are stubborn, though: "Among living intellectuals, some spend themselves in serving the machine, others in building it, others in inventing or planning a more powerful type; a final category of intellectuals spend themselves in trying to escape its domination" (pp. 79–80). The last category of intellectuals — which came to describe itself as *intellectuals* — can assert itself only in the struggle not so much against the machine itself, as against the fellow intellectuals who serve it. . .
 10. Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les Intellectuels en France, de l'Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris, Armand Colin, 1986), p. 9. To prove their case for leadership, intellectuals aspiring to collective reassertion had to argue the superiority of the resources they represented over those possessed by the established (political) leaders; they had to oppose "the values of truth and justice to those of power and order". An indispensable element of the strategy was the claim that the intellectuals, and they alone, are (in Lucien Herr's words) people "qui savent faire passer le droit et un idéal de justice avant leurs personnes, leurs instincts de nature et leurs égoïsmes de groupe". This unique capacity has been ascribed to the very same feature to which the adversaries pointed in order to arouse suspicion against the intellectuals' qualifications as leaders: to the "non-belongingness" of the intellectuals to any of the established groups, and the resulting "uprootedness" (p. 18).
 11. cf. Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines de Nationalisme* (Paris, Émile Paul, 1902). Justice and truth are both *national*, and resist the incursions of cosmopolitan, "uprooted" reason. "Qu'est-ce que la vérité? Ce n'est point des choses à savoir, c'est de trouver un certain point, un point unique, celui-là, nul autre, d'où toutes choses nous apparaissent avec des proportions vraies. . . L'ensemble de ces rapports justes et vrais entre des objets données et un homme déterminé, le Français, c'est la vérité et la justice français; trouver ces rapports, c'est la raison français" (pp. 12–13).
 12. *Les Intellectuels en France*, p. 30. No wonder; the centrist position would mean an exit of the intellectuals' "horror of the centre", one would rather observe that only the critical extremes of the political spectrum are conducive to the processes that integrate an otherwise disparate profession into a category unified by its vocation.
 13. "Bataille autour d'Intellectuel(s) dans les manifestos et contre-manifestos de 1918 à Bonnard-Lanette et J. L. Rispail (Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1989), p. 227.
 14. "The Intellectuals and the Coming of War in 1914", *Journal of European Studies* (June 1973). Commenting on the unanimity of intellectuals in the enthusiastic support for their respective governments with which they had been heretofore in any-

thing but friendly relationship, Stromberg suggested that "In fact, the mood which sent idealistic youth off to the war in 1914 was very like that which impels the present younger generation into the street to protest against the war. The youth movements which poured their energies into World War I were quite like today's in fundamentals: in their accusatory attitude toward the older generation, their desire to escape the trammels of convention, their fuzzy but powerful idealism and Utopian aspiration to remake the world. They sought a grand cause and found it in the heroism and reviving power of a military crusade". Compare also the perceptive study of the same episode in intellectual history, John Cruikshank, *Variations on Catastrophe: Some French Responses to the Great War* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982).

15. cf. "Justice as Theatre", *Times Literary Supplement* (18 January 1991), p. 6.
16. cf. Peter Brooms, "Western Civ at Bay", *Times Literary Supplement* (25 January 1991), p. 6.
17. All quotations are taken from Wes Blomster's translation, published under the title "Culture and Administration", *Telos* 37 (1978), pp. 93–111.
18. "Intervista a Michel Foucault" in Michel Foucault, *Microfisica del Potere* (Turin, 1977). Here quoted from English translation by Colin Gordon, published under the title "Truth and Power" in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (Brighton, Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 126ff.
19. cf. *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London, Routledge, 1989), pp. 390–398.
20. For a fuller discussion of this trend, see my *Freedom* (Open University Press, 1988); also my forthcoming *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London, Routledge, 1991).
21. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals* (New York, Basic Books, 1987), pp. 220, 167, 180, 119.
22. Régis Debray, *Le Pouvoir Intellectuel en France* (Paris, Ramsey, 1979), pp. 99, 120, 97–98.
23. *Les Intellectuels en France*, p. 233: "L'intellectuel crée ses enjeux plus qu'ils ne s'imposent à lui, il décide, à tout le moins, de leur hiérarchie".
24. "Pour que demain l'autre ne peuple pas notre enfer", *L'Événement* (3–9 January 1991), p. 52.