

Exile without Borders*

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ABSTRACT

This article offers an extended reflection on the institutional ambiguity of the intellectual, between privilege and exile, exploring its sources, notably in the clash between Pauline Christianity and freedom, and its contemporary articulation.

1. Knowledge; autonomy

The coming together of human knowledge and autonomy in the Copernican discovery of the “revolutions of the heavenly spheres,” which represented both a reform of thought and a renewal of humanity, left its imprint on the character of philosophers, scientists, and modern intellectuals. One can observe that new confluence of knowledge and freedom in their artistic, literary, and scientific output. Yet the changes in the intellectual landscape inaugurated by the new human sciences was not merely an emancipation of thought from ecclesiastical and monarchic control. Philosophers and scientists such as Luís Vives, Sebastian Franck, and Paracelsus conceived of the new knowledge as a medium for an explicit critique of feudal absolutism, Christian imperialism, and the human suffering and misery that these institutions imposed *per totum orbis terrarum*.

Vives questioned the brutality of the imperialism of the Cross. Franck spoke out against the European wars of religion. Paracelsus (1952: 310 ff.), physician, botanist, astrologer, and metaphysician, bitterly denounced a Roman papacy that, while professing to spread the doctrine of Christ throughout the world, employed death and slavery to achieve its ends and indulged in orgies of corruption and contempt for the Christian masses. All three thinkers based their opposition to Christian absolutism on a belief in the autonomy of reason, in the capacity of humanity to build a historical world in accord with the divine harmony of the heavens. From Judah Abravnel to Giordano Bruno, the humanism of the sixteenth century sustained a belief – even to the point of enduring the ultimate consequences of holding such a belief: persecution, torture, and death – in the possibility of reestablishing this accord between the

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historical world and the cosmos. Similarly, the new humanism held out the possibility of restoring spiritual order through a millenarian tradition that integrated Vedic philosophy with the cosmology of the Egyptian magi and with Talmudic wisdom, a tradition that dialogued simultaneously with Sufi mysticism, the Cabala, and modern astronomy. Works such as the *Encyclopédie* and the *Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen* are late products of this unification of human knowledge and autonomy.

The institutional ambiguity of the intellectual – privileged by nobles and kings, and indeed by the Renaissance church itself, and at the same time subject to persecutions and exile – is inherent in this two-fold foundation. The unification of knowledge and liberty elevated the humanist to a level of understanding “like that of the prophets,” as Abravanel wrote when he fled from Spain (Sloush 1928: 19). But at the same time, the autonomy of knowledge signifies domination: “*scientia et potentia humanae in idem coincident*,” in Francis Bacon’s formulation. The very same unity of knowledge and autonomy that raised Erasmus and Bruno to the rank of intellectual and social reformers of thought and society also conferred the status of “useful” knowledge on the new sciences, whose “fruits,” mythologically identified with the divine feminine and with the fecundity of nature, Bacon had already assigned to the category of capitalist lucre derived from industrial enterprises and colonial expansion. The grand systems of modern philosophy are the architectonic expression of the fragile equilibrium between scientific reason and technological, economic, and social transformations, transformations linked to the ambivalent human meanings of industrial and postindustrial progress.

One of the highest expressions of the unity of knowledge and freedom is found in Goethe. In his botanical and minerological studies, as well as in his critique of Newtonian physics, Goethe combined a rigorous theory of scientific knowledge with humanity’s most ancient literary and philosophical wisdom. But Goethe’s project, which saw its poetic crystallization in the figure of Faust, was nonetheless destined to founder both politically and epistemologically on the shoals of the mechanical conception of nature, which superimposed itself on the “Spinozan” interpretation of plant morphology, and on Goethe’s “romantic” theory of color as well, without any stronger rationale than its congruence with the imponderables of mechanical production and the progress of instrumental reason. Moreover, the economic and political conflicts at work in Goethe’s *Faust* announce the reasons for the project’s interior dissolution, a truth formulated explicitly in later versions of Faust, including Nikolaus Lenau’s in the nineteenth century and Klaus Mann’s in the twentieth.

In the end, capitalist progress carried off the beatific vision of cosmic and social harmony contemplated by modern science in the age of Paracelsus and Kepler. It abolished the dialogue between muse and machine that positivists still dreamed of in the great European industrial expositions of the nineteenth century and dissolved the unity of human knowledge and autonomy on which the socialist revolutions of that same century were built. From the moment that American Independence and the *Grande Révolution* evolved into the political and military apparatus of a new secular and technocratic imperialism and the industrial revolution converted scientific epistemology into an instrument of neocolonial subordination on a global scale, from the moment that the learned work of education and enlightenment was shifted into a global system of cultural production and media-transmitted contempt, the modern intellectual has become socially secluded, linguistically fractured, and internally divided. Hölderlin first represented this crisis in the figure of Empedocles, pursued by brutalized masses who could not comprehend the emancipatory value of his critique. An unbroken strand of testimonials to the resulting solitude and desolation stretches from Goya to Munch to Beckman.

Marx, Bachofen, Nietzsche, and Freud, each set about to transform the constituent political and metaphysical elements of the decadent and imperiled civilization in which they found themselves. With the radicality of Renaissance humanists or Enlightenment philosophers, they embraced a wide spectrum of disciplines, including epistemology and natural philosophy, hermeneutics and anthropology, and social theory conjoined with literary and aesthetic criticism. Their work restored the unity of knowledge and human freedom found in Spinoza or Bruno. All of them attested to the need for social and cultural rebirth that could put an end to the suicidal march of nineteenth – and twentieth – century industrial capitalism, and to the cultural decadence that capitalism brought in its wake. Marx reshaped the legacy of a European socialism that had struggled to reestablish harmonious relations in the social and natural realms. Bachofen uncovered matriarchal cults that had stood in non-destructive relationships to nature and had preserved democratic traditions eliminated by the patriarchal order. Nietzsche fixed his gaze on the regenerative possibilities of Greek art and philosophy which Christianity had laid to waste. And Freud developed a method for reeducating a modern consciousness that was choked with guilt, anxiety, and internal division.

The twentieth century has seen an uninterrupted series of reforms and revolutions that have sought to create an alternative to the globally devastating effects of colonialism, to the proliferation of warfare, and to social differences of ever-increasing enormity and social conflicts of ever-increasing intensity. In a manner that is as much aesthetic as

philosophical or social, this tradition of resistance has redirected the waters of artistic and philosophical thought through a profoundly transformative channel. The Russian Revolution of 1917, the liberation of India and China from colonial rule, the national independence movements that arose across the expanse of Africa, and the revolutions in Mexico and Cuba have stood as historic milestones in this endeavor. Out of the crucible of these social changes a new type of intellectual emerged. Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, Antonio Gramsci, Mahatma Gandhi, Patrice Lumumba, and Che Guevara all started as writers, philosophers, or journalists and subsequently converted their awareness of the inhumanity of industrial capitalism, and of colonialism, into a social praxis that included methods for political enlightenment, strategies for resistance to authoritarian political systems, and a vision of human solidarity.

At the same time, the twentieth century has also been assaulted and held captive by an unbroken succession of totalitarian systems, imperialist wars, and genocides. Along with a concentration of power in the hands of corporations and the military, the twentieth century has witnessed the development of a complex institutional machinery of propaganda, ideological control, and control effected via mass media. One consequence of the development of this machinery has been the coercion and persecution visited upon intellectuals. Soviet Stalinism, European National Socialism, American McCarthyism, and the various fascisms of Latin America have all offered, on a grand scale, a veritable montage of violations of intellectual autonomy, some flagrant and others covert. The inevitable outcome has been the constant infringement of intellectuals' rights, their permanent exile, and their infinite silence, ultimately resulting in the quarantining of the intelligentsia, heretofore excluded from a public reality monopolized by political authorities, from the commercial means of communication, and from the corporate domain of the techno-sciences.

The new concentrations of power have, for their part, been accompanied by new techniques of production, new systems of propaganda, and the astonishing growth of information technologies that have altered the forms and idioms of intellectual praxis. The unity of knowledge and moral consciousness that once formed the backbone of intellectual praxis has long since disintegrated into a thousand fragments. Intellectuals are now experts and specialists. The scope of their responsibility is limited entirely to instrumental activities, their role reduced to a type of professionalism subject to corporate vigilance and departmental discipline. The conditions of the academic and industrial production of knowledge locate the intellectual within a circumscribed system of micro-domains that, in the best of circumstances, tolerates ethics only as a means to institutional legitimation. In the final analysis,

the micro-political networks governing intellectual conduct strangle the expert to the point of complete intellectual nullification. It is for this reason that the academy continues to validate the disappearance of critical discourse, the paralyzation of reflective consciousness, and the alleged messianic arrival of the postintellectual.

But the intellectual's destiny does not end there. If corporate dominion molds an expert who is pedestrian and disciplined, then in a complementary manner, the culture industry casts the intellectual in the role of professional performer. The former sacrifices all socially responsible communication in the name of professionalism; the latter sacrifices all conceptual and moral rigor for the sake of a mindless cultural spectacle. Both are ruled by the same norms of monetary rationality, but whereas the technocrat is submerged in administrative anonymity, the cultural performer is exhibited throughout the global village with all of the fetishistic glamour once reserved for media stars.

This is the stigma borne by modern intellectuals. Throughout the twentieth century, one attempt after another to organize a democratic and egalitarian society has been crushed. Again and again, political contempt has triumphed over the mass of humanity reduced to impotence and hopelessness. Continually and impassively, we have countenanced concentration camps and refugee camps, the implementation of organized torture and rape, the genocidal use of weaponry, and the dislocation of entire populations by military force. We have been confronted directly with the most extreme forms of human degradation. From the First World War to the global war on terror, modern and postmodern intellectuals have witnessed all of these epiphenomena of capitalist civilization in ever growing proportions. And every time the same pattern of silence, indifference, cowardice, and retreat is repeated; the same stance of implicit collusion and explicit cynicism with regard to totalitarian policies and corrupt regimes is enacted; the same complicity and silence are duplicated and sealed with the politically correct semiotics of sublime patriotisms, impeccable democracies, or perfect communisms.

Julien Benda described the affiliation of European intellectuals with nationalist political movements, which opened the door to fascism and Stalinism, and ultimately to the Second World War, as "le trahison des clercs." But since that time, the charge has acquired global resonance, and its reach now extends far beyond the limited political spectrum that was the concern of Benda's original essay. The passivity displayed both by intellectuals and the academy in the face of the ascent of fascism in the 1930s, the muteness of professionalized intellectuals in the face of the development of nuclear and biological weapons during the Cold War, and the complicity of the "global professor" in the face of the ecological and social destruction of the Third World, are successive examples of an

intellectual consciousness thoroughly immobilized by fear, diminished by opportunism, intimidated by patriotic and nationalist populisms, and contaminated by decadent aestheticism.

No modern depiction has made the poverty of the intellectual – a poverty of many dimensions, moral, artistic, sexual, and political – manifest in a more disturbing fashion than Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*. Mann's novel sought above all to portray both the precarious position of intellectuals who opposed the National Socialist state in Germany and the human vicissitudes caused by persecution, banishment, and exile. But Hendrick, an actor and the novel's protagonist, makes manifest something else that is as dismal as the persecutions and genocides perpetrated by modern fascism: the paralysis of the intellectual faced with the coercive power of the state, and the transformation of an independent artist into an agent fully incorporated into and identified with the performatization of fascist political machinery. *Mephisto* testifies to the annihilation of the modern intellectual as a sovereign consciousness at the very moment in which he is triumphantly elevated to the summit of global power as spectacle.

The historical situation perceived by Mann should in no way be discounted as a simple nightmare of a now defunct authoritarianism. His novel, along with the ban it was subjected to in the postwar years and its subsequent cinematic recuperation by Istvan Szabó, make bring to light a very contemporary problem.¹ *Mephisto* describes the transformation of intellectuals and artists – once mediators of a social process of apprenticeship and of liberation in the sense described by humanists such as Leibniz and Diderot – into stars of the cultural industry, politico-artistic fabulists and producers of politics as work of art. The classic model of this process is still undoubtedly the theory of culture developed by Goebbels – the executive producer of National Socialist propaganda and the man who first connected film production and modern communications to the military-industrial complex and its political representatives, all under an aesthetic conception of political power as absolute spectacle. McLuhan too might be viewed as a minor postmodern pseudo-prophet who recycled the romantic visions of older European fascisms, reshaped by modern technological changes such as Sputnik and the television, and presented them in their North American guise of democracy as talk show. In any case, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the fascist project of staging politics as spectacle, with its attendant universe of semiologically manufactured triviality, has crystallized into a globally triumphant second nature whose

¹ The novel was published in the DDR in 1956 and banned in West Germany until 1981.

consequences are found in the landscapes of genocidal wars and in the deterioration of humanity.

At the site where culture is diluted in a variety of commercially degraded productions, where the design, production, and promotion of spectacle invades every expression of human existence, there too the intellectual has ceased to function as an independent intellect, as a socially oriented consciousness, as a moral exemplar, or even as a public figure. Klaus Mann's vision was prescient in this respect as well. His 1949 manifesto *Die Heimsuchung des europäischen Geistes* describes a postwar Europe entirely in ruins and utterly foundering in historical time, a Europe that had lost its faith in progress and watched its most sacred hereditary values collapse. The concepts Mann used to describe portrayed this historical condition were eloquent in themselves: "permanent crisis," "rubble and ruins," "dislocation ..." These metaphors have a long history within a European intellectual tradition, stretching from Nietzsche to Adorno, that recognized of the phenomenon of cultural impoverishment depicted by Mann. Mann adds a new dimension to their observations: *Heimsuchung*, a word that designates the condition of being persecuted, captured, entrapped within one's own walls, a word that ultimately alludes to complete political and moral defeat (Mann 1993: 21ff.).

The figure of the modern intellectual has been molded by a series of revolutions that have shaped the modern world in general as well. Jefferson and Paine were philosophical voices raised against colonial European power. Miranda, Bolívar, and Martí were men of letters who envisioned the liberation of the peoples of Latin America. Proudhon, Saint-Simon, and Marx devised categories of thought intended to overcome the cycles of social destruction set in motion by nineteenth-century capitalism. Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg defined a political means of resistance to modern imperialisms. The new political will of the Blanquistes and the Saint-Simonians, of anarchists and communists, of Third World national liberationists and partisans of various anti-colonial fronts, all are encompassed by one word, a military metaphor: the vanguard. Intellectuals assumed the role of pioneers in the march of history toward the final emancipation of the proletariat, the condemned of the earth, the masses of humanity assembled by industrial capitalism and then made superfluous. Their critique of society and their vision of history were conceived under the banner of justice. Theirs historical spirit was animated by Jewish humanism and messianism, strengthened by the heretical eschatologies of medieval revolutionary Christianity, and then secularized by the scientific rationalism and anti-clericalism of the encyclopedists. The conceptual framework for a rational harmony between the natural and historical worlds, together with the strategies

and tools for its political realization, all flow together in the consciousness of the modern intellectual.

Nobody has defined the idealism of this revolutionary consciousness as fully as György Lukács, in his classic work *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (1968). According to Lukács, scientific knowledge of the conflicts experienced by society, together with the moral will to emancipate humanity from its chains, gave revolutionary intellectuals a normative function. Their social criticism and their ability to orchestrate a collective process of enlightenment and subsequent emancipatory action signaled the birth of a new historic consciousness: “the consciousness that does not develop into a completely passive spectator ... nor into the power of a subjective arbiter” (Lukács 1968: 252). According to Lukács’ social theory, once the governing intellectuals’ liberating function reached its fulfillment, once the project of establishing a community of the free and self-aware subjects of a humanized history reached its completion, the intellectuals would renounce their detached stance and dismantle their transcendental epistemology for the sake of democratic self-rule.

By the end of the twentieth century, though, the construction of a global order under corporate control, together with the global extension of colonialism and the concomitant propagation of war on a planetary scale, has revealed the opposite historic tendency. And intellectuals have not been immune to this inversion. Intellectuals have been devoured by administrative and financial bureaucracies; vaporized by the productive systems of instrumental rationality; and transfigured by the fetishistic glory of media spectacle. The principle of autonomy that had defined their noble humanist past, their function as social liberators during the Enlightenment era, and their tenaciously reformist thought has been derailed by the rocky scarps of the post-political, the post-historical, the post-human, and the end of philosophy. Ultimately, the autonomous and liberating characteristics of the intellectual vanished without a trace into the vacuity of the administratively domesticated knowledge industries, into the deconstructionist labyrinths of academic production and reproduction.

The intellectual dependence on corporate and governmental administration identified by Charles Wright Mills in the middle of the last century, as well as the parallel fossilization of the intellectual in the figure of *Homo academicus* described by Pierre Bourdieu in the 1980s, have in the meantime effectively become a *fait accompli*. Professionalism and specialization, the codes of administrative discipline, the universal subordination of intellectual activity to the principle of economic return, all have conspired to create the moral apathy, the pandemic of theoretical mediocrity, and the sonorous public silence that characterize intellectual life at the start of the twenty-first century. The norms of

administrative efficiency and profitability have enclosed the corporately organized knowledge professions within the limits of a blind technocratic pragmatism, in the case of the technical-scientific faculties, and within a tightly circumscribed field of irrelevant intertextualities, in the case of the humanities.

Within the academy now, it is deemed impertinent to protest the corporate monopolization of information, the eco-cidal and genocidal effects of industrial biology, or the degradation of democracy into spectacle. In an age of massive commercialization and trivialization of culture, to debate the crisis in the sciences or at the institutional frontiers of the humanities is to take a considerable risk. To question the globalization of violence or the devastating policies enacted in the developing world is a dangerous transgression. Socially responsible reflection in an age defined by atrocities, the massive denigration of human rights, and the construction of global systems for the totalitarian control of civil society, profanes the hallowed neutrality of the lecture hall. Thinking is not politically correct. Faced with the manifest absence of meaning in the discourses of economic development, industrial progress, and national security, the academy and its "last intellectuals" have become mute witnesses to their own eclipse.

When there is nothing to say, when nothing can be said or no one wants to say it, the best remaining option is to talk about language. The fetishization of language, which began in 1960 with the Saussurian School of the Parisian left and culminated in the deconstructionist hysteria at Yale University, compensates for the muteness of intellectuals in the face of the crisis of legitimacy in the postmodern sciences. None of the great dilemmas of modern critical theory have escaped this omniscient semiological customs-house. According to its axiomatic precepts, the Freudian unconscious is a grammatical construction of the subject, the struggle between the classes merely a meta-historical allegory, the corporate control of information a *fata morgana* and a system of simulacra. Everything begins and ends in discourses, constructions, representations, performances, allegories, and semiotic strategies. Nuclear war is an ambiguous referent, global warming merely an interdisciplinary hypothesis, the irreversible destruction of cultures across the planet a matter of semiotic hybridism. The ultimate consequences of this linguistic turn among intellectuals have been the propagation of systems, the proliferation of jargon, and the fragmentation and decay of academic discourse, until what results is a fraudulent chatter that makes the pedants ridiculed by Bruno in his dialogues seem dignified by comparison.

Moreover, the semiotic vaporization of critical theory has gone hand in hand with its micro-political dismemberment. Feminism, queer theory, cultural studies, studies of subaltern subjects and local identities

delineate the space in which postwar European critical theory has been dismantled and scrapped. These developments have eliminated any genuinely theoretical perspective on the various conflicts that are springing up at the start of the new century; meanwhile, ponderous critiques of representation and tedious analyses of performance continue to echo throughout the academy.

The banners of pluralism and multiculturalism have also waved superciliously over the rhetorics of the global academy. The watchwords, dressed up in the avant-garde sex appeal of the ethereal newest left, never advance beyond eclectic semiologies of hybrid representations. Under the cloak of such banalities, technocratic monolinguisism, corporatized spectacle, unidimensional political thought – not to mention military armaments and the global violence they fuel – continue to circulate effortlessly off campus, the consequences of which have been devastating in every way for those cultures that are not white, Western, or Christian. Ultimately, one cannot ignore the extent to which the academy's institutionally circumscribed and philosophically irrelevant thought has been characterized by two fundamental attributes: the nonexistence of any genuine intellectual agenda, and the resulting absence of any authentic political projection.

In the context of classic totalitarianisms, Klaus Mann laid open the fatal dilemma faced by the modern intellectual: a disjunction between political opportunism on the one hand, and autistic isolation on the other. C. Wright Mills (1963) denounced the vaporization of the intellectual by the machinery of production, by bureaucratic apparatus, and by the entire corporate system, a phenomenon visible from public administration to the industrial laboratory. Having endured the mutilation inflicted by McCarthyism, the intellectual has now been utterly devoured by the structures of academic administration, resulting in the sub-departmental deconstruction of the intellectual detailed by Russell Jacoby (1987) in his account of his long agony on the campuses of North America. The commercialization of intellectual production by the cultural industry has reduced the intellectual's creativity to the lower limits of mercantile triviality and media manipulation. At the same time, in the developing world, the combined effects of criminal dictatorships, of the destruction taking place under the auspices of the World Bank and the countries' own national universities, and of the colonization of the most vital indigenous artistic and intellectual traditions as sub-products of the Western culture industry, all foreshadow a violent denouement (Volpi: 327ff.).

In this age of "organized irresponsibility," in which great decisions devolve upon corporations and anonymous bureaucracies, the intellectual as an exemplary individual consciousness has been ruthlessly cut down (Mills 1963: 298). The deconstruction of intellectual

discourse, the subordination of intellectuals to the stereotypes of industry, and the enlistment of intellectual activity as a productive component in various cultural industries, in financial and or administrative mega-machineries, have mired intellectuals in a condition of conspicuous impotence. They do not see, or do not want to see, the disaster that befalls them. Thus even when intellectuals are confronted directly with the crisis of our time, their institutional confinement drives them into passivity and emptiness. Like the Angel of History depicted by Benjamin, the intellectual can do nothing. In our age, the electronically dispensed blindness of the global village forms a necessary condition for the survival of corrupt political, military, and financial leaders; thus, intellectuals' expertise regarding structural conflicts of ecological or social origin, their full awareness of the systemic irrationality of economic policies and economic development programs, and their scorn for mass media reduce them to a condition of marginality.

2. Unbounded exile

In his *Retablo de las maravillas* [*The Altarpiece of Marvels*], Cervantes (1921) presents an allegory of society as spectacle. His protagonists are a company of performers of comedy and farce. One day, they arrive in a certain village and announce that they will present a miraculous show; the show will include biblical episodes, an appearance by the Grand Turk, even an attack by a terrifying bull. But the company of actors imposes one condition: only men and women of clean blood can attend the show. In Catholic Spain, to have clean blood is to be free of Muslim or Jewish lineage.

Everyone accepts the challenge. Everyone turns up at the theater. Everyone acclaims the miracle. Everyone enthusiastically applauds an empty stage.

Suddenly, a soldier appears. No one expected his arrival, and no one recognizes him. Like Cervantes himself, he carries within himself memories of voyages to distant lands. But he has arrived late for the performance, and he knows nothing of the stipulations regarding who can witness its hyperreal visions. Without hesitation or doubt, the foreigner exclaims that there is nothing to see on the stage, that the miracles are a farce, that the spectacle is an empty sacrilege.

The crowd hears the affront; it rises up and cries with one voice:

*¡Basta: de ex illis es! ¡De ex illis es! ¡De ex illis es!
¡Dellos es, dellos, dellos es!...
¡Basta: dellos es, pues no ve nada!* (Cervantes: 151)

[‘That’s enough! He is ex illis! He is ex illis! He is ex illis!
He’s one of them, one of them!
That’s enough! He’s one of them, so he sees nothing!’]

Cervantes denounces Hispano-Christian racism and calls into question the very concept of faith, which has been recast as obedience by means of ecclesiastic intimidation. The foreigner who sees that there is nothing to see embodies the cognitive structure and the enlightening social function of the modern intellectual. Cervantes' comedy also marks the intellectual as a negative consciousness. The intellectual's reflective critique is founded on a double negation: it is the denunciation of emptiness; the negation of nothingness; a "no" to non-being.

This critique of the emptiness of representation, of the falseness of propaganda, of the nothingness of spectacle, also encompasses a social dimension, inasmuch as it lays bare the constitutive principle of a false national consciousness – the connivance of an entire people with the subterfuge of purity of blood. On top of, or perhaps beneath, all of that, Cervantes places the intellectual under the stigma of "ex illis." The intellectual is a foreigner, one of the others: the exile.

"Ex illis" is not the etymological root of the word "exile," but it signals the social stigma, the constitutive wound of exile. Banishment and extradition, like ostracism, expatriation, and exile, are words that designate social exclusion and segregation, and hence the confinement and isolation of the intellectual. Indeed, not only do these words denote the reflective consciousness's dislocation in social and political space, they also reveal precisely the excision of that consciousness from its historic time, together with the deep wound that results. Exile defines modern intellectuals' social isolation, their politically and linguistically besieged condition, and consequently their social impotence and existential precariousness. How has this excision of the intellectual consciousness from modern cultural history come about?

Cervantes' comedy is illuminating in this respect as well. The segregation of the intellectual, first as a foreigner, then as an exile, and finally as an outlaw – the three phases experienced by the soldier in *Retablo de las maravillas* – is shown to be a consequence of an absolutist political system, one that founds its patriotic identity on the compulsory principle of imperial Catholic universalism and, equally, on an illusory – and hence necessarily genocidal – ethnic identity.

This politico-theological definition of exile generates series of important ramifications. One is the system of persecution by means of which national identities have been forged. Another is the epistemological and mystical "body" of inquisitorial torture, which constitutes yet another chapter in the transcendental configuration of Christian "ethnicity." Today, it is necessary to emphasize anew the truth that all nationalisms and patriotisms are built upon proscription, deportation, and exile as their necessary constituent conditions.

On the other hand, these persecutions and banishments give rise to migrations of intellectuals in search of more open social spaces. The

social and cultural deterioration that ensues from this banishment of intelligence, from this exile of cultural idioms and memory as well, is another germane consequence of the politico-theological definition of exile. Cervantes in particular throws this false principle of Hispano-Christian identity into sharp relief in his oeuvre: a principle that demanded the sustained performance of sacramental acts and acts of faith; that succeeded in extirpating Hispano-Judaic spirituality and Hispano-Islamic mysticism from Spain; that persecuted the scientific and philosophical humanism of the Renaissance with fire and blood; that continued to sponsor inquisitorial orgies right up until the moment of the Great Revolution; and that never ceased satiating, by means of its incessant witch-hunting of liberals and romantics during the last two centuries, its hatred of anything reminiscent of the open spirituality it had wiped out.

The bloody historic panorama of Western progress prompts one final line of inquiry: What kind of energy lit the bonfires in the first place? What was the source of the original flame that set off this continual destruction of life, knowledge, tradition, and sacred sentiment? What profound rancor has nurtured and continues to nurture the thirst for the destruction of everything that is most noble in the cultures of the past? Why have spiritual men and women been systematically eliminated throughout the expansion of Christianity and the West?

The persecution of liberals in the Soviet Union, the suppression of intellectuals in the United States by McCarthyism, the exile of the intellectual vanguard by European fascism, the persecution and mass extermination of intellectuals in Latin America under the auspices of the Cold War: all of these examples seem to point to an intimate relationship between the exile of the intellectual and modern totalitarianism. But to contemplate exile from this exclusively political point of view would be as limiting as viewing it solely from the legalistic perspective of human rights, as confining as interpreting it as an anomalous episode in comparative literature. What, then, are the deep sources of this radically enslaving and annihilating force that has persecuted, banished, expatriated, and eliminated both enlightened mystics and learned intellectuals, both shamans and rabbis? Why are the instruments of torture and the cells of the Inquisition a constitutive moment in the paradigm of the exiled modern consciousness?

If a singular model of the persecution, dismemberment, and destruction of spiritual legacies and their intellectual leaders throughout the history of the West is provided by the Christian Church, then an important source for understanding the originary meaning of the Christian exile of the intellect is provided by its founder Paul. Two or three citations from Nietzsche will be illuminating in this respect.

Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, which is at base a critique of Pauline theology, is motivated by three primary considerations. The first, and undoubtedly the most important, is the dialectic of sacrifice and transcendence out of which the *kyrios kristos*, the Messianic Lord, is constructed. Nietzsche focuses on the sense of nothingness affixed to the cross of being as the absolute principle of Christian transcendence. Nietzsche's second critique of Paul concerns his allegorical falsification of biblical history, his tergiversations regarding its most universal spiritual values, and his subversion of the Judaic conceptions of the cosmos and of being. But Nietzsche raises still another objection to Paul: his exile.

Paul's biography is the biography of an archetypal exile. From Tarsus to Damascus, from Antioch to Ephesus, from Jerusalem to the capital of the Empire – the city that was his final destination, the city in which he sowed discord and disorder – wherever he went he was accused of betrayal by Jewish communities and of undermining established custom by gentile communities. Wherever he went, in the end he was persecuted as a divisive presence, beaten and stoned as a meddler, and ultimately driven out as a malefactor. And yet his sectarian mission grew in visionary intensity as each new persecution purified him, enabling him to conceive of a perfect community of the factious, an *ekklesia* founded on the sovereignty of the Messiah, the *kyrios kristos*.

This erratic existence, an existence of being repeatedly banished and outlawed – that is to say, the originary condition of Christian exile – was based on four firm principles: the concept of an absolute and originary debt, the transcendence of being effected by means of the sacrifice on the cross, the suppression of Jewish law and memory, and the establishment of the new faith as a system of credit based on the settlement of debts after death.

In every pre-Christian religion, from the cosmological Celtic and Mayan religions to Buddhism, the cross is, together with the circle, a symbol of the unity, plenitude, and harmony of being as conceived from the point of view of its conflict and dynamism. But Paul lifted the messianic and transcendental meaning of the torture, agony, and sacrificial death of Jesus – a death effected through the cruelest and most humiliating method of intimidation and slaughter applied to the political enemies of the Empire – onto this same cross of being. And it was on the site of this messianic, or, more precisely, Christological, sacrifice that Paul built the architecture and the logos of a new consciousness, a new humanity, and a new universal spirit of history. Paul thus established a new *ekklesia* in space and time, a *sui generis* entity that refused to accept the contingent being of human communities, of their spiritual memories and knowledge, of their laws and sacred forms of life.

Culpability, or more precisely, the narrowing of the multiple meanings encompassed by the *Bereshit* to a single and absolute postulate of debt, this was the great Pauline concealment. In the first instance, this guilt or debt thrusts death into the edenic heart of being; at the same time, it raises an absolute barrier between the human and the divine and between consciousness and the cosmos. But according to the Pauline politico-theological program, the cancellation of this originary debt through grace (*karis*) – that is to say, justification through the sacrifice of the Messiah (*kristos*) – can only take place within the space opened by a rupture with the Law (*nomos*), which Paul identifies with sin (Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:4). And that rupture entails the abandonment of Jewish memories and forms of life, as well as the Jewish conception of being and of the cosmos, the full sense of which is encompassed by the notion of *halakha*. This is the blackmail imposed by the Pauline concealment. From the absolute and originary debt, a new obligation arises as a necessary condition for reconciliation with being and with the divine: the abandonment of traditional norms of life, first for the Jews, then for the gentiles, and ultimately for all of humanity.

This is also what exile signifies for Paul: a fraudulent double condition – the separation of consciousness from being (*oussia*) as a consequence of the principle of debt, and the simultaneous separation of human existence from its communities and its ways of life (*halakha*) as a condition for the settlement of the debt by means of sacrificial grace. This Pauline Christological exile is the point of departure for Paul's concept of transcendence: a new humanity, the heavenly Jerusalem, the power (*dynamis*) of the Messiah over all sovereignties (*arche*), authorities (*exousia*), powers (*dynamis*), and dominions (*kurietes*) in the present and future of all of humanity (Ephesians 1: 19–21).

The Pauline double exile carries within itself the category of the second Moses, enthroned as the founder of a new divine people (Taubes 1993: 58). It is the foundational condition of the Christian “ethné” (Ephesians 2: 14–16; 1: 22), not least because it establishes the Messiah as the principle of absolute power, universal judge, and the spirit of history, the meaning of which has been reformulated time and again in the papal bulls of the imperial Christian era, in philosophical systems of universal history and, equally, in the use of the notion of *one world* as its ultimate secularized rendering in colonial corporate propaganda.² This exile ultimately crowns itself with the conciliation of the heavens and the earth under the

² The concept of the Christian *ekklēsia* as a uniform “Third Race,” distinct from Judaism and paganism, was formulated in Patristic literature and was rooted in Paul's political theology (Tomson 1990: 3). It was also the criticism that Hellenistic and Roman intellectuals directed at the Christian sect during the first two centuries of its history (Harnack 1902: 197ff.).

sign of *pleroma kairos*: the divine plenitude of historic time (Ephesians 1: 10).

Exile from the community and from being is likewise the ontological condition of the syllogistic constitution of the *je pense*. The Cartesian rational subject is the logical definition of a consciousness cut off from its eyes, its hands, and its body. It is a logical subject segregated from its own existence, a subject that severs all of its links with nature and community. Its descendant, Kant's transcendental logos, is itself the result of the dislocation of thought from the community of speakers, from their interests, and from their forms of life. *De nobis ipsis silemus* are the opening words of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*: the universal capacity of the transcendental Kantian consciousness ignores itself as a contingent existence; it is in exile from society and cut off from the very nature that it dominates. Similarly exiled is the intellectual as defined by Marx, the intellectual as universal historical consciousness, as revolutionary leader, and as the apostle of the universal egalitarian community. Marx's doctrine of a universal revolution that would ultimately suppress all class differences is itself heir to the Pauline doctrine of a community of Jews and gentiles mingling together in the universal church under the sign of Christ (Agamben 2005: 30ff.).

The same postulates of separation from being and the suppression of community drive the aesthetic of the artistic avant-garde of the twentieth century. Both the Dadaist anarchists and the futurist fascists silenced cultural memory as zealously as the Christian iconoclasts did. Functionalism – with its utopias, its crystalline cities and its skyscrapers whose radiant towers illuminate the firmament – affirmed the structural and material bases of absolute abstraction from nature and from being. The idealized geometric cities envisioned by the pioneers of modern architecture were the metastasis of the celestial Jerusalem depicted by Paul. Moreover, the artist installed in the historical avant-garde by Malevich and Mondrian rose from the ashes of history and from the devastation wrought by modern industrial warfare, and thus the avant-garde held itself up linguistically and theologically as the inaugural moment of a spirit of redemption bestowed by a transcendent, universal, and absolute normative power.

The separation of consciousness from the linguistic community and the postulation of an absolute origin by always reiterated history and writing “degree zero” redefine intellectual exile as a constituent principle of Christian civilization, as the force that configures the discursive identity of that civilization, and as a sacred institution. Intellectual exile is likewise the point of departure for the modern utopias of nation, republic, or communism, and for the postmodern global village as well. Exile is the metaphysical condition of the subject of universal domination.

In his commentary on the *Letter to the Romans*, Giorgio Agamben articulates an interesting series of etymological associations. For example, he mentions *klesis* in the sense of calling, of messianic vocation – *klesis* as a private call in a reflexive dimension, as revealed in the miraculous conversion of Saul into Paul by divine will when his horse tossed him to the ground. But while *klesis* signifies a divine call, it also anticipates *Beruf*, which, in barely secularized languages like Castilian, must still be translated by coupling the meaning of mystic vocation, corresponding to the word “Ruf,” with the sense of being missionary by profession: “professional vocation.” This meaning is further associated with an ascetic monastic discipline that makes visible a secret link between the professional concept of the modern intellectual and Pauline Christology. Finally, *Klesis* also signifies the investment of a priestly class through the abandonment of the law, and it is thus related to the construction of an *ekklesia* conceived as the community of the called, of those bound together by the sacrificial suspension of the law and the sacrificial conversion of being.

In short, the condition of modern intellectual is the necessary apostolic and missionary consequence of the Pauline inversion. Agamben’s commentary on the Pauline origins of modern exile permits us to understand the defection of modern intellectuals in the face of the great modern political crises as indeed constituting a “*trahison des clercs*” in the literal sense of the word *klesis*: cleric and clergy. It permits us to understand the defection as a clerical abandonment of the contingent being of society, with its conflicts and memories, for the sake of an idealized transcendental city. What Agamben ultimately makes evident is the intimate relationship between this ecclesiastical vocation on the one hand and spiritual theocracy – or the theocratic universalism of the spirit – on the other, a relationship that extends from Paul to the Hegelian and Marxist philosophies of history (Agamben 2005: 20ff., 98ff.).

At the time of its formation, this exiled intellectual consciousness was a divine soul; it elevated itself to the summit of eternal spirituality and ultimately transformed itself into the self-conscious subject of the universal history of reason. In Paul this exiled consciousness is evidently bound to the dream of a transcendent community and a universal empire. The Augustinian utopia of the *City of God* is an expression of this same Christological ideal. Baroque mysticism, philosophic and artistic humanism, scientific rationalism, and modern philosophies of social revolution all share certain fundamental traits – the heroic grandeur of the individual consciousness, of an exiled group advancing in the vanguard – with the errant wanderer Paul. But modernity is faced with the reverse of Paul’s celestial exile. Modernity witnesses the collapse of this principle of domination into an abyss of solitude, anguish, and

emptiness, an abyss in which nothing can give meaning to the culpability that underwrites the transcendence of being, to its failed redemption, or to its wretched consciousness.

Der fliegende Holländer raises the clamor of its fanfare to this Christian consciousness. Wagner's mariner is the embodiment of the infinite freedom and the absolute individualism delineated by Fichte and Hegel. In this eternal pilgrim, Christian exile is carried out to its most extreme consequences: the Dutchman's dominion extends over an ocean without borders, and his existence rises to an intangible dimension of being and time. Yet the Dutch mariner is also a capitalist subject. His mythical ship is a metaphor for infinite technological power. Over the course of his interminable adventures across the perilous seas, he accumulates treasures from every culture. He is for that reason also the colonizing subject; his eternal existence grants him the absolute power that belongs to death.

But in contrast to the Christian interiority of Paul, Ignatius of Loyola, or Luther, and in contrast to the Cartesian rationalist or the phenomenological secularization of this interiority, the absolute character of the Dutchman's subjective power and infinite consciousness no longer blazes under the sign of grace, of unity with the absolute. The meaning and destiny of Wagner's mariner are the death, nothingness, and the void. Exiled from the very nature he subdues, exiled from the community he has dissolved in his infinite consciousness, and exiled from his own existence, which he has transformed into a mere instrument of his chimerical wanderings, his empty consciousness no longer desires anything except for its own extinction. The same social separateness, the same mortification of contingent being celebrated by baroque mysticism as the splendor of the absolute subject, dissolves this subject's consciousness in the center of cosmic catastrophe.

3. No to non-being

Cervantes' *Retablo de las maravillas* does not take up in any way the Christological dialectic of sacrifice and transcendence, of exile and redemption, that is at work in the bloody reign of the spirit of history. Quite the contrary: at the dramatic culmination of the work, the crowd exclaims, "Dellos es ... pues no ve nada" ["He's one of them ... so he sees nothing"].

"To see nothing": to say no to the nihilistic spectacle of a transcendent being that in actuality encloses the mystery of the void within itself; no to the spectacle of a negative and false nothingness; no to the negative spectacle of devalued and subverted being. This is the double negation that defines the soldier's illuminating action.

The soldier knows that the village knows that there is nothing on the stage. But instead of acclaiming it as a theophany, a *deus ex machina*, a

spectacular miracle, the soldier rejects this nothing. The soldier, as intellectual, places his reflective negation of the emptiness of being in opposition to the spectacular sacramental affirmation of transcendence and the justification of being. This negation in turn calls into question the order of Western and Christian false consciousness.

For this reason, it has to be an outsider who enacts the negation. Only those who have received the stigma of difference, of otherness, are truly foreigners and exiles. By these means are they despoiled of being: a consciousness that knows itself to be nothing and nobody is a consciousness in exile. But the negation of its being is precisely the spiritual condition that enables this consciousness to negate nothingness. Cervantes's intellectual is a foreigner and an exile, but not in the sense of one who deserts the community of the law, halakha, or dharma. On the contrary, he represents the negation of that negative consciousness, the double negation of the isolated consciousness and the alienated community.

Where the horizons of this reflective exile lie becomes clear in the definition of the modern intellectual presented by Günther Anders (1951) in his interpretation of Franz Kafka's literary oeuvre. The two primary categories he employs are *Entfremdung* and *Verrücktheit*. The first, the concept of "alienation," proceeds from Marx and makes manifest the double condition – exiled from being and despoiled of existence – that obtains under the conditions of labor, social coexistence, and biological survival created by capitalism. To this referent Anders adds certain other related concepts: *Befremdung*, *Enstellung* ... distanciation, the estrangement from and deformation of reality viewed precisely as facets of the same process of capitalist alienation. *Entfremdung*, like alienation, makes manifest a pathology of modern consciousness: it designates the excision of consciousness from the real and its division from itself as well. *Verrücktheit*, the other concept Anders uses to define to condition of the contemporary intellectual, radicalizes this pathological, schizophrenic dimension of modern consciousness. But in addition, *verrücken* connotes distancing, parting, turning one's back. According to Anders' interpretation, Kafka constructs a gaze founded upon displacement and distancing, upon estrangement and a separation from all that exists. Only in this sense is he able to reflect the insanity, the schizophrenia, that reigns in industrial civilization (Anders 1951: 15ff.).

The Kafkaesque intellectual is thus also an intellectual in exile, but in an entirely different sense from that inaugurated by Paul: this intellectual resides precisely in that unique point of view capable of disarticulating the charismatic subject of transcendence, particularly the transcendence conceived by Christian theology. The most eloquent examples of this are found in those works with animals as protagonists: the chimpanzee in *Ein Bericht für eine Akademie*, the beetle in *Die*

Verwandlung. The reflective intellectual must assume the extreme alienation of animal irrationality in order to manifest the horror of the rational human world.

But in Cervantes' comedy, the soldier does more than denounce the irrationality of Christian reason and capitalist reason. On the night of this false nation, which constitutes itself sacramentally in the theater of marvels, Cervantes not only says no to spectacle through the character of the soldier, but also reawakens the spectators to the very cultural memories that the spectacle obliterated. In this way Cervantes sketches the elements of a concept of *Aufklärung* that does not close itself off, as Kant's did, from the autonomy that pure reason possesses as the exiled constituent principle of consciousness, community, and being; instead it remains open, as Herder's did, to the memory of origins. Through his comedy, Cervantes presents himself as the intellectual who says "no" to non-being in order to open consciousness to knowledge of the origins of being.

There are four possible responses to the question of memory and to the question of the hermeneutics of being and its origins: those modeled by Karl Marx, Johann Jakob Bachofen, Sigmund Freud, and Paul Klee.

The most important component of Marx's thought from a contemporary perspective is certainly not its Pauline dialectic, the postulated revolutionary conversion of existence into a reign of the spirit in which all differences of race, class, language, memory, and norms of life vanish. The only component of Marx's theory that still has force is his critique of *Entfremdung*. It is a critique of humanity's banishment and estrangement from nature, from community and memory, viewed as a constitutive moment of the spirit of capitalism. From this point of view, Marx rejects Paul's theology to the extent that he conceives of the salvation of humanity as transpiring not through the alienation of its own nature and memory, but rather through their re-appropriation. For Marx, liberty is not to be found in the negation of "man" in the name of a purportedly authentic being-for-death, to recall the metaphors operating in Heidegger's Christian nihilism. The emancipation of humanity, alienated and exiled as the global proletariat, consists for Marx in the reintegration of humanity into a historic community, in the reestablishment of humanity's own nature, and in the regeneration of its norms of life. In this sense, it might be said that Marx reintegrates a liberated humanity into a historic community and into the reality of its own historic contingency, the same reality that the psychoanalytic theories of Georg Groddeck and Freud call "Es," and that comprehends the biological, physiological, historic, and spiritual substructures of human existence.

With regard to Bachofen, it is possible to make a similar point. His work *Das Mutterrecht* uncovers the cultural base consisting of mother

goddesses that lies beneath the subsequent patriarchal religions and juridical systems. But the fundamental question marked out by Bachofen is not simply concerned with those same goddesses or their icons; rather, it is concerned with the conceptions of time and the cosmos, the unity of humanity and being, that they guaranteed. In the face of countless expressions of the disequilibrium and chaos that follow from patriarchal domination and its theological subversions, Bachofen's archaeological reconstruction recovers forms of productive exchange between humanity and nature, models of social organization and conceptions of the sacred capable of preserving the harmony of being.

Freud should be viewed from this same perspective. What is at issue is not his theory of the unconscious, but rather his analysis of the libido and its relation to the primordial principle of energy: Eros. It is to this notion of Eros that Freud's critical theory owes its importance. By situating neurotic and psychotic constructions of consciousness, psychic traumas, and even social organization itself on the foundation of this principle of energy, which is also spirit, Freud introduces into modern reflection on the world a philosophical tradition that achieves the sublimity of the Vedas and the Song of Songs, of Renaissance Platonism and the Iberian Cabala. In so doing, Freud devises a newly harmonic conception of the unity of humanity and being.

Klee represents the lyrical and metaphysical reconciliation of alienated consciousness with being. His work reestablishes a visual, physical, and spiritual unity between human eyes and the colors, materials, and emblems of the poetic and pictorial universe.

4. Consciousness under siege

The postmodern liquidation of the reflective intellectual traditions of the twentieth century has provided justification for the micro-political deconstruction of rationality, which in turn has been irresponsible in the face of posthuman strategies for economic genocide, for biological and electronic domination, and for nuclear holocaust that have arisen in modernity. When the identity of human knowledge and autonomy coincides with systems of destructive exploitation and brutal domination on a planetary scale, intellectual reflection is suppressed. The identity of philosophical criticism and social reform that was central to the work of modern intellectuals from Spinoza to Marx has drifted into a system of electronic hyper-information the ultimate consequence of which is the paralysis of the historic consciousness. This media-induced, and academically induced, impotence has restricted the intellectual to an inactive function of delivering irrelevant testimonials to random human or ecological horrors. In previous eras, exile delineated the jurisdictions of national political authorities, but it has now been generalized throughout the space of global control, encompassing everything from television channels to academic departments and to their own "ready

made” idioms. It is no longer possible to speak with any rigor of the exiled intellectual because exile has become a universal condition. Hence the metaphors favored by contemporary academic jargon: borders and frontiers, transcultures, displaced subjects, hybridisms; hence also the contemporary intellectual gaze, polarized between the micro-politics of subalternity at one extreme of the global discourse, and the production of the posthuman at the other extreme.

In the best of circumstances, a minor intellectual presence is tolerated in the irrelevant position of marginalized dissidence, from which it can offer a micro-political critique that does not question aggregate systems in their full amplitude. A Nobel Prize winner can protest the systematic rape of women along the US-Mexico border as a gender issue, for example, as long as silence is maintained regarding the corrupt military and global-financial networks of which these crimes are but traces. By means of the degraded media figure of the “left-wing intellectual,” the culture industry and the academy carry out the ultimate validating function of staging scenes of freedom of expression in the midst of the spectacle of a politically mutilated democracy.

An independent intellectual – an academic at a global university in the West, for example, or a journalist at a local media enterprise in the developing world – necessarily faces a crucial dilemma: censorship and confinement or administrative instrumentalization and media exploitation. The cultural politics of the twentieth century offer countless examples of intellectuals liquidated by the same media that they themselves employ as experts and advisers. Such is the case in the paradigm of the American postmodern: *Citizen Kane*. Kane represents the synthesis of financial power and the power of spectacle. Under his zeitgeist, we see the baptism of a new type of intellectual, the post-modern agent of negated negativity, the anti-human post-subject shaped by structuralist positivism, the ascetic-semiotic renouncer of reality, the exalted priest of the nothingness of the void.

And yet everything appears to work in favor of this great absent figure. On every side, meetings, conferences, and congresses are held for intellectuals and about intellectuals. Describing the public role of writers or artists at the beginning of the twenty-first century entails recognizing that their glory is celebrated everywhere. Their photographs appear on the front pages of newspapers; the Internet publicizes their biographies; both television and the academy maintain a veritable cult of the intellectual. As the intellectual’s institutional confinement and divided consciousness pass across the stage of cultural spectacle, they are miraculously transfigured by the semiologies of glamor and excitement.

The transfiguration of intellectuals into media stars is not contradicted by their evident social desertion; their transfiguration actually complements the desertion. The very same media that turn the

intellectual into a public fetish also silence the intellectual in the face of the great dilemmas of our time. It is often forgotten in this connection that the function of the intellectual, whether in academic departments or in the information complex, is not one of reflection. The spiritual universe represented by Andy Warhol or the *Nouvelle Philosophie* is fictitious transcendence. It is spectacle.

The debasement of the intellectual as “public man” occurs in direct proportion to the valorization of the journalist as the performer of reality. While the former is privatized and consigned to the roles of commercial author and corporate academic, the journalist is exalted as the meta-author of the culture of spectacle. Journalists are to grant significance to any given piece of news or current of thought, to decide hierarchies of values, to establish focal points for both intellectual and anti-intellectual attention, and, consequently, to channel, concentrate, and discharge the media-absorbed masses via electronic conduits. The power of journalists is absolute because the “miraculous” function of producing reality in all of its possible meanings devolves entirely on them. Of course, at the same time this performative function subordinates journalists to political and financial bureaucracies; their independent judgment and activity are restricted to an even greater extent than are those of academics, whose institutional confinement at least guarantees a modicum of irrelevant freedom.

Nonetheless, institutional subordination is not the principal restriction faced by journalists. The journalist’s professional work is ultimately governed by the epistemological boundaries of information, which do not reside primarily in censorship or in propagandistic manipulation. Even in those cases, or perhaps precisely in those cases, in which a journalist’s clean intellectual conscience enables him or her to reveal true crises, extreme crimes, social disasters, or evident abuses of human rights – as we see happening throughout the global village today – the journalist’s most radical testimony still will not challenge the condition of passivity that structurally defines the information media. When it comes to reports on genocide, or video clips of torture and executions, the greater the journalist’s professional integrity – delimited as always by the formats and idioms operant in the communications industry – the more apparent the journalist’s complicitous position as a narrator, as a betraying witness, as an onlooker reduced to impotence, becomes. The paradox of journalism in a society founded on spectacle is that professional competence as meta-author of the real is nevertheless not enough to move journalists beyond the same “watch ‘n’ wait” condition that already condemns their humanist and techno-scientific counterparts to a state of irresponsibility and aphasia.

The intellectual: unlimited exile. Stranger to political and corporate power in this age of contempt and destruction; alienated from a culture

of *prêt-à-porter* forms, categories, and values; expatriated from various pre-designed idioms; censured, confined to heavily monitored channels of information and fields of culture; bystander to the spectacular wreck of the bloody spirit of history; expelled from the sacred origins of being; condemned to testify to the annihilation of the human. And yet it is still necessary to say no to non-being; no to exile; in the silence of being.

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