New Europe College Yearbook 1995–1996

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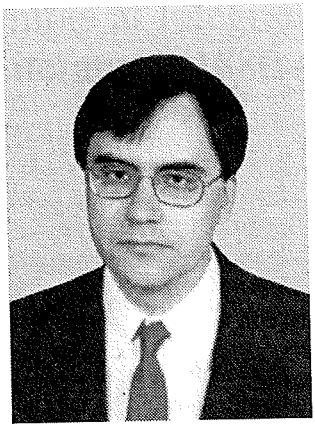

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War, Revolution, Carnival: Three Attempts at Integrating Politics and Literature (1880–1970)

I. Introduction

When speaking about literature and politics, the difficulty one encounters from the very beginning is that of defining literature as such. Different cultural epochs cast different lights on what we understand as being ***literature***. This has to do neither with a highly specialised philological debate nor with a purely logical description of the concept of literature, but is implied by the very different responsibilities, fantasies, utopias or existential projects bestowed upon the realm of poetic fiction. Apparently, to deal with politics and literature would mean to summarise the whole lot of historical meanings of 'literature' and to compare it with the historical series of the meanings of 'politics'. It is possible, though, to avoid such cybernetic an enterprise. We intend to restrict the sphere of 'literature' to those cases in which it explicitly raises claims to a form of 'power'. The interest lies with those cultural contexts and with those frames of mind that allow literary imagination to take off, to represent itself as a total, mystical, founding and, at the same time, projective discourse.

The origins of this ambition are quite disputable, as origins always are. My suggestion is to consider the war ballads of Bertrand de Born as the first 'mature' poetical expression of pride and vanity. One of the most violent of the troubadours, Viscount de Hautefort, has left his mark on the political life from the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. His *Chansons de guerre* (polemic, aggressive political poems formally related to the rhetoric of *fin amors,* but in fact expressive of the sensibilities of the Northern 'wild' gentry, as opposed to the refined Southern one) represent a most authoritative example of how violence and poetry are associated. This *Stimmung* was clearly rooted in the culture of chivalry, in that very unstable balance between intense, mystic love feelings and the psychic drift towards aggression and destruction. Bertrand de Born did not create a school. In a scientific idiom, we could say that his type of aesthetic behaviour failed socialisation. Even in his own time Bertrand was a rather strange figure, an eccentric if not a mere outcast,[1] unfit even in the eyes of his own kind, the grand seniors of France.

However, his poetry expressed the attitudes of a social group that almost defined itself through 'violence' and could, at times, give birth to open conflicts with the political authority of the kings as well as with the spiritual authority of the Church.[2] Whether the poetry of the troubadours really expressed a kind of ideological code typical of a specific social category or whether it represented the cipher language of the Cathar heresy[3] is, of course, another problem. What we still have is this association of poetry and top 'ideological' ambition, of literature and dissent.

Another important moment of poetical emancipation is to be found during the Renaissance, when esoteric traditions of the Antiquity, gnosticism, alchemy, Zoroastrianism, were rediscovered through the Arabs. This has provided some small groups of intellectuals with the feeling that they could dispose of huge energies and powers. From the secret cult of the *fedelli d'amore,* of which Dante himself was a member, to the mannerist theoreticians of art of the sixteenth century, this blend of mystical devotion and magic 'arrogance' could be easily located.[4] But, apart from the hiding-place where heretic fantasies are nurtured, Renaissance also witnesses an unprecedented growth in the social prestige enjoyed by writers and poets. The public figure of the scholar is centred on creative, fictional abilities. For Jakob Burckhardt, the lack of legitimacy of Italian thirteenth-century princes is at the root of this cult for art and the artists. Unlike other European political leaders, the Italians could not use the support of a stable, traditional, sacred hierarchy. Usually they came to power through *coups d'état* and had to face communities with a rather high degree of political awareness. Surrounding themselves with poets and scholars, Renaissance tyrants were experiencing a new type of legitimacy, conferring, at the same time, a new status to the arts and the letters.[5]

Poets were very much aware of their position and did not hesitate to blackmail their lords and masters, as they also believed in the power of poetry for conferring either immortal glory or eternal oblivion. In fact, Dante's *Divina Commedia* is a huge device of asserting merit and distributing penitence which clearly indicates to what extent the Poet saw himself as having been granted divine attributes.[6] Another main source of social prestige was the Renaissance invention of literary success. Separated from the traditional link with the Church, the epic or dramatic poetry of the Late Renaissance (from the sixteenth century, or even the beginning of the seventeenth), discovered and learnt to exploit the vulgar mind, the collective fantasies of urban audiences. The very subtle and powerful theory of Mikhail Bakhtin on Rabelais' *Gargantua*, seen as a highly sophisticated though truthful and reliable intellectual reconstruction of common Renaissance culture, awakened the interest for Carnival, perceived as a determining cultural pattern which equally put the culture of the scholarly elite under pressure.[7] At

the centre of the symbolic constellations of Carnival, Bakhtin discovered a mythical fascination with 'matter', as something rejected by the high spirituality of ecclesiastic authorities but which contained energies and powers beyond imagination. The 'people' represent in fact a fantasy of this primordial substance, of this 'organic' vitality.

There are presumably three origins to the political and spiritual ambitions of literature: a) a privileged access to ancient traditions of the occult, to a Gnosis enabling the initiate to command over vital energies such as the ones contained in the huge body of the 'people'; b) the rhetoric art of creating and maintaining charisma, those subtle devices called 'myth making', which can activate and control collective memory; c) the divine nature of inspiration, an ancient *topos* re-enhanced by the recent studies of Plato.

Another significant structure of meaning is to be found in the seventeenth century. The classicist revolution brought about the strong affirmation of an understanding of literature as **construction**, implying both a specific competence, a Gnosis of the eternal, and the ability of entrusting this values to the world. From Boileau to Pope or the literary court of Czar Peter the Great, the classicists had a major contribution in the edification of a conservative *Weltanschauung*. By adding the ethos of the Stoa (that is to say a dignified impassiveness in front of merciless Fate) to the old cult of chivalry and to the old sense of divine hierarchy typical of the Middle Ages, the classicists created, as a matter of fact, what is generally known today as the *ancien régime*. Classicism was marked both by the allegiance to the values of Greek and Latin tragedy and by a sense of dramatic balance, able to hold together the Christian tradition, the pagan addiction to violence typical of the warriors' culture, *and* the classical belief in rationality itself.[8]

In the seventeenth century, the representation of power through dramatic means equated the very creation of power. Classicist tragedy dwells not on leaders in the very act of governing, of exercising power, but rather shows political leaders in the process of *creating themselves*. The classic, that is to say conservative, political ethos did not require the monarch to try to harmoniously shape the unpredictable world of social experience, but to embody eternal moral imperatives, to give a perceivable expression to values and ethic commandments that would always count as 'true'. The leader opposes society just as ethic values oppose empirical experience.

Nevertheless, the moral and intellectual ideal of the Classicism, which was profoundly linked to the idea of self-containment and self-limitation, was no fertile milieu for extreme experiences of imagination. If we were to regain the path of literary maximalism, we should perhaps go as far as the end of the eighteenth century. During the decades that preceded the French Revolution,

the concept of *homme de lettres* grew to cover a great variety of meanings. From Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* to Voltaire's *Zadig*, from Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* to the scientific treatises of Laplace, everything was *littérature*, and had to comply with all the requirements of high rhetoric.[9] 'Philosophy' also acquired quite confusing meanings. Studying the catalogues of the *cabinets de lecture* and of the bookshops of pre-revolutionary France, Roger Chartier reached the bewildering conclusion that, for the reading public, 'philosophy' was not restricted to the works of La Mettrie or D'Holbach, to Rousseau's *Contrat social* or to the Encyclopaedia; philosophy also included well-known pornographic best-sellers such as *Thérése philosophe* or the works of the Marquis de Sade and Crébillon-fils.[10]

The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries can be considered as a hiatus in the evolution of the 'ego' of literature. This is the type of break that forces any serious observer to ask him- or herself if, under the circumstances, one can talk about evolution or 'history'.[11] It is reasonable to assume that, when the literary 'fundamentalism' burst up again, in the Romantic age, it had no real, profound connection to what had happened in the past. It is true that, in its heroic attempt to restore Poetry to its 'aboriginal' dignity, Romanticism used every possible rhetoric and imaginative device, exploring the non-classic epochs in search of new sources of pathos. But this was something as artificial, as unrealistic as the belief of the Middle Ages alchemists that they were continuing the uninterrupted tradition of Chaldean mysteries or the pretence of the classicists that they were part of the same world and shared the same values as the Greek and Latin authors.

Nevertheless, Romanticism turns out to be a corollary of all the attempts made to transform literature into a fiery togetherness of thought and feeling. Romanticism managed to recreate, through a kind of trial-and-error experiment that covers the largest part of the nineteenth century, all the relevant patterns of what I call here 'literary maximalism', and turned them into *La Belle Epoque*, into the historical Avant-Garde, and into the neo-Avant-Garde of the Sixties.

These patterns depend on the representation of the power they are centered on, the right to use actual or symbolic violence in a fairly unrestricted way. The attempt to give meaning to this powerful attraction towards violence creates different species of modernity. But interpreting violence has to do with the way poets understand power. According to this criterion, I think I can distinguish three views of the world, three different 'cultures of violence', three different narratives of Creation, each displaying different forms of dramatics.

The first one sees power as pure energy, separated from the amorphous world of 'matter' but entering it violent and defying. From this point of view, power is absolutely synonymous to violence. It bursts out in the social world or, rather, it

is its very blast that creates the social world. Power is a kind of highly dramatic founding sacrifice, a Big Bang in which the world is conceived. This understanding of power implies a pattern of circularity, of 'eternal return', because the primeval event, the revelation of force, should be continuously repeated in order to sustain reality, to help it survive. Inside this frame of mind, the experience of the power explosion is, in fact, *the* experience, the only acceptable reason for living one's life. We will give this cultural pattern the code name **War.**

The second model of our paradigm is based on the understanding of power as consisting essentially of knowledge. Initiation in this knowledge consists of two different parts: the revelation of the hidden architecture of the Universe and the revelation of the means by which this absolute order can be imposed on the real world. Violence has to do with the infliction of this other order, with the aggression of form over matter. Violence can be equally linked to the spasmodic condition of the neophyte striving for the final reward of Gnosis. The ancient theory of government as the art of creating a beautiful society, a beautiful *polis*, perfectly balanced according to cosmic rhythms and ratios, the Greek understanding of politics as a form of aesthetic commitment[12] revived during the Renaissance,[13] and which survived in the 'administrative utopias' of the bureaucratic Enlightenment,[14] are closely linked to this second pattern. Basically, this implies another 'species' of time: historical, moving along the line of imposing 'truth' on 'matter', gradually becoming an object of thrill and veneration in itself. We shall name this pattern **Revolution.**

The last model imagines power as existing from the very beginning, as having no outcome and no end, no input and no output. Power permeates everything and fertilises the substance of the world. From this point of view, violence itself is a fertilising act, it engenders life as everything else does in this pantheistic universe. However, violence can not put an end to anarchy, on the contrary, it can only help it proliferate. Power is actually unalienable, power is a substance, a body, no vital energy and no spirit, no *Raja* and no *Logos*. Power is the state of communion, the warmth of human contacts, the exuberance of a pointless solidarity. And this last pattern of our making will bear the name **Carnival.**

The three models suggested above are the result of an attempt to create a bridge between some accepted anthropologic patterns of the human imaginary and several dominant, if not obsessive, themes of modernity. It is not my intention to argue the fact that mythical structures underlie the entire cultural development of humanity and that we should discover remains of ancient fertility or passage rites in every daily gestures. Let us rather begin by modestly considering this scheme the way Ezra Pound thought of the Homeric design of James Joyce's *Ulysses*: as a supporting structure that can be removed, once the edifice supports itself.

II. War Culture

So far, I have tried to make a distinction between 'tradition' and other past-oriented attitudes. The simple act of invoking a vision of the world belonging to the active or passive historical heritage of a given culture does not imply a continuity of mind and thought, or a spiritual community between the living and the dead.

In the case of south-eastern Europe, this becomes obvious when one comes to accounting for local attempts at constructing a conservative ideology based on the Western pattern of 'medieval nostalgia'. How is it possible to preserve a past that did not actually exist? How can one claim the legacy of aristocratic, heroic values in the case of peasant societies that either completely lacked urban political elites for centuries or whose elites differ strikingly from those of the classical Western feudalism? For these cultures, the gap between the existing social reality and the image projected on it is absolutely evident. And this helps us understand the fact that conservative heroic 'operas' were in fact a trading place for certain cultural elements (symbols, customs, folk stories and poetry) that could be considered as 'aboriginal' heritage, and imported medieval fantasies which, in fact, bespoke of the fascination with Western civilisation — one which, paradoxically, meant the fascination for *modernity*.

I shall only give the example of the Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889). He wrote 'metaphysical ballads' and some 'heroic fantasies' in which he managed to fit national folk tales or historical stereotypes not only into a Schopenhauer frame of mind, but also into the settings and psychological atmosphere of 'Gothic' Romanticism. His fictional characters, poetical settings, and poetical metaphysics are typical of the education Eminescu received in Vienna and Berlin. But his use of very specific Romanian archaisms and regional words, of old linguistic clusters (or of clusters made to *sound* old, in a very Sezessionlike manner), of ethnographic details (fused with 'feudal' Western patterns through subtle, unperceivable licences), turned his poetry into a keystone of Romanian conservative political philosophy and of Romanian national sensibility in general.

This process of invention, apparently so clear when one deals with 'marginal' areas in European culture, is in fact specific to the Romantic revaluation of the Middle Ages in general. It has nothing to do with a process of cultural legacy, with tradition in the usual meaning, but it is rather a case of 'present' influencing and creating the 'past', of the kind mentioned by T.S.Eliot in his famous 1920 essay *Tradition and Personal Talent*. What Romanticism and especially post-Romanticism attempted to recreate was a symbolic way of looking at the world, an initiatic approach to life, an intense feeling of communion, a naive and spontaneous defiance of death, a sense of spiritual sacrifice and personal devotion.

The magnetism of the 'dawns of the European civilisation' was closely linked to the ambiguous attitude of Romanticism toward aristocracy and aristocratic values. On the one hand, Romanticism lived on a revolutionary mythology, and even contributed to develop this mythology. On the other hand, a large part of the Romantic trend resulted from a genuine fascination with the ethos of chivalry. According to V.L.Saulnier, it is not possible to establish the political option of Romanticism: on the eve of the 1830 revolution, almost every possible ideological option acceded to the new language.[15] But after 1848, as the tide of social revolution drew back, Romantic opinion makers seem to have joined the consensus that Thomas Nipperdey calls *the post-revolutionary political culture*.[16] This extended and complicated contract between the aristocratic architecture of power and the liberal social doctrine and ethos was translated into a specific artistic language by the Biedermaier, *le pompierisme bourgeois* or the Victorian (and later, with a label invented by Virginia Woolf, Edwardian) spirit.[17]

Actually, it was this very layer of intellectual security, of gracious aesthetics, of refined prosperity and relative moral stability that engendered *La Décadence*. The *fin de siècle* launched in fact the last campaign of medieval revival, the one in which the basic artificiality of this attempt revealed itself most clearly. The pre-Raphaelites set the tone for a style and a sensitivity that were to be continued and refined by Central-European Jugendstil and the Art Nouveau. As a matter of fact, there were two models of the medieval spirit that were more or less consciously competing: the spiritual devotion of the troubadours of the twelfth century and the virile brutality of the *chansons de geste* of the early Middle Ages. The aesthetised suffering of the medieval love songs was continued by the symbolists, following the path opened by the sado-masochistic experiments of Charles Baudelaire. The idea of poetry as inherently connected to moral sufferings, as a form of initiation in the mysteries of alchemy of converting pain into pleasure and vice versa, lies at the core of the *Décadence* of the 1890s, when Joris Karl Huysmans called his fellow naturalists to aesthetic disobedience. In *Là-Bas* (1891) Huysmans' alter ego, the *décadent* Durtal, is writing a novel on the horrifying figure of Gilles de Rais, the French marshal put on trial for Satanism, abduction, and child murder. In this novel, which can be equally interpreted as a long essay, Huysmans meditates on the spiritual mould of a Middle Ages that had the moral force to face the worst of satanic Evil and yet preserved intact its capacity for forgiveness. The other branch of medieval nostalgia, the one descending to the dark layers of mythical imagination, trying to reproduce, so to say, *in vitro* the birth of the mythical Hero, finds itself under the authority of Richard Wagner. This amazing forerunner of J.R.R.Tolkien and of *heroic fantasy* as a literary genre was driven by the ambition to obtain the supreme status for music and poetry by bringing to life the archetypal figure of the warrior-singer. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* is, in fact, a totality of passion and power, a reconstruction of the archaic centered on the very idea of sacred violence.

But the reconstruction of the ethos of aristocracy could not be reduced to diving into a blurred medieval 'past'. For more than two centuries, high culture identified with Greek and Latin studies. As already suggested above, Classicism introduced self-containment, lucidity and scepticism in the cultural definition of itself of French and other European gentry. In fact, High Romanticism tried to preserve this precious legacy. High Romanticism did not dismiss antiquity, but tried to provide a more vivid image, to cast its own hope and despair into the mould of Classicism. These experiments reached a peak in the thinking and poetry of Friedrich Nietzsche. Even though a harsh enemy of Romanticism, Nietzsche gave in fact expression to the Romantic dream of legitimacy. To show that modern passion was rooted in ancient pathos, that *le mal du siècle* was an offspring of the same divine enthusiasm that inspired the Orphic hymns, was more than the Romantic rebellion could dream of. A new image of Antiquity, a new meaning bestowed upon classic culture were, to a certain extent, a kind of therapy for a schizophrenic aristocracy which was torn between a cult of violence, inherited from war-waging ancestors, and a cult of rationality that was the legacy of forerunners who had developed a true addiction to the values of geometric beauty. Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragoedie* puts on the same level the Apollonian and the Dyonisian, as the two theatrical masks of the being. More than that: *das Werden des Menschen* makes these masks fatally and ironically alternate. The pride of being aware, the sign of election represented by lucidity (cultural features that had entered the spiritual coat of arms of the aristocracy) no longer contradicted bellicose instincts. The new doctrine also had the merit of relieving aristocratic culture from the complications of Christian moral commands. On the one hand, the Wagnerian emphasis on archaic layers of violence underlying the mystically gracile Romantic visions of the Middle Ages, on the other hand, Nietzsche's archaeology, which brought to light Minoic and Thracian grotesque from under the philologic utopia of Greek Periclean rationalism, contributed to shape a brand new image of 'the elect' and lay the foundations of a new culture of War.

The idea of natural born superiority, of a natural right to dominance is, politically speaking, of aristocratic origin, but the knights who dedicated themselves to this cause, at the end of the nineteenth century, were not necessarily pure breed aristocrats. They could as well come from the ranks of the upper bourgeoisie, they could be the sons of merchants or low-ranking clerks, of the high or petty intellectuality. The origin was no longer relevant. Alain Besançon calls this social structure created by the more or less secret solidarity of youngsters with a sophisticated education who felt excluded and therefore developed an alternative, 'subversive' *Weltanschauung,* **radical intelligentsia**.[18] Besançon discusses the context of nineteenth-century Russia, and relates 'genetically' the birth of the 'intelligentsia' and of 'ideology'. But, in the articulated, abstract and

'modern' disguise we are used to, ideology is not a compulsory element in the definition of *fin de siècle* dissent. *Décadence* is built on a very diffuse nostalgia and on a rather incongruous attempt at restoring the 'savageness' and 'refinement' of the mythical chivalry to their brilliance and freshness. The Romantic naiveté of recreating them through mimetic devices, through imaginary medieval scenery and outfits, was abandoned in favour of a spiritualised, quintessential image of power and violence. In *Bereitschaft zum Gewalt,*[19] Christina von Braun identifies violence as one of the defining trends of the *fin de siècle*. In her opinion, violence has to do with the basic need to prove, to oneself and to the world, that one does really exist. Violence is an attempt at resisting the '*Gefühl der virtuellen Existenz*'[20] invading the frame of mind of the aristocratic-like intelligentsia of *La Belle Epoque*. Professor von Braun relates this crisis to the advance of modernity, to the rise of new reproductive techniques such as photography and film which, far from improving the social sense of reality, contribute to the further fictionalisation of the environment.

Themes generally considered expressive of the essence of Romanticism, as, for instance, the erotism of death and the *Weltschmerz*, are in fact discovered or granted full strength only in this period. We must accept that it is no longer possible to distinguish between what is Romantic and what is not Romantic, and that post-Romanticism slowly fades into *Décadence*. Intermediary concepts like Julien Benda's *Romantisme de la durité* or *du dédaigne*, or like Mario Praz's *schwarze Romantik*, can help us understand this inchoate transition.[21] The differences grow, on the technical side, between Romanticism and *Décadence*, as *der Man ohne Eigenschaften* typical of 1900 tries hard to cover his 'void complex' by refining his senses and by continuously improving his ability to express perceptions. Rimbaud's famous call for 'la dérégulation de tous les sens' or Ezra Pound's no less famous aphorism that 'he who tries to use his mind where he should use his senses, is driving screws with a hammer' speak for this hunger for 'concreteness' which eventually leads to a paradoxical deconstruction of the entire mimetic tradition of arts and literature. However, on the emotional side, the inceptive modernism of the final decades of the nineteenth century seems to continue and to emphasize the High Romantic tradition, against the newly-born Biedermeier, and later against the Naturalist consensus with civil society. This emphasis reaches a degree that leads George Mosse to say that, for the *décadent* spirit, death is 'the last real or 'sensual' experience.'[22]

The line of argumentation embedded in the fantasies of the last decades of the nineteenth century follows, more or less, into the footsteps of German Romantic philosophy. The idea of individuality was much closer to Fichte's attempt to found metaphysics as a whole on the *Ich Prinzip*. In a way, Décadence followed the same path that brought Fichte from the limits of solipsism to a conservatory view of political hierarchy incorporating the divine principle.[23] The most

explicit resemblance can be found with Maurice Barrès, a key personality for the understanding of the *Décadence*. Barres became famous through his *Trilogie du Moi* but ended, in the course of his inflamed participation in the Dreyfus scandal, as a promoter of devotional nationalism, as a priest of the cult of heroes and a delirious crusader against the 'Jewish conspiracy'. The case of Gabriele D'Annunzio, a European *arbiter* of the Décadence who ended as an enthusiastic supporter of Italian fascism, is not very different. The same can be said of Ezra Pound, one of the major poets of the twentieth century and, in my opinion, a typical representative of the same Décadence, in spite of his temporary connections to the Avant-Garde, Pound also cautioned the authoritarian regime of Mussolini, considering *Il Duce* as a simultaneous incarnation of ancient Roman imperial glory and of Confucian ethic principles.

The aristocratic individualism, founded on a kind of natural right conferred by one's genius, was, in fact, understood as a plunge into one's self, as an exploration of inner possibilities. From this point of view, it is quite hard to understand why the artistic sensitivity should be 'enchanted with the vision of a multitude of elements subordinated to each other up to the supreme one, who holds the supreme authority', as Julien Benda very clearly and bitterly stated.[24] Hierarchy implies a regular, even logical structure and a principle of functioning that seems to require an amount of rationality greater than the one a typical decadent would be willing to accept for no matter what so ever. If we want to understand this frame of mind and the type of political culture it finally tutored, we must be ready to suppress the contradiction between hierarchy and irrationality. The conservative, aristocratic sensibility did not perceive 'structure' the way we do, after almost half a century of intensive structuralism. It *experienced* rather than conceived hierarchic functions. As for classical education, it did not help this semi-aristocracy, this 'noble' artistic intelligentsia, to cast 'hierarchy' under the scan of reason, but to take seriously the Greek etymology of the word: *hieros*, sacred, and *to archein*, to be first, to rule (*apud* Webster's *Encyclopaedia*). Hierarchy is taken to have meant, in fact, *living* power, experiencing, so to say, the secret of 'the violent' and the violence of 'the secret'. A trace of this fantasy can be detected in the poetics of what is generally called, after the title of a manifesto published by Jean Moréas in *Le Figaro*, in 1886, Symbolism. The junction between sophisticated sound and rhythm effects and the obligatory obscurity of the psychic background can suggest the same strangeness that associates the geometry of vertical organisation to a brutal blood cult. Hyper-selfconsciousness, the slogan invented by Poe and Baudelaire, did by no means contradict the taste for the esoteric and for experiences that disorganize the psyche, which is so characteristic of decadentism. The famous mixture of violence and voluptuousness is to be found 'in den literarischen Werken des 'soldatischen Mannes' wie in dennen der Dekadenz'.[25]

The imperative of overcoming contradictions, of neutralizing apparently irreducible oppositions, finds its most important artistic expression in the already mentioned ideology of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The need for totality is a particular type of urge for knowledge, but, for the frame of mind of the 'neo-aristocrats', discursive knowledge was unacceptable. Initiation, as a cultural model that appears with a constantly growing emphasis at the end of the century, is linked to tradition only by artificial, rhetorical devices. In fact, the nostalgia for initiation rites that would have regained their original force and cruelty (as opposed to the abstract rites of free masonry, for instance, already void of meaning and emotional substance in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*) is expressive of a need for simultaneity quite characteristic of modernity. I guess *fin de siècle* decadents could have sung, together with their descendent Freddy Mercury, the late leader of the legendary rock group *Queen*, 'I want it all and I want it now!'

To enclose in one and the same cultural pattern, artistic performances that go from obsessive, narcissistic aestheticism, to a pagan cult of life and virility and to ostentatious religious conversions seems quite risky an attempt. Trying to express the ambiguous and self-contradictory political reflexes of conservatism, Chantal Millon-Delsol speaks of 'la nébuleuse des fascismes-corporatismes'.[26] There really is a nebula of impulses and ideas, which brings together Barrès, Sorel, Maurras, the paternalist and religious authoritarian regimes of Pilsudski, Primo de Rivera, Salazar, Horthy and, last but not least, Italian fascism. Even if it is difficult to think of a really coherent configuration to master this diversity, I shall still try to relate the aristocratic fantasies of *fin de siècle* intelligentsia to a dominant symbolic pattern. And this pattern is, as already suggested in my preliminary argument, War. War seen, of course, as initiation rite and as a spiritual experience.

Anthropologists do not always agree on the place and meaning of violence in the realm of culture. The point of view inherited from the Enlightenment is that war is purely irrational, an expression of the beastly nature of man that reason has to fight uninterruptedly. This is the spirit of the definition of war contained in the famous *Encyclopédie*. But other approaches to the ways violence really functions in the so-called 'primitive' cultures and in the economy of the human psyche favoured the idea of its primeval value. In fact, the status of war as such is disputed: it is either that of 'non-culture' or that of an autonomous structure of meaning, of an organizing cultural pattern. The contemporary 'common sense' of cultural anthropology seems to favour the latter interpretation, but, at the turn of the nineteenthth century, the academic establishment was still far from a unified theory of the subject. This is, of course, up to the moment when, in some academic areas, Nietzscheanism became the official policy.

By considering war a dominant *fin de siècle* myth, I do not mean to say that each and every manifestation of the Décadence can be integrated in it. Neither do I mean that, throughout their lifetime, Décadence writers were representatives of one and the same *Weltanschauung*. A creative personality is looked upon as lively and mobile in two opposite cases: when it is said to move along with an entire system of ideas and with the stream of the 'collective subconscious' and when it is vested with the power to break loose from the inertia of corporate society and to swim against the tide. The *hommes de lettres* of the Décadence were too intelligent, too spirited and energetic not to experience both. So that one can discover among them hard-line individualists who have pushed the principle of dissent and rejection up to the point of despising their own kind, or, with a cluster borrowed from the sociological jargon, their own 'group of reference', namely the aristocracy, with its heroic war fantasies.

From this point of view, it would be very interesting to contrast the attitudes of two classics of literary Dandyism: Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Marcel Proust. According to Adorno, Hofmannsthal had to face an Austro-German aristocracy quite different from the nostalgic model of a nobility defined by extreme refinement, subtle manners and an exquisite artistic taste. German speaking aristocracy was rather indifferent to its legitimation by means of arts and the *belles lettres* and was very attached to its patriarchal way of living; for the German aristocrat hunting was the major fulfilment of one's life. So that a would-be aristocrat like Hofmannsthal had to invent a style for this upper class, to embody a spiritual model that had no real life backing; in fact, he had to live within an utopian aristocracy.[27]

On the other hand, the authorized biographer of French high-life, Marcel Proust, practiced a highly different policy toward his 'reference group'. Even if overcome by nostalgia and expressing an irresistible fascination with the nobility by birth, even if centered on the myth of a blood so pure that it was beginning to rot, Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* lends itself to being interpreted as a mock epic of French aristocracy. True enough, the irony addresses more the upstart nobility of the *Second Empire,* but this is not as exclusive as to become moralizing and doctrinaire. Proust has the lucidity to measure the gap between the ever-increasing bourgeois passion for everyday comfort and well being and the heroic, glorious self-representations of the aristocrats. The taste for glory and life-size patriotic adventure had been awaked by the Dreyfus affair. The fact that Proust kept a safe, ironic distance from the turmoil that opposed passionate Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards, on the eve of World War One, was considered by Jean-François Revel as a token of independent critical thinking in the old liberal style.[28]

However, one notices a wide range of attitudes, from the total identification with the aristocratic ideal of power and beauty, to the ironic reluctance and

'demystification' of this ideal (of which not only Proust but also a great figure of the *Wiener Moderne*, Robert Musil, are highly representative). This should warn us against and prevent us from inadequate generalizations. Not all the great writers of the *fin de siècle* shared an irrepressible commitment to the values of a war culture. One can reasonably question whether the representatives of the dissenting current of Décadence really had alternative values, without profound connections to this broader pattern of mind and feeling. The point I am trying to make is that neither Proust or Musil, nor any other ironical spokesman of the Décadence could be seriously considered as representing a democratic alternative and a reasonable, critical counter-model to the dominant intellectual *Stimmung* of their time. The fact that they did not praise war, that they refrained from melting into the fiery 'paste' of patriotic enthusiasm, still does not mean that they did not share the essential features of the decadent ethos or the aristocratic contempt for democratic procedures and values.

One has to be cautious, since an attempt at including literature under some more general anthropological and political determinations is a very risky enterprise. Modern tradition — it is long since this word cluster ceased to be paradoxical or oximoronic — has placed literary creation under the sign of pure intimacy. The only consistent approach that defied such a view, and that generated a separate, 'scientific' perception of literature, is Marxism. Marxists like Georg Lukacs, or its more sophisticated offsprings, such as, for instance, the genetic structuralist Lucien Goldmann, include literature in a pattern of class conflict. A literary work which is, manifestly or not, hundred percent ideology, is — from the perspective of theories that feed also on psychoanalysis — an expression of a collective thrive for power. So, speaking about Décadence as hiding in its essence an aristocratic war-culture, may sound very much like the authoritative view of dialectical and historical materialism.

To compensate for the above invocation of Marxism — a capital offence nowadays in Romania — I can only say that, in my view, this theory has limited valability. Though it may be flexible and comprehensive enough to explain the turn-of-the-century cultural context, to generalize it, to pretend that it can be applied to the interpretation of everything, from ancient Greece to the Renaissance and to James Joyce, is illegitimate and even unsound. The Marxist theory of literature, which is to say, in fact, the theoretical works of Georg Lukacs, is expressive of the essence of the *fin de siècle*. Lukacs himself, in spite of his very Leninist lack of understanding artistic modernity, like many other Marxists with aesthetic interests, is a typical product of *fin de siècle* mentalities. Therefore, the idea of literature springing from the viscera, from the vital greed of a social class, is less of an explanatory theory and more of a project or manifesto. Like many other attempts typical of the epoch we are interested in, the Marxist approach to literature takes its energy from the one and the same *Gesamtkunstwerk* project.

More than that: even if the *liaisons* between Marxism and literature will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter, which focuses on the myth of Revolution, let it be said now that, in my view, part of the socialist culture of the *fin de siècle* has affinities with the war-culture and the aristocratic culture. In a very perceptive essay on Rosa Luxemburg, Hannah Arendt considers that the main motivation of her commitment to the cause of the working class was of a pure moral nature, that Rosa Luxemburg had a kind of aristocratic idealism about her. As for the erotic culture which developed inside the revolutionary cultures of the time, Hannah Arendt says (discussing the break between Rosa Luxemburg and her husband, Leo Jogiches) that 'this generation still firmly believed that love would only strike once in a lifetime, and one should not mistake its indifference to marriage licences for some belief in free love.'[29] I think that a sensitivity towards unconditioned sacrifice is the real link between social revolutionaries and the decadents, far more than the active and unlimited support granted by European social-democrats to the national hysterics preceding World War One. The same can be said about the anarchist movement: part of it was also influenced by the cult of war and allowed for the development of an aristocratic ethos. True enough, this is a nuance that can be detected more on the fringes of anarchism, in the artistic milieu that had a certain sympathy for the aesthetics of terrorism *per se*, i.e. without any definite political mobile.[30]

Fin de siècle is the stage of laborious efforts of building a theory of war that could bring together Enlightenment and vitalism. The liberal tradition, generally looked upon as a perpetual challenger of the conservative focus on natural strenght, is in fact not quite unrelated to the exultation of national energies. Not only the liberalism of the marginals — i.e. Italians or Eastern Europeans — was structured on a hard-core nationalistic discourse, but also the liberal theoreticians of what was to be called later 'imperialism', spoke the same language of grandeur and blind self-confidence. That is why even in the United States one could hear opinions such as that of Albert Beveridge who speaks of a 'race of conquerors' and of the 'call of the blood'.[31] In the Old World and in the United Kingdom, the theoretic frenzy was, of course, even greater. War culture was not carried only by 'natural' agents, such as Rudyard Kipling or William Ernest Henley in England, Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras in France, Gabriele D'Annunzio in Italy, by social Darwinians such as Treitschke, or by a follower of Klausewitz, general Golz, but also, as Barbara Tuchman bluntly puts it, by the political implications of Bergson's 'élan vital' or by George Bernard Shaw's 'vital force'.[32]

War seemed something noble and dignified, it enclosed a moral code of courage, manliness and boldness. This spirit was so widely spread, that war enthusiasts count among their ranks amazing casualties, like Thomas Mann, for instance. The conflict opposing him and his brother Heinrich is perhaps one of the most

relevant incidents of the time. In 1915, Thomas Mann wrote *Friedrich und die grosse Koalition*, a more than explicit approval of war and a homage paid to the hard-line foreign policy of Wilhelm II. Heinrich Mann, an admirer of Nietzsche in his youth converted to the *Zivilreligion* by the fascinating example of Emile Zola's *engagement*, replied to his brother in an article called *Geist und Tod* (published in *Weissen Blättern*, 1915). In it, Heinrich Mann attacked and exposed the mechanism of the Décadence, pleading for 'Frieden', 'Wahrheit', 'Optimismus', 'Demokratie' and of course 'Sozialismus'.

In his turn, Thomas Mann reacted promptly with a highly relevant text, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, in which he deploys a large range of rhetoric devices, accusing his brother of being incapable to tell 'Zivilisation' from 'Kultur'. Thomas Mann's pamphlet contains, indeed, some of the key concepts of decadent political culture. First of all, it was 'unpolitisch', because politics has to do with the spiteful level of 'Zivilisation'. The fact that literary aristocracy was not interested in politics did not imply, as it is traditionally believed, a lack of interest in power.The literary aristocracy simply believed that the world should not be run by endless discourses of loose rhetoric competence or by pragmatic and 'materialistic' means, but rather by acts of power and authority that could be, at the same time, acts of beauty. War was an essential revelation of the true, noble essence of the human being. This essence is synthetically embodied in the happy few, in *die Geistige*. This message of the *Betrachtungen* is also explicitly revealed in Thomas Mann's famous novel *Der Zauberberg* (1924), in which the character Hans Castorp completes his initiation on the battlefield.[33]

The relationships between the decadent heritage and the modern concept of politics become more explicit at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the very aggressive and apparently determined first generation of the Avant-Garde comes to the fore of the literary stage. The first manifesto of Italian Futurism (1909) states: 'We want to sanctify War — the only hygiene of the world — militarism, patriotism, the destructive deed of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas for which one dies, and the despise for womankind'.[34]

By far the most important alternative cultural manifestation of the period preceding World War I, Italian futurism represented a strange hybrid between the legacy of chivalry — an ostentatious Latin, Classical, legacy which had been argued by Charles Maurass of the previous generation —, and the newly born machinism. The continuity with the decadent forerunners is quite obvious in a lot of details and one could say that, in fact, Futurists were born mannerists, because all they added to the already constituted ethos of the Décadence (which, in the Italian culture, played an even more important role than in the other European cultures mentioned so far) was a new rhetoric, a language at the same time more straightforward and more sophisticated.

Futurists did not pretend they were 'unpolitical'. On the contrary, in 1913 they launched *Programma politica futurista*, a document in which nationalism, industrialization and war were the key concepts. The movement, which spread from Italy to Catalonia, America and Russia, had obsessive fantasies about modernity, but to its representatives modernity was no more than a background, a scenery. In all his manifestos and proclamations, F.T.Marinetti — the international leader of the Futurist movement and one of the most influential voices of his generation — invokes modernity, the need for speed and the need for a total change of the poetical imagery, which should include all the items of twentieth-century technology. But nothing else. The moral code, the values that count for the number one of world Futurism are the conservative ones of *fin de siècle*.

The decadent political culture is, I dare say, a mixture of emotion and spirituality. Political system, political discourse, political mechanisms, political rationality: these are notions that a *Geistiger* can understand only as tools sometimes not even worth touching. Of course this kind of sensitivity, this way of thinking could find no better medium than arts and literature. And it is interesting to meditate on the fact that the Nazis did not possess such an articulated ideology as the Bolsheviks. Their 'view of the world' was more adequate for a type of symbolic, intensely emotional language which was highly reminiscent of what has been called here a poetic war-culture.

III. Revolution

It is quite a challenge to make a distinction between the bellicose system of symbols and the powerful stream of revolutionary myths and emotions. Not that these two literary ideologies resemble one another. If we were to think only of the understanding of time, in both perspectives — a point that I tried to make from the very beginning — we could easily observe a major difference. War is the founding manifestation of Power, a revelation that has to be enacted periodically. It has to do with the *ewige Wiederkehr*, with the circular time pattern put by Gilbert Durand under the Tarot symbol of the Coin (the Dinar), whereas Revolution implies the belief in turning points, in irreversible processes, therefore has to do with Judeo-Christian linearity, it is placed under the magic symbol of linear time, the Staff.

However, in actual literary life, there is often no difference of style between the 'aristocrats' and the 'revolutionaries'. The broad and diffuse cultural zone separating (or uniting) these two worldviews could be anarchy. Or, the other way round, we could say that at the core of each of these ideologies there is

an irreducible tinge of anarchism. They both flourish from what Barrès called *le culte du moi*. However strong their devotion towards traditional authority, the Christian moral establishment or a revolutionary party, the moderns always tended to wage their own war. It is also true that the opposite need for higher legitimation, for hierarchy, for the geometry of command and control also holds together 'knights' and 'revolutionaries'. And if I argued that some of the leading figures of the *fin de siècle* workers' movement had an ethos based on honour, pride and audacity typical of the *ancien régime*, the same holds true and is even more appropriate for the *literati* who embraced the cause of World Revolution.

A warrior culture implies the coexistence of at least two separate orders of reality and consciousness. The *Übermensch* lived in his own world, tortured and suffering until the moment of great exploits would come. And then, he would act in order to re-establish the frame of the world, to give a fundamental example of vital energy. Warriors were the carriers of a model of beauty and *incorporated* this model of beauty. The poet-warriors, whom positivist scholars, the Romantics and, later on, the Decadents brought back to life from the *Iliad* and the *Eddas,* were *rois fainéants* the most of the time. In fact, in times of peace, of painful bourgeois stability, they had to fight spleen, which is to say their own inner demons. They challenged the obscurity and brutality of the universe by abusing their own mental, spiritual and physical health, by cultivating excess and self-destruction. In a way, the decadent poet offered his/her own body as a theatre for the strife between human will and the forces of decay.[35]

Revolutionaries take 'the mould' from outside themselves and from outside the world. In their imagination, body as such does not play a very important role. The universe should not be conceived as anthropomorphic. There is some kind of embodiment, but it is that of the Perfect City, and the revolutionary can never be sure whether that perfect model of the world will be the one to gain substance, or the low, corrupted mundanity will be delivered of its gross, Calibanic appearance and will regain the dignity of the spirit. From this point of view, we could explain a whole chain of theories from the 'dehumanization of art' preached by José Ortega y Gasset (who, in spite of this, was closer to the aristocratic ideal), to the Sixties' imperative of rejecting 'humanism' as a bourgeois, repressive construct, led by Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. But there is always a breeze of pride or vanity that turns *les hommes de lettres* from a complete identification with Revolution and gives them a 'body' of their own.

It is difficult to make aristocratic literary intelligentsia and radical intelligentsia part, because the latter very often tries to join the culture of Revolution, that is to say of total dedication, without giving up its special privileges of tolerated eccentricity, be it intellectual, aesthetic or purely erotic. A most astonishing eclecticism can be traced, for instance, in the case of the representatives

of the so-called Bloomsbury club. It was founded around 1915 by a group of brilliant young representatives of the British post-Victorian elite, led by Lytton Strachey and counting among its members remarkable personalities like E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf (and her husband, Leonard, the Fabian militant), Keynes and, occasionally, the young T.S.Eliot. With them, the aesthetic ideals of the *fin de siècle* Décadence blended with the moral philosophy of the Cambridge philosopher George Moore, the social theories of left-wing Labourites like Sidney and Beatrice Webb and finally with the most radical Marxism. As Stephen Koch, a historian of the Bloomsbury group, claims, their egalitarianism was pure gibberish. The essayist and biographer Lytton Strachey, the most politically minded of the group, managed to convince everyone else that socialism would not diminish, but strengthen their power as a cultural elite.

More interesting than the political fantasies of this generation are the influences they had on younger intellectuals who were to become vocal in the Thirties. Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean and Kim Philby, the media star of this Stalinist espionage network, were, as Stephen Koch puts it, the 'progeny of the original Bloomsbury circle'.[36] This famous Cambridge circle of spies was held together by naive beliefs in the rightness of the proletarian cause, as well as by a fraternity based on an acute sense of their intellectual superiority and on the symbolic complexities of a homosexual solidarity. In a word, something very similar to the decadent circles of aristocratic literary intelligentsia.

Even more puzzling within the context of distinguishing between 'war' and 'revolution' as cultural and imaginative patterns is Georges Sorel's theory of 'revolutionary war'. The author of *Réflexions sur la violence* is a perfect example of syncretism: an enthusiastic Marxist in the beginning, Sorel ended as a flamboyant apologist of energetism, nationalism, war, and social mythology. The blend of Marx and Nietzsche represents a distinct tradition which produced some very influential personalities, like Georges Bataille and some of the Surrealists, for instance, and later flourished in the rock culture of the Sixties.[37] Georges Sorel also made a clear distinction between revolutionary violence and war. In his critique of the French Revolution, interpreted in the tradition of Tocqueville and Taine, as a continuation of the taste for political geometry of the *Ancien Régime*, Sorel opposes the violence of the *Jacobins* to his own moral understanding of class struggle. About the 'violences prolétariennes', he wrote that 'elles sont purement et simplement des actes de guerre, elles ont la valeur de démonstrations militaires et servent à marquer la séparation des classes. Tout ce qui touche à la guerre se produit sans haine et sans esprit de vengence; en guerre on ne tue pas les vaincus; on ne fait pas supporter à des êtres inoffensifs les conséquences des déboires que les armées peuvent avoir éprouvées sur le champ de bataille; la force s'étale alors suivant sa nature, sans jamais prétendre rien emprunter aux procédures juridiques que la société engage contre des criminels'.[38]

The difference between 'war' and 'revolution' is that revolution is what we would call today a 'total war', an attempt so radical at the extermination of every possible enemy that it can no longer make a clear distinction between friends and foes. Commitment to Revolution has no other intellectual, psychological or moral content than 'le culte superstitieux de l'État',[39] while commitment to war relies on 'powerful', 'brave', 'dignified', full of 'vitality' **social myths**.

In fact, Sorel opposes utopia to myth; utopia is seen as the pure outcome of a wrecked rationalism rooted in seventeenth-century classicism and in eighteenth-century Enlightenment, while myth is the energetic expression of a moral grandeur rooted in human nature from the beginning of history. As a matter of fact, Sorel's conception of social myths could help define the nature of the entities suggested as essential for the understanding of the links between literature and politics: war, revolution, carnival. According to Sorel, in the social myths 'se retrouvent les tendances les plus fortes d'un peuple, d'un parti ou d'une classe, tendances qui viennent se présenter à l'esprit avec l'insistance d'instincts dans toutes les circonstances de la vie, et qui donnent un aspect de pleine réalité à des espoirs d'action prochaine sur lesquels se fonde la réforme de la volonté.'

Another source of misunderstanding is the fact that the concept of revolution has been used in contexts that render it completely ambiguous. The idea of a 'conservative revolution' that grew in the milieu of the right-wing theorists of the Thirties is symmetrical to the above-mentioned 'revolutionary war'. In Italy, the fascists used revolutionary slogans to a large extent, both before and after coming into power. The 'conservative revolution' meant the restoration of plain moral values, a revival of responsibility, courage, sympathy for your fellow man (in the very restrictive sense of 'fellow *country*man'; this did not apply to outsiders, to those who did not share in the 'vivid' traditions of the community). 'Conservative revolution' also meant a new sense for hierarchy, for social discipline and for self-commitment. It was, in fact, an attempt at rebuilding the spirit of the community which, according to a theory accepted by everybody, from the extreme political left to the extreme political right, had completely vanished from the industrial and liberal world. From this point of view, the difference between left and right apparently lies in the fact that the right considered the idea of community to be embodied in the 'people', in nation seen as a a whole consisting of thought, feeling and action, while the left, even if bewitched by the same fantasy, considered that the working class represented the epiphany of the unaltered humanity.

Scarce as they may be, these elements can, nevertheless, help us understand the extreme difficulty of separating the 'culture of war' from the 'culture of revolution'. For politologists and historians this may be less of a problem. A rationalization of the conflicting ideologies of our century may still consider them as basically incompatible, in spite of the countless similarities of detail.[40]

For someone concerned with the imaginary, with the artistic trials of giving utopias a perceptual consistency, the border between communism and fascism is, by far, less evident. As a matter of fact, the theme of revolution should be approached from at least three points of view: a) the perspective of high culture, which tries to cope with the idea of social justice, rejecting (repressing) the evidence of its own privilege and imagining a kind of socialization of its ideals; b) the experiments of the radical Avant-Garde for which Revolution is prior to every other cultural or symbolic activity and which tries to internalize dialectics, to dissolve itself in the huge process of becoming of the collective proletarian consciousness; c) the attempts made by the revolutionary ideological establishment to bring literature under control, to provide the correct interpretation for the creative process, to make literature fit into the corpus of revolutionary knowledge.

Subversive aristocrats

Speaking of the participation of French writers and intellectuals in the workers' movement, at the end of the century and in the interwar period, Michel Trebitsch distinguishes two categories of *engagement*: on the one hand, that of the romantic magus, the prophet who brings light to an ignorant but innocent people, breaking (betraying) the principle of the separation 'entre la connaisance abstrait et l'authenticité, entre le conçu et le vecu'; on the other hand, that of the revolutionary intellectual, totally committed to the myth of revolution, and who, in order to accede to 'l'authenticité lukacsienne', has to betray his own kinship and class.[41]

Several important distinctions should be made within the first category in which the heirs of the Enlightenment find a suitable place. The rationalist and bourgeois belief in personal autonomy of the hard-core Naturalism, which gathered momentum during the Dreyfus scandal and was embodied by Émile Zola, found a prominent follower in Heinrich Mann. The contribution of the modern Gnostics, of the esoteric circles around Mallarmé, Stefan George or Vyacheslav Ivanov, who believed in a restoration of the hermetic philosophy and in the resurrection of mystical experience shouldn't either be forgotten. These authors also placed themselves above the civilian society, in a transcendent realm from where they could bring a message of redemption to the people. By giving 'un sens plus pur au mot de la tribu' they were undergoing their own *spiritualist* (when not spiritist) revolution.

A third and most relevant category of writers that had affinities with the present topic were the heirs of Décadence. The blend of courage and sensuality typical of this kind of post-aristocratic literary culture nourished both the

chauvinistic and the proletarian revolutionary approach. In the Thirties, the leading figures of French antifascism — André Gide and André Malraux —, and of the German 'archetypal' revival — Ernst Jünger, Gottfried Benn — were, in my opinion, continuators of the Décadence. To them all, politics was a combination of violence and voluptuousness, which provided them with an opportunity to undertake beautiful acts of personal courage.

It is true that between Gide (who belongs, from an aesthetical point of view, to the generation of D'Annunzio and Oscar Wilde) and the younger writers there is an important difference of nuance. The 'neo-decadent' spirit tended to explore the everyday life even in its marginal and miserable aspects. Malraux's novels, featuring the quest for illuminating violence just as much as every poem by Marinetti, take place in a world of common people, full of sufferings, rough, even promiscuous, a world totally unacceptable to the taste of the *fin de siècle*. Even more relevant is the case of Céline, the violent pamphleteer and obstinate monographer of human decay, who owed his fame, in fact, to the sophisticated intelligentsia, thrilled by his hidden aestheticism. Mention should also be made of the alliance between Décadence and the spirit of the *Lumpenproletariat*, such as it appears in the writings of Jean Genet. In their essays, Benn and Jünger explicitly condemn the poetry of vague and void preciousness, the useless lasciviousness of their predecessors, yet in their writings they perpetuated the Symbolist and Expressionist taste for the perverse. In Russia, Alexander Block strived to break free from his symbolist past by devoting himself to the Revolution and writing the poem *The Twelve*. Block was contested Both by the Futurists and by the Akhmeists who wanted to remove spiritualism from the pre-structured, hyper-aesthetic poetical world of Block's generation and to pour it over a world of open experience, one that would not refrain from being 'common' or 'vulgar'.[42] In Italy, we face the difference between the overwhelming and flamboyant classicism of D'Annunzio and the ostentatious, almost 'proletarian' lack of style of Giovanni Papini's variant of the Décadence. But the stream of naturalism brought by the so-called 'Generation of the Trenches' in the universe of the aristocratic fantasy did not, in fact, change the nature of what we agreed to call 'War culture'. It did not help to invent another aesthetics and did not change the decadent idea of what the 'totality' of the work of art is, namely, an extreme intensity of personal experience melting together the body and the spirit.

There is a certain underground solidarity between the different literary trends which tried to protect the privileges of literature, its right to cross the limits of common sense, morality, decency, logic, and efficiency. The political attitude of these trends is characterized by the fact that they do not accept either privilege (there is a feeling of responsibility towards the masses, the suffering, the poor), or the fact that they might ever abandon the 'nobility' of poetry. The idea of

democracy entertained by these trends is, in fact, the socialization of this freedom of imagination, the socialization of the political, erotic, ethical privileges of literature. From this point of view, it is easy to understand why the Russian Futurism and the French Surrealism became, for a while, enthusiastic 'compagnons de route' of the Communists. Both trends were seeking the political force that could help them expand their message, that could turn their aesthetics into the dominant one. The same motivation can be found on the other side of the political barricade. In Italy, Marinetti fought continuously against the suppression of Futurism and against the influence of the Nazi aesthetic ideology of Alfred Rosenberg.[43] Ezra Pound's association with Mussolini had the same aesthetical basis, it was a contract based on aesthetics. In the eyes of the American poet, *Il Duce* represented the only barrier against the grotesque tide of the bourgeois art and literature, against the wreckage of authentic arts and the invasion of the realms of the spirit by the brutish forces of finance and commerce.

Between the Surrealist dreams to erotically revolutionize the proletariat of the world and the conservative fear of barbarism there seems to be a world of difference. Since, throughout the nineteenth century, the chimera of the dangerous classes was closely connected to the political emancipation of the working class, it seems reasonable to think that this phobia still echoed in the ideas that Pound, Eliot, Maurras or Paul Valéry entertained about barbarity. The demophile inclinations of the anarchist Avant-Garde, of Expressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, seem the perfect counterpart for this conservative modernity. Yet the 'conservative' often see capitalism as their direct enemy, whereas the abstract enthusiasm of the left-oriented for the 'people' could be psychoanalysed as an attempt at exorcising a profound fear. The myth of the proletarians as well as the myth of the race could be seen as attempts of 'euphuisation'[44] of the menacing unknown.

Apart from fear, the new generations of the Décadence also have to solve an ethical problem. By the beginning of the century, an articulated and aggressive Marxist discourse succeeded to inoculate a feeling of guilt into part of the intellectual elites. The simple but effective idea of a class representativeness of the products of the mind made writers compete against themselves: how could they escape being determined by their own social origin? How could they pretend art was an expression of spiritual liberty, against its definition as a way of codifying the power structure of society? Between the two world wars, the attacks of the Lukacs school against aestheticism, seen as a major ideological enemy, continuously grew in intensity. The Frankfurt school brought Walter Benjamin's ideas on the deep relationship between *l'art pour l'art* and totalitarianism to paroxysm. The ethical condition of art became more of a problem with the outburst of Fascism in Italy and with the rise to power of Hitler. Thus, by the mid-Thirties, nobody could avoid the obligation of taking a stand, of making statements any longer.

The literary elite had to accept that individualism, sensuality, the cult of divine beauty, of orgiastic knowledge, of gratuitous courage and nobility were profoundly immoral, as long as they were only a kind of leisure for the powerful if not a way of hiding the brutal, 'terrorist' essence of capitalist society. Yet to most of the Décadence-inspired writers, the perspective of socializing their own perception of life, of preaching their own gospel of the forbidden pleasures, was irresistible. They were not ready to accept the 'guilt' of their art the way they accepted it for their social class. In their view, guilt had a certain intrinsic value, one that need not necessarily be suppressed. To include vast majorities in their own frame of mind, to impose their view of the world, which, for so long, had been seen as perverse, as the aesthetic norm of society, seemed much more of a revolution to them, than to try to discover the 'appropriate' literary language for the 'progressive' political forces. Their political project was more the unlimited access to eternal voluptuousness and the unlimited participation in the contemplation of eternal beauty — all of which had been the traditional attributes of a closed, self-centered aristocratic culture. Their political project did by no means include the suppression of aestheticism and hedonism, but their exhibition and socialization.

Hard-line revolutionaries

The crisis of the ethical and political status of literature found more than one answer, and the one discussed above is hardly the only representative one. It is not even prevalent. We tried to tell the story of a literature that circled the realm of political revolution, rather than enter it directly. This type of literature preferred to invent a revolution of its own rather than accept the ideological frames of the already existing revolutionary movements. The Stalinist masters of the literary-political game created a special name for this type of writer. They were called 'travel companions'. Marxists placed them the way Dante had placed Greek and Latin poets and philosophers: neither in Paradise or Purgatory, as they were heathen, nor in the Inferno, as they illustrated the glory of the 'progressive' trans-historical team.

However, our interest lies now with the attitude and creative commitment of the writers who really thought of Revolution as teleology and who genuinely believed in the explanatory patterns of History as a whole. A difference can be made between those who considered Revolution as a means of achieving a goal and those who saw Revolution as an end in itself.

Anarchists. They are closely linked to the political idea of 'permanent revolution', the innovation introduced by Leon Trotsky in the classical Leninist theory of proletarian revolution, from his Mexican exile. Yet the Trotskyite milieu

are not the only ones representative of this way of thinking and they can by no means be granted their invention. Trotsky's idea itself could be understood as either the remnant of or a conscious attempt at bestowing new meanings onto a traditional anarchist theme. It is the Heraclitean dimension of Bakunin or Kropotkin that is brought to life again in the desperate attacks of the most famous dissident of the Bolshevik Revolution against Party bureaucracy.

Anarchist imagination took part in the great *fin de siècle* attempt at bringing together the mystical and the scientifical sides of modernity. The longing for this synthesis can be felt even in the works of Balzac, and later in those of his hard-to-define follower Leo Tolstoy (who, in *War and Peace* articulates social inquiry and the theology of history); the synthesis gained momentum with the Symbolists (if we take into account the theories of Baudelaire about the solidarity between scientifical and poetical means of exploring the world), and became obsessive with the Decadents. In his novel *Là-Bas*, J. K. Huysmans imagines the literature of the future as a convergence between the techniques of hyperrealistic description and mystical inner expansion. The model for this new *Weltanschauung* is to be found in the creation of the German painter Grünewald and, as regards the modern times, in the novels of Dostoevsky.[45] From this point of view, Anarchism brought an interesting solution. Its view of freedom was based, on the one hand, on the mystical, Romantic exaltation of the individual, of the unalienable sovereignty of the human being, that made every state construction illegitimate. On the other hand, as Emmanuel Mounier noticed, there was very little unconditional exaltation in the actual anarchist theories.[46] Bakunin and Kropotkin in particular used a rhetoric based on rational arguments that often invoked the prestigious model of positivistic investigation. Kropotkin claimed that society had to be set up on the principles of empirical and experimental research. Scientific approaches are bound to refrain from any manipulation or deformation of facts and to formulate physical laws and principles that are debatable and subjected to continuous revision under the pressure of new evidence. Likewise, society cannot be organized in a stable, hierarchic form, it cannot legitimately employ force and violence — be it physical or spiritual — against individuals, who are the very political equivalents of epistemological 'facts', whose Brownian irregularity is sacred.[47] Kropotkin's views differ greatly from the Marxist pretensions of building a scientific theory of society. As far as political practice is concerned, the anarchist philosopher argued the emulation of the basis of empirical research. Society should be de-centralized just as scientific research rejects all-embracing, metaphysical explanations of the world. This was an explicit attempt at considering experiment not as an accessory to social change, but as the very essence of modern society.

With the arts, this very tempting analogy between revelation, scientific knowledge and political freedom became widely spread. An explicit relationship with political anarchy could be detected only after World War One. Not that the *fin*

de siècle did not witness a growing sympathy of the artistic milieu for the anarchist underground. But this sympathy was of the type analyzed in the previous chapter, aristocratic curiosity rather than real interest. Things decidedly changed with the advent of the Avant-Garde. As strange as it may seem, the interest in anarchy was generated by Italian Futurists, the uncontested leaders of the 1900 revival of artistic expression. Their profound influence on the alternative milieu of young writers, artists and intellectuals in France, England, Germany, the Austrian monarchy, and Russia brought to life a curious mixture of exaltation and furious rejection of state power. The political imagination of the first generation of Futurists was not as absurd as it may seem. In fact, Marinetti wanted a kind of treaty with top political leaders, which would grant artistic experiment total independence and the artistic caste aristocratic privileges, in exchange for its 'professional' support of totalitarian power. Arts were entitled to conclude a kind of separate social contract, one which would exempt them from ordinary moral and social duties and would integrate their civil disobedience in a broader concept of political and national grandeur. This principle is not inherently different from the attitude of the American 'lost generation', whose representatives, in the words of Irving Howe, made their own 'separate peace' during or after World War One.[48] They believed in their preferential status *as* artists and writers, in their non-identity with law-abiding ordinary citizens.

This is a vision of artists as an anarchist colony tolerated inside the body of society, a kind of compensatory, reversed image of political order, a living utopia that establishes a minimum of diplomatic contacts with the outside world which enable it to survive. But the conversion of literature to anarchism implies much more than this analogy. It is expressed in the participation of artists to real revolutionary events or projects, it is expressed in the radicalisation of the artistic discourse in the aftermath of both World War One and World War Two. The enthusiasm of the Russian Futurists for the Bolshevik Revolution, of German expressionists or of the Dadaists for the Bavarian Commune of 1919 or the support granted by an important number of avant-garde Hungarian writers and artists to the Soviet Republic of Béla Kun are events that marked a profound change in the evolution of the theme of revolution on literary and artistic ground. The ideological tension between nationalist, conservative, Christian political trends associated with totalitarian movements like Fascism and National-Socialism on the one hand, and the bundle of left-wing doctrines, among which the totalitarian Communist movement gradually took the symbolic lead (following the Russian Revolution) on the other hand, brought the process of radicalization of arts and artists to its extreme.

There is still another difference between writers who assumed anarchism through their aesthetic commitment, by dismantling the oppressive structures of language, and writers who considered that literature could advocate, with more

or less conventional means, the anarchist point of view. The latter are represented by challenging figures, by authors who also became political stars, such as George Orwell and Arthur Koestler, and later by 'political refugees' from the Communist camp, like Manès Sperber or Victor Serge. After World War Two, in the context of the *tiersmondisme* and of an antifascist *engagement* which unfortunately lacked Fascism, the writer's absolute independence, so close to anarchistic positions, was represented by Albert Camus, who systematically turned down every ideological affiliation. During the sixties, when one witnessed a strong movement against the Vietnam war, American imperialism, cultural manipulation, alienation through technology and 'consumerism', the cause of anarchy was embraced by German writers like Heinrich Böll, Günther Grass, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, by Bernard-Henri Lévy and a part of the *Tel Quel* group in France, by the poets of the '63 Generation in Italy. The idea also played a role in the East-European dissident movement, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, with writers close to the Chart '77 group, in Russia, with Brodski and Axionov. As for Romania, one of the most challenging experimentalists who could publish his works in a moment of apparent liberalization, in the late sixties, Dumitru Tsepeneag, openly stated, after his expulsion to France, his affiliation to the anarchist creed. Tsepeneag also belongs to the line of anarchistic affinity, not only to that of anarchistic affiliation. By anarchistic affinity I understand the attempt at making revolution with no other weapon than linguistic hyper-creativity, which could allow for the subversion of the basic institution of language. If one states that language is the primary and basic determination of the human being, that all the structures man is part of, are mere analogies of links and patterns which already exist in language, and that every form of power over man and society is basically exercised through language, then one could conclude that by destructuring/restructuring language — which is, at the same time, the 'brain' and the concentrated image of the whole system — the very social or political ties are broken and reshaped. It is this type of cabalistic picture of the world that underlies many of the Dada and Surrealist experiments and it is this total belief in the epistemological power (or the power *over* epistemology, over cognitive paradigms) of the language, that motivates the French *Nouveau* and especially *Nouveau Nouveau Roman*.

Marxians. It is, in fact, this last category that best illustrates the description of the *Weltanschauung* of revolutionary literature given in the introductory chapter in which Revolution was linked to the belief in a transcendent model of perfection, to an image of the *Civittà del Sole* or the New Jerusalem, according to which the whole world must be modified. From this point of view Revolution is only a process of revelation, of giving the ideal the flesh and blood of reality. This is no end in itself, it is only subsequent to the purpose, it is motivated by the faulty nature of humans.

However, it would be far too much to claim that every single intellectual and artist who dealt with Revolution as a simple means, as an instrument of achieving a goal, had such utopian and apocalyptic visions. One should distinguish between utopian and dialectical revolutionaries. The first category consists of people who actually imagine the future. They are driven by the future, they try to communicate (and, sometimes, genuinely believe they do communicate) a sense of immediacy, of the presence of the future, which is experienced as a kind of specific power. The most visible embodiment of utopian thinking in the first decades of our century is science fiction, a genre that enjoyed great sympathy in Soviet Russia and, to some extent, in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.[49] This line of literary production, striving to give substance to the so very abstract and disquieting perspectives of revolution, filled in a blank that existed in both Communist and Nazi ideology: even if prophetic in nature, neither of them ventured to give precise descriptions of the world to come. But, irrespective of the fact that they were writing out of pure enthusiasm, or were responding to a 'social command', SF authors remained marginal, and, at least at the apex of Stalinism, they were even persecuted and censured.[50] One should also notice that, between the wars, no actual link existed between this 'literature of anticipation' and the experimentalist trends. Such a junction was made only in the late fifties, with the American New Wave dominated by the great novelist Philip K. Dick. Yet this trend developed from the alternative tradition of the counter-utopias of Zamiatin, Orwell or Huxley. The rhetoric of revolutionary science-fiction of the twenties and the thirties is conventional, plain-hearted, omniscient, popular realism.

SF never represented a serious competitor to the title of 'revolutionary literature', even if it constantly remained a medium for the ideological self-assertion of the technical intelligentsia or rather an efficient safety valve for its fantasies of progress, frustrated and repressed by the party elites.[51] The debate around 'revolutionary literature' developed after the October Revolution and, for about a decade, expanded in a really autonomous form, without the vigorous regulatory intervention of party officials. The revolutionaries were different from both decadent and avant-garde writers. The names of Boris Pylniak, Vsevolod Ivanov, Isaak Babel were put forward, especially by the French and German communist *hommes de lettres*, as possible models for what a 'new' literature could or should be. In the thirties, Alexander Blok and Boris Pylniak were the most translated Russian authors and were perceived as legitimate literary spokesmen of the Revolution.[52]

Blok and Pylniak were not very vocal as literary theoreticians, but someone like Victor Serge, in France, or Ossip Mandelstam, in Russia, tried to construct a new aesthetics based on this 'natural' offspring of the Communist Revolution. What they required was, with the words of Jean-Pierre Morel, 'une modernité entierement positive, non-contaminée par l'avantgardisme, une modernité qui

sera le produit sans mélange de la révolution sociale et politique. L'inspiration révolutionnaire plus la forme novatrice, l'une et l'autre depourvues d'ambiguité, voila ce qui definirait la vraie 'littérature révolutionnaire'.[53] Pylniak and the authors gathered under the name of 'the Serapion Brothers' equated, in fact, Revolution with a style of fresh observation, with a 'brutal' mix of episodes, with a narrative speed permanently threatening to dissolve the narrative itself. Pylniak's novel *The Barren Year* or Vsevolod Ivanov's *Armoured Train 14–69* provoked fiery debates because of their open, multiple-narrative conception. At the beginning, the translation of Pylniak into French provided Victor Serge with the opportunity to assert that the novel without a central character, without intrigue, without a focal point, the 'récit multilinéaire et discontinu', was the very expression of Revolution.[54]

As early as 1922 came the reply of the intellectual moguls of Revolution, through the voice of Leon Trotsky. In an article published in *Pravda*, he made an extended analysis of *The Barren Year*, reaching the conclusion that the strange structure or lack of structure of the novel pointed to the fact that the author could not make heads and tails out of the revolutionary reality, that he lacked ideological guidance and that, in fact, he was no more than a 'fellow companion'. This reaction is expressive of the great differences in understanding Revolution that underlie the apparent homogeneity of the radical intelligentsia. To the Serapion Brothers as well as to independent writers like Mikhail Bulgakov, author of *The White Guard*, Vassilyi Platonov, the creator of *Chevengur*, or to the famous couple of satirical writers Ilf and Petrov, Revolution was an open reality, as unpredictable as life itself. To Trotsky, who also took the matter seriously and amplified his theories in *Literature and Revolution* (New York, 1925), this flexibility was unacceptable and even dangerous, since the only chance to acquire a revolutionary consciousness was to cling to *the concept* of Revolution. Only the 'dialectical and historical' vision of Marxism-Leninism could shape the huge and centrifugal amount of facts generated by the October Revolution. Jean-Pierre Morel gives a highly perceptive interpretation of Trotsky's reaction. According to him, from the point of view of a founding father of the Soviet system, the Serapion Brothers were excluded from the understanding of revolutionary reality because they borrowed the perspective of the average, unaffiliated, 'traditional' man. These novels could only be blueprints of the confusion created in empirical minds by the turmoil of the Revolution. They were not really 'modern', they were rooted in the past, they were still affected by the Russian inertia. In spite of their good intentions — Trotsky did not declare them enemies; for this to happen, we shall have to wait for the epoch of the grand purges —, they were no more qualified to express Revolution than the 'bourgeois' avant-garde; they were unable to diagnose the causes of the capitalist crisis and condemned to remain, more or less, a marginal symptom of this crisis. In Jean-Paul Morel's

opinion, Trotsky wanted writers to see Revolution from above, from the point of view of the power, to put each and every casualty under the authority of scientific socialism, to think in 'grandes formes'.[55]

A more successful attempt at finally creating the literature that would legitimately speak for the revolution was that of the revolutionary milieu of the anti-fascist German exile. The ideological radicalization of the exiles grew systematically during the Nazis' ascent to power. The brutal installation of the totalitarian system, its discriminatory, oppressive and, finally, extermination policies against Jews, against every other 'inferior race', against sexual minorities, avant-garde artists, political opponents, generated, apart from the ideological frustration, a strong personal frustration as well. Apocalyptic feelings and the conviction that radical means had to be employed against Fascist barbarity — the idea that intellectuals had to wage a total war not only against racist ideologies, but against the flesh-and-blood representatives of these ideas, to raise in arms, to take weapons — made some prominent young German writers approach the Leninist idea of revolution and the Soviet Union as the most determined enemy of the Nazis.

The most interesting such example is that of Bertolt Brecht. Not because his ideological radicalism were superior to that of Walter Benjamin or to the one of the Frankfurt School, which, in the thirties, moved to Paris, before finally settling in New York.[56] Brecht is the only one who was committed to elaborating a theoretical revolutionary aesthetics, and also to exemplifying it in his own literary creation. Brecht had a major contribution in transporting the abstract principles of dialectics into a functional concept of the literary work.

Brecht's most interesting theoretical construct challenges the Aristotelian idea of the aesthetic experience as *katharsis*. In his *Theorie des epischen Theaters*, Brecht argues the dialectical value of theatrical performance: the playwright should not force the identification of the audience with theatrical archetypes, on the contrary, he should create a critical distance, a space of lucidity, an intellectual tension. A theatrical experience should not 'purge' the consciousness of its frustrations and anxieties, but should make these frustrations and anxieties obvious to the consciousness, should rationalize frustration by making the human subject inquire the actual, social and political causes of his unhappiness. Brecht called this the *V-effekt*.[57]

At the core of his aesthetics lies the idea of truth. In his 1939 essay *Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit*, Brecht explained his idea of truth: 'sie darf nicht etwas Allgemeines, Hohes, Vieldeutiges sein"[58], but 'etwas Praktisches, Tatsächliches, Unleugbares, das, um was es sich handelte.'[59] But Truth has to be reached by the use of a suitable method, by the science of grasping the essentials of every phenomena. For this, one needs 'eine Kenntnis der materialistischen Dialektik, der Oekonomie und der Geschichte.'[60] As a matter of fact, Brecht equates the practised art with the capacity of making truth instru-

mental. The third chapter of his essay bears the title 'Die Kunst, die Wahrheit handhabbar zu machen als eine Waffe'.[61]

Brecht's discovery of Marxism was prior to his antifascist commitment and occured at a time when he was already a mature writer. Marxism did not modify his literary language, only radicalized it. Brecht thinks of the literary work as if it were a precise, rational demonstration which, somehow, enacts the dialectical movement of history. The literary structure is moulded on the pattern of the dialectical triad: thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Brecht builds on classical values: limpidity, coherence, lucidity. But he changed the meaning of these categories by separating them from an ethos of self-containment and loyalty to the Eternal and projecting them against the background of class conflict and social becoming.

Unlike other 'revolutionary writers' of his generation, Brecht did neither claim the self-determination of literature (this would be the case of hard-core Communists like Louis Aragon and Rafael Alberti, who were always granted the privilege of following, in their poetical work, their personal fantasies), nor did he complacently accept the ideological guidance of the Communist party (like Paul Nizan or the Russian promoters of 'socialist realism': Sholohov, Ehrenburg, Alexey Tolstoy). Brecht unified his literary and his intellectual beliefs out of conviction. He carried out a personal project of totality, of completeness which essentially contradicted his enthusiasm for dialectics. The famous statement of Walter Benjamin on Fascist aestheticism in politics which has to be confronted with the increased political awareness of aesthetics might have been inspired by the antifascist work of Bertolt Brecht.[62] But, at a closer look, are these two processes as different as they first seemed? Is the passion for a structured, complete and dramatic explanation of the world totally unrelated to aestheticism? Was Marxist hermeneutics not an aesthetic experience of the 'totality' in the same way in which the organicist theory of the state was an aesthetic experience for the Fascist-Futurist intellectuals incriminated by Walter Benjamin?

The fact that Brecht's intimacy with Marxism was of a special nature, that he actually found in Communist revolutionary ideology structures that helped him complete his 'neo-classic' experiments, may be proved by the huge literary heritage he left behind. Writers of the so-called Generation of '47 who came to be acknowledged after World War Two, placed themselves under the authority of Brecht. The most important post-war German fiction writers paid him homage. True enough, this reverence belated the moment of interrogation over the Brecht's activity in East Germany as an undecent Stalinist zealot. Brecht's image, in both German states, was emblematic for the 1968 rebels. After his death, he became the 'living evidence' testifying to the possibility of an 'authentic', creative Marxism, unstained by the bureaucratic sclerosis of the Soviets, yet profoundly orthodox. Brecht was impressive in his desperate act of continuously watering the Marxist wooden language, hoping that one day it will suffer the same miraculous transformation as Tannhäuser's staff.

Ideologists

Up to this point, I discussed only the point of view of those writers who appropriated the theme of Revolution, as if they enjoyed a special kind of legitimacy in dealing with it. But even Bertolt Brecht, who had the closest approach to the criteria of ideological orthodoxy, did not think of himself, during the most important period in his creative activity, as an obedient servant of the Communist Party. In a text written in the '30, Brecht accuses the reluctance of intellectuals as regards the Party, but he agrees that it is a bureaucratic structure lacking creative spirit and generosity, and that, at the outbreak of the revolution, its interests will prove to be different from those of the working class. Brecht was only convinced that, when the time came, the Party would be 'dialectically' overcome by the spontaneous spirit of the popular upsurge.[63]

The image that poets had about Revolution and their attempt to dominate or integrate themselves in the revolutionary process is only one side of the story. In order to acquire a better understanding of this matter, it is vital to look at the facts from the point of view of those in power, of those who were actually making the Fascist, Nationalist or Communist revolutions. Their attempts at imagining literature and integrating literature in their picture of the world will be the focus of the following inquiry.

We must perhaps differentiate the policy of the Communist or of the Nazi party with regard to writers from the ideological attempt at creating a literary orthodoxy. The political strategies of both totalitarian movements fluctuated with time. The Soviet strategy, which has a much longer history, reached a final state of baroque self-contradiction in this respect. Different power nuclei inside the power structure used writers as their speakers and many political or ideological wars have been waged under literary cover. In the Soviet system, literary criticism used to play a greater role than literature itself. There is a significant difference, from this point of view, between Communist and National-Socialist dictatorships. In Hitler's Germany, writers never had the social status and the symbolic power they enjoyed in Soviet Russia, even at the apex of Stalinism. This is one of the reasons behind the claim which can still be heard, that Communism had a more human face than its right-wing counter-part, because it inspired a great literature and it cherished poetry.

To account for this diferrence, we have to look into the Russian tradition of the enlightened intelligentsia, one that has generated a specific blend of political and literary culture, a belief in the 'mission' of literature which has been

pathetically advocated by generations of Populists, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchists or Panslavists, and ended up in becoming part of the second nature of Russian intellectuals. Russian culture developed the theme of the intellectuals' 'guilt' to an extent that makes comparison with other spiritual areas extremely difficult. Inherited from one generation to another, the theme acquired an intellectual and aesthetic poignancy that entitles it to be considered a *form* rather than a diffuse *substance*. One cannot insist enough on the cultural rather than psychological nature of the theme of 'guilt'. This guilt complex explains both the surrender before the pretence of ideological domination of the Bolsheviks and the tenacity of the intellectuals' resistance to Communist totalitarianism. Writers were traditionally granted the status of intermediaries between the solitary man who represented the peak of the 'power' (the Little Father, be he the Czar or the Secretary General), and the 'people'.[64] German tradition favoured the image of the Poet who transcends human contradictions. If there is some kind of agency that the poet can exercise, this is more one of a spiritual kind. The poet should intermediate between community and the ethereal spheres — or the dark powers of the abyss, not between the autocrat and the masses. The poet's status was not built on a profound feeling of guilt, but on a very serious belief in the poet's spiritual superiority.[65]

Apart from these 'spiritualist' considerations, other pragmatic reasons may have oriented the literary policies of the two major totalitarian regimes. The fact that electric media were not as highly developed in the USSR, in comparison with Nazi Germany, might have also contributed to the Communist over-evaluation of literature. Yet it is interesting to note that both ideological movements developed their interest in the propagandistic value of literature more in their foreign than in their domestic practice. In the thirties, literature seemed a perfect means of disseminating the myth of internationalism, of Communist revolution, of the USSR as the motherland of world proletariat as well as for the dissemination of the Aryan myth and for the ideology of national socialism. The policies applied on both sides of the ideological barricades are, in many ways, symmetrical. The Komintern worked very hard to promote an organization of 'progressive' writers, moulded on the structure of the Third International. The greatest concentration of symbolic, intellectual power of the epoch was, undoubtedly, Paris, and the Komintern ran an assiduous campaign for bringing the French opinion leaders under its command or, at least, under its control. But the Nazis were by no means less aware of the symbolic overcharge of the *Ville lumière*. After 1933, the year the Nazis came to power, they openly supported right-wing cultural tendencies all over Europe. But Nazi cultural propaganda reached the peak of its efficiency during the occupation of France. In 1940, Otto Abetz, the German Ambassador in Paris, said that there were three forces in France: communism, finance and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.[66] In compliance with this remark,

Abetz supervised a policy of tolerance and generous offers of co-operation as concerns French writers and intellectuals. The most efficient instrument of this policy was the German Institute in Paris, led by a sophisticated intellectual, Karl Epting. In the fourties and from the Nazi point of view, a cultural intercessor like the sculptor Arno Becker played exactly the same role Ilya Ehrenburg had played during the thirties for Soviet propaganda.[67]

It is not the purpose of my study to elucidate whether the policy of the Popular Front (largely backed by Joseph Stalin) emerged from real fear of the Nazi menace or was, from the very beginning, a cynical technique of manipulating other people's fears. The purpose is to prove that it was a turning point in the social career of literature. The fairly coherent and planned operations of structuring that which Jean-Pierre Morel called 'l'Internationale littéraire' also implied marketing an emphatic social status of literature, great exposure for the literary profession, and a social myth of the writer as a civilizing hero, as eternal campaigner against 'barbarity'. I strongly doubt that the importance of the Komintern conspiracy for the socialization of a triumphal image of literature and the creation of the conviction that literature was, in itself, a form of political power could be easily quantified. The contributions of professional Komintern agents like Ilya Ehrenburg and particularly Willy Müntzenberg and Eugen Fried, alias *le cammarade Clément*, are very telling insofar as regards the use of Communist intellectual guerrilla techniques of controlling the media and exercising an aggressive, populist and effective propaganda. Communist agitators of Stalinist make-up provided the literary stars of the moment with several techniques for dealing with mass society. Writers had a tradition of despising mass society; the Communists taught them how to confront and tame the masses.[68]

But, for the history of the relationship between literature and ideology, the theoretical creation of the *socialist realism* represents a moment of much greater importance. The very complicated, if not complex, negotiations and polemics around the clarification of the leading role of the Bolshevik Party in literature belong to a different form of understanding the theme of Revolution. During the NEP period, the Communist Party did not actually adopt a political line on literature. With the tacit approval of Lenin, the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment led by Lunacharsky, almost favored the plurality of literary experiments.[69] Only the 'counter revolutionary' tendencies were excluded from this treatment. Non-party writers were accepted, encouraged and, by means of personal talent and intellectual creativity, they even dominated the literary life. The Serapion Brothers have already been mentioned; the LEF (the Left Front of the Arts), later to become the *Novyi Lef* (counting among others Kruchonych, Mayakovsky, Ossip Brik), the *Akhmeists* (Gumilev, Akhmatova, Mandelstam), the group *Pereval* (Ivan Katayev, Platonov), and exile writers who manifested a growing sympathy for the liberal spirit of the early twenties and who gathered

around the Berlin publication *Smena Wech* (A.Tolstoy, Bunin)[70] should also be added. Richard Stites generously speaks about 'Lenin's gigantic laboratory of revolution' in which utopian and experimental literature also had a place, protected from the frowning of hard-line Bolsheviks and from the attacks of the different 'proletarian' fundamentalist associations (which, in a certain sense, were avant-garde and experimental themselves).[71]

When Stalin rose to power he put an end to NEP and inaugurated an epoch of 'revolutionary' terror, which radically changed this policy. After fiery debates for the hegemony over the literary life, led mainly by RAPP (the Russian Association of the Proletarian Writers) and the *Litfront*, the Party reached the conclusion that 'fractionism' and 'sectarianism' in the realm of *belles lettres* had to cease, much in the same way in which they had been expelled from the political life. In April 1932, a resolution of the Central Committee made it clear that all writers, party or non-party members, had to unite around the Communist ideology and fully participate, by means of their specific competence, in the construction of socialism. The process thus generated eventually led to an organizational and administrative control over the writers (as, apparently, was the main interest of Stalin) as well as to the imposition of 'socialist realism' over literature. The most interesting aspect of the debates that led to the relative clarification of this blurred concept was the clash between allegedly 'proletarian' writers and critics, who required a highly ideological art, profoundly linked to the understanding of dialectics, and the party officials or the Communist scholars appointed by the Party officials to elaborate the ideological profile of Soviet literature. With his 'robust' optimism, Stalin stated that any author honestly mirroring the socialist reality will be a socialist realist,[72] and, at the second Plenum of the Organizational Committee of the Writers' Conference, Lunacharsky claimed that a good writer was not necessarily supposed to have experience in matters of ideology.[73] From the point of view of a RAPP critic and playwright such as Afinogenov, who had developed a Marxist theory of drama somehow similar to Brecht's ideas, such a position seemed unacceptable.

The most extraordinary thing about 'socialist realism' is that it encouraged a paradoxical estrangement of literature from ideology as such. Socialist realism favored a 'vigorous', traditional view of the writer, it valued the writer from the point of view of his 'mimetic' and 'monumental' technical abilities, stressed on the emotional function of literature (Stalin stated that writers are 'producing' human souls[74]). The writer was no longer a 'fellow traveller', and by no means was he an ideological partner, a *tavarysh*. The *Proletcult* ideology, initiated by Lenin's Bolshevik comrade, the engineer and science-fiction author Bogdanov, began by requesting such a preferential treatment for those who were creating, through their literary works, a purely proletarian literature. These thought of themselves as some kind of proletarian aristocracy and, during the NEP period,

they requested total autonomy of their organization, as long as the Bolshevik Party itself, which contained peasant and intelligentsia elements, was not purely proletarian.[75] At this level of competence, they felt entitled to participate in the very making of the Communist ideology. As 'initiated' Marxists, characterized by their lucidity, commitment, awareness and class purity, they were ready not only to exercise power in the literary field, but also to influence, in a certain measure, the global perspective of the Soviet view of the world. As embodiment of the Bolshevik apparatus, Joseph Stalin could not tolerate such a pretense. So that, even if he made no consistent suggestion as to how socialist realism should look like, the stand he took contained a powerful ideological input.

As a matter of fact, the doctrine of 'socialist realism' dismissed the hopes held by radical factions of the literary intelligentsia with regard to being treated as a politically and ideologically privileged elite, an elite that could participate in preparing the elements as well as in the very exercise of symbolic power. Such illusions were still nurtured by the Western antifascist literary intelligentsia, and the Popular Front spirit and policy were largely founded on them. But literary Stalinism meant something very different from the Brechtean vanity of submitting only to the pure laws of dialectics. The Stalinist experience brought to the revolutionary culture a masochistic taste for irrational and unconditional submission, an acceptance of the transcendence of the Party and the conviction that the Party could be embodied in a supreme leader. Pathetic rationalism ceased to be the essence of 'revolutionary literature'. It was replaced by a dramatic act of blind faith.[76]

Yet, a difference in the style and treatment of literature in the two totalitarian regimes may have originated in this opposition. Constantly pretending to be the unavoidable, though dialectical, development of the Enlightenment and the rationalist tradition, European Communism favored a type of aesthetic experience that emphasized the values of self-consciousness. Its style, in Germany, France and, to a lesser extent, in Italy, was a pathetic hyper-lucidity. This irrational praise of some forms of rationality and self-awareness was an important link between Marxism and Existentialism, in the fifties, or between Marxism and the 'Neue Neue' Sachlichkeit of the German Generation of '47. In the USSR and its later East-European satellites, literature appeared more as an emotional safety valve, as a corrective of the necessary abstraction and scientific quality of the political discourse. This line was followed by the official writers as well as by dissenters. To a certain extent, the East preserved a distinction between rationality and emotion which had been promoted by 'socialist realism'. Literature should be emotion, empathic experience. Disagreements between orthodox followers and dissenters appeared only with regard to whether the territory of this emotional experience should be pre-determined by Communist Knowledge, or should remain unmarked and unlimited.

Nazi ideology differs in that it never drew a firm line between the politic and the poetic. Literature as such could not acquire a great prestige under Nazi rule, because it was already present, in a diffuse state, in the emotional political discourse of Hitler. Alfred Rosenberg, the main theoretician of Nazi literary orthodoxy, could not overcome the performances of his *Führer*. The highbrow *Kulturpessimissmus* is obvious in the following rhetoric sample, taken from a speech Hitler delivered before German officers a couple of months before his death: 'Es ist eine andere Weltordnung und ein anderes Weltgesetz nicht denkbar, in einem Universum, in dem die Fixsterne Planeten zwingen, um sie zu kreisen, und Planeten Monde in ihre Bahn zwingen, in dem in gewaltigsten, gigantischen Geschehen Sonnen eines Tages zerstort werden und andere an ihre Stelle treten.'[77]

IV. A culture of the carnival

War and Revolution are two galaxies of symbols that concentrate a great deal of the literary substance of modernity. They are strongly polarized in the consciousness of the thirties: on one side, a culture of war embodied in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, on the other, revolution and its friends and fans attached either to humanism or to Marxism-Leninism, gathered around the USSR. In real artistic practice it is very hard to distinguish between the two. My last attempt will be to shape another cultural pattern (social myth, stream of consciousness) which, though it may often appear in close symbiosis to the other two, does still possess a significant degree of autonomy. One of the most important effects of this complication of the ideological-literary scheme is that, beyond blurring the mechanical opposition between Fascism and Communism, it also forces us to put the opposition between literature and political totalitarianism in a more balanced perspective.

I call this third entity *Carnival*. The suggestion is borrowed from the great Russian literary scholar, Mikhail Bakhtin. Even if the last decades witnessed a constant increase of the interest for this cultural structure/theme, I dare say that theoreticians who worked in this field, like the anthropologist Victor Turner or the promoters of the popular culture studies, did nothing but gloss on Bakhtin's ideas. The Russian scholar made a very personal investigation into Medieval and Renaissance popular imagination, taking as a pretext the work of Rabelais. Combining the method of the German school of philology and of nineteenth-century historians of culture like Burkhardt, with the methods and the concepts of the Russian Formalists, which he appropriated after having thoroughly revised them,[78] Bakhtin came up with a brand new theory of the popular.

According to his interpretation, carnival is a cultural expression of 'totality'. Speaking in Formalist terms, one could say that the paradigm of the popular culture language is fully actualized in the syntactic aspect of the carnival performance. Carnival reverts the official, 'frozen', authoritarian, hierarchical world of high culture, it spontaneously creates a general equality of status, or rather a general lack of status. By doing this, it channels tensions and frustrations out of society, it creates the premises of a new beginning. Carnival is inherently opposed to linear, conceptual thinking because it 'consists of' a basic distrust of theoretical and ideological constructs. By exulting the intensity of feeling and direct experience, by triumphantly praising the body and the values of corporeality, by harboring a limitless optimism and a 'shameless' joy of living, carnival is, in fact, an alternative to understanding life and society *more geometrico*. Moreover, carnival is subversive. It penetrates the apparently rational order of 'day-light society' and, through mock rituals, turns it into a fluid, nocturnal shape. This cannot be done without the use of violence. Therefore, carnival uses violence.Yet the main argument in favor of the idea that carnival is not a survivor of 'barbarous' epochs, but a complex, even sophisticated, cultural form, is that it is centered on a euphuistic, symbolic, ludicrous violence, one that appears, at the same time as 'void' (devoided of cruelty, not producing real effects) and 'magic' (having as a background fertility rites that have survived Christianization).[79]

As already stated, Bakhtin's theory does not refer exclusively to popular culture, it inquires into the relationship between popular culture and the intellectuals. What did Rabelais do, in fact, when writing the story of Gargantua: did he submit to the charming spirit of liberty, to the spontaneous anarchy of popular culture, or did he try to use the popular element as a vehicle for his own intellectual utopia? Of course, this is a scholastic question of the type Rabelais himself used to mock at. Its merit lies in pointing to the fact that 'carnival'— taken not literally, but in a typological or (anti)metaphysical perspective — is by no means purely 'popular'. Apart from the cultural anthropology of late Medieval and Renaissance urban culture, Bakhtin also examines the emergence of a spirit that I would venture to call 'ludicrous subversion'. Carnival, as Bakhtin understands it, seems to have two different origins: the pagan elements which survive on the fringes of a Christian culture imposed from above and the sophistication or *avant la lettre* 'decadence' of intellectual elites secretly defying ecclesiastic authority.

This culture of carnival borders on both utterly popular forms of playful violence and jocund utopias created by the literary intelligentsia. Though it is possible to associate them in one and the same concept, in my view they remain clearly distinct, they do not really mingle. In fact, the label 'carnival' could be used for every 'wisdom' that denies the capacity of the mind to fully describe

or even approximately perceivie objective reality, for every 'wisdom' that relies on strategies of detouring this dangerous illusion and, last but not least, discovers a certain pleasure, a hedonistic ethics, in the ironic dissolution of 'bulky' representations of the truth as well as in the opening toward the unexpectedness of experience. Hedonism is necessary in order to distinguish this tradition from medieval nominalism or from Kant himself. Skepticism — for keeping it distinct from the energism of Romanticism. But skepticism and hedonism are also the prevalent characteristics of the Décadence that we considered typical for War culture. There is still another element, essential to the carnivalesque: the assumption that the sense of humor may form the basis of a self-contained philosophy, that comedy is a self-sufficient view of the world.

Even if it has deep connections with the popular and emulates some of its most distinctive features, this type of culture is complicated enough and its chances of becoming genuinely popular are quite scarce. The connection between the two is not only 'natural', expressed by the indefinable quantity of mutual changes, but there are also ethical and ideological perspectives of the matter. Ethical, because it is by ethical decision that the 'carnivalesque' author opens him-or herself towards the undetermined social and cultural diversity of his fellow humans. Ideological, because the experiments of writers in the sphere of the popular could also express a tendency toward 'control' and 'submission' of this form of culture: propaganda could be defined as an attempt at filling a popular 'form' with an ideological 'content' that has nothing to do with the inherent (anti)ideology which Bakhtin ascribed to Carnival.

The *liaisons* between Décadence and Carnival are very ambiguous. We ascribed to the spirit of Décadence the attempt at re-creating an aristocratic philosophy of life, including the appropriated re-shaping of the liberal and/or positivistic understanding of politics. And yet, some of the traits of Décadence culture strongly remind us of what has been described as Carnival. Nietzsche's *Gaya Scienza* seems very close to the outbursts of pure joy and to the unmediated experience of vital energy characteristic of Carnival culture. This is quite paradoxical, since Nietzsche counts as a theoretician of the elite, of the superior race, far removed from the stream of popular culture. However, if we accept that the Nietzsche of the later period is not completely free of links with the early Nietzsche and the seed of his (anti)system can already be found in *Die Geburt der Tragoedie*, we may discover that the metaphysical category of the Dyonisian, on which the philosopher's basic existential attitude relies, is extracted from ancient Greek popular cults. Nietzsche's theory on the birth of tragedy deduces, in fact, this form of high culture *par excellence*, from the Dyonisian feasts and the Dyonisian mysteries which, from Bakhtin's standpoint, should be placed in the ascendancy of Carnival. Not to mention the famous Nietzschean

theme of the *laughing God*, which could be considered as a highly accurate symbolic expression of the Carnival nebula.[80]

'Holly drunkenness' and the orgiastic understanding of vitality are deeply embedded in Nietzscheanism — the very backbone of what we called Décadence and War culture. We can clearly trace these elements from the *Wiener Moderne*,[81] Expressionism, and the interwar *Neue Sachlichkeit*,[82] to Anglo-American or French admirers of the philosopher (D.H.Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Malraux, Bataille),[83] up to literary stars of the fifties and the sixties, like Allen Ginsberg and Norman Mailer.[84] Does this mean that all these groups and writers are legitimate members of the Carnival 'Phi-Beta-Kappa'?

I would say no. 'Joy' is understood by this stream of ideas as an all-embracing category which reconciles man with his most profound nature, individuals with 'organic' togetherness, high culture (detached contemplation) with politics (the realm of action). But I think a distinction should be made between this 'joy' and the sense of humor and ludicrous freedom. The Decadent pattern contains an essential element which is incompatible with the pattern of Carnival: the *Kulturpessimismus*. The ingenious Décadence forced its radical hedonism to meet stoic ethics. The Decadent subject is implied and impassable at the same time. He or she can loathe the energetic consistency of Life with all his/her sensors, while its intellect contemplates, through the veil of Maya, the ataractic purity of vacuum.[85] His/her joy simultaneously implies an intense feeling of being alive, and of being free from life, from determination, from empirical bonds, it implies being possessed by and possessing the vital energy. Carnival does not include *Weltschmerz* among its premises. The idea of voluptuousness needs not to include sufferance, its literary genre is not 'tragedy being born' but sheer comedy commanding over nuclei of tragedy. Decadent utopia of establishing a fix, inner point of reference and reflection inside the universal fluidity is completely purged out by the spirit of Carnival. The jocular completeness could not tolerate the 'frozen' attitude of tragic contemplation.

With respect to politics, both War and Carnival can be said to practice 'politics of voluptuousness', but this will have very different meanings depending on context. For the *fin de siècle* decadent spirit, the only meaning of exercising power is the pleasure this very exercise can give. Or, with an important nuance, the chance of experiencing power, of *living* it, through the agency of politics. A political hierarchy is, from this point of view, a scale of intensities: the closer to the top one gets, the more thorough the experience of power. From the perspective of Carnival, hierarchy exists only to be mocked at, and the ratio between political status and the intensity of 'political emotion' is reversed: the 'top' is absolutely barren, lacking human consistency, it is barren and hollow, while the 'basis' is the prefered residence of the 'living' power. It is no 'basis' in fact, but a kind of 'depth' you descend into, in order to regain your original

innocence. Carnival deploys a political strategy that should *protect* and *develop* voluptuousness. For the imagination of Décadence, with its undeniable touch of masochism, the power structure tends to become a nexus of erotic freedom and delight. For the Carnival imagination, the pleasure resides in by-passing power structures and playing tricks on them. Carnival does not reject or exorcise power in itself, it just sets power 'free' from its narrow, official, administrative, hyper-organized self-consciousness.

In one word, if we look for *fin de siècle* examples of a culture of Carnival, we should not hope to find them in the realm of aristocratic vitalism and aestheticism. It is rather in the spirit of an author like Alfred Jarry that one can identify the Rabelaisian legacy or, partially, in the theatrical works and the pornographic novels of Guillaume Apollinaire. A very interesting example of association between modernity, ludicrousness and a 'popular' audience is the Viennese *Sezession*. Austrian artists managed to create an idiom of the arts with a marked carnival-like appearance. Austrian Art Deco profoundly influenced the bourgeois taste and penetrated the everyday life of the average people, by means of what could be called today industrial design.[86] But it is difficult to find an exact literary counterpart for this phenomenon. If we agreed that this spirit of Carnival must not be *literally* popular, that it is a honorable intellectual project which can afford to ignore the actual public as much as every other modern project, I would say that perhaps Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* is a literary example of the carnivalesque.[87]

Avant-Garde brought about an interest in the popular that expressed itself in theoretical terms. The first irruption of this new, unclassifiable attempt at creating a hundred percent novelty, the Futurism, expressed its will to do away with the traditional and somehow patriarchal *fronde artistique* of the nineteenth century. I think this idea is thoroughly expressed in the 1913 *Futurist Manifesto Against Montmartre* signed by A.-F. Mac Delmarle, 'Futurist painter'. In it, the whole spirit of the famous artists' colony is contested in the name of an imperialistic modernity: 'No doubt that your Moulin de la Galette will disappear into a metro station.'[88] Apparently, Futurism did not contradict the ludicrous aspect and the carnival atmosphere of Montmartre. Its fantasy excesses and its exhibitionism overcame the 'domestic' feasts of the old would-be Avant-Garde, but, at first sight, one would have said that these exaggerations could not really alter the relationship between arts and society. The carnival was, up to 1900, only the epiphenomenon of the artistic underground: a way of life rather than an outspoken political attitude, that could still be associated with the traditional rituals of medieval artistic guilds. Futurism seemed to lend these outskirts of artistry an independent significance. It projected the burlesque life-style of traditionally tolerated but marginal artistic colonies on the public stage, granting it an ostentatious — doctrinaire, if not already ideological-significance.

F.T. Marinetti was the first to state explicitly that the culture of the urban masses — the new 'popular culture' — could be explored in search of new means of expression and techniques. These modern forms of the popular were a reservoir of collective fantasies that could not be ignored by a poet willing to express the Age of the Machine. It is the possibility of associating the schemes and the language of the 'teatro di varietà' with the mechanical production that thrilled Marinetti, in a rather spirited manifesto of 1913.[89] Russian Futurists developed the same taste for the popular. Among the first consequences of this turn of mind were the theories and the stage practice of Meyerhold, who tried to articulate a new theatrical expression by melting and reshaping elements of pantomime, puppet theater, and vaudeville.

Even when employing popular culture as an instrument, Futurism did not completely engage in a culture of carnival. Marinetti's trend is essentially related to the neo-aristocracy of the Décadence. The spirit of the political Futurism is clearly expressive of War culture, as previously pointed out. An entirely carnivalesque Avant-Garde emerged with the outbreak of World War One, when the strange and distorted form of pacifism of the Dada movement came into being.

The Dada style in its entirety hints to the underground tradition explored by Mikhail Bakhtin. Even if it is generally perceived as an anti-bourgeois movement, it is quite hard to deny the numerous links existing between Dada and *urban popular culture*. This notion is close to Bakhtin's *culture of the marketplace*. The Russian scholar links the dialogic structure of the cogito to the cultural entity of the marketplace: economic and symbolic processes of change are integrated in the same mental pattern. The 'marketplace' is a kind of essential image of what has been described by Karl Popper as an 'open society', reminding, to a certain extent, of the anarchist project (a free market is, first of all, free of any transcendent command).[90] It is possible to associate Dadaism with the traditions of 'marketplace freedom', taking into account its specific way of insertion into social life. The Dada movement, from the very moment of its foundation in Zurich, in 1917, by a group of Swiss and of various other exiles who were fleeing World War One, acted according to a mental representation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* that had more in common with 'popular' feasts than with the Décadence (or, as I shall try to prove hereafter, revolutionary subcultures). From the very beginning — that is to say, from its first manifestations at the famous *Cabaret 'Voltaire'* — Dada did not create art or literary *objects*, but *performances* including poetry, music, fine arts, dance and acting. This cocktail was set under the sign of the 'mother of invention', of a pointless freedom and vitality. It did not try to be 'aristocratic', it did not elude or transcend all possible marks of the vulgar, of the 'popular'. In fact, Dada seemed to deny all difference between high and popular culture, in the name of child-like purity, of creative naiveté, of refreshing absurdity. It was very close to the spirit of Carnival underlying the tra-

ditional, 'patriarchal' market. The marketplace was itself open to performances of all kind, to mimicry, to the burlesque — a paradoxical place of ludicrous 'displacement', of 'farcical' fluidity.

Le dérèglement de tous les sens, the intersection of different, incompatible orders of reality and pseudo- or super-reality, the de-structuring of time and space already existed in European literature. But they were connected to gothic or sado-masochistic fantasies, they implied a Romanticist experience of the grotesque and the sublime and were intricately connected to a cathartic pattern of literary experience based on awe, anxiety, or even sheer terror. The high tradition embodied in the different forms of *fin de siècle* Décadence produced rather scary representations of the unknown and irregular. Décadence expresses disorder with mixed feelings of fear and fury, with dread and despair. Sometimes, irregularity is accepted with a kind of perverse sensuality, with a sense of complicity vacillating between disgust and superior irony. The Dada movement completely altered this crypto-classical approach. Dada felt no longer compelled to give incongruity, contradiction, amorphousness a profoundly negative connotation. It did not attack War culture by means of symbolic violence, curses and apocalyptic imagery, the way Expressionism did. It simply tried to invent a world in which sheer fear and terror were no more possible: as long as reality and possibility are joined and equated, as long as the unexpected as such is burnt out by overcharge, there are no more reasons (no more intellectual reasons, at least) for a cosmic feeling of menace and insecurity. Dada tried, in a way, to imitate the great ability to exorcise collective fear by means of tricking Death and cheating Fate, means which were so typical of traditional Carnival.

The evolution of Dada is essential for understanding what brings together and what separates revolutionary culture from what was called here the culture of carnival. It is most instructive to compare the ironic and playful language of the manifestos and proclamations of the Zurich period with the ever gloomier tone of the documents issued during the next phase of the movement, when its international headquarters moved to Berlin. In the beginning, no one within Dada seriously thought of associating the literary *soirées*, exhibitions, and representations with world revolution or with the cause of the world proletariat. Even the most ideologically oriented member of the group, Tzara, seems quite remote from actual political preoccupations. The style of his first Dada manifestos retains, apart from an enormous quantity of bluff, a certain civility, a certain — to use a contemporary American label — human nicety. In his 1917 *Manifeste de M. Antipyrine* (maybe a mock replica of Paul Valéry's M.Teste), Tzara adressed 'le gentile bourgeois'. This could be considered an obvious irony, had not the author clearly stated that Dada was neither madness or wisdom, nor *irony*.[91] Even if it is quite certain that Tzara did not really think of the bourgeois as being *stricto sensu* 'nice', the determination is not, in my

opinion, totally void of meaning. According to the general Dada philosophy, it expressed a readiness to absorb, in a quasi-Buddhist way, one's opposite into one's self, to encompass and include contradiction rather than to obsessively isolate and sharpen it, as the revolutionary pattern required. The manifesto ends with Tzara declaring his wish to please his audience and the powerful love for this audience that had overcome him.[92]

Moving to Germany, where the tense atmosphere that was oozing with violence, social frustration and anxiety, in an intellectual climate dominated by the Bavarian communist-type upsurge and the brief but pathetic episode of the Munich Soviets, Dada underwent a gradual but irreversible change. The beginnings of Dada in Berlin are not as fundamentally different from the previous history of the movement. In the speech Richard Huelsenbeck delievered at the Galerie Neumann (Berlin, Kurfurstendamm), on the 18th of February 1918, he warns the audience: 'Deswegen, wenn Sie mich fragen, was Dada ist, würde ich sagen, es war nichts und wollte nichts.' But, at the same time, Huelsenbeck brings some comfort: 'Bitte bleiben Sie ruhig, man wird Ihnen keine körperliche Schmerzen bereiten. Das einzige, was Ihnen passiren könnte, ist dies: daß Sie Ihr Geld umsonst ausgeben haben.' After such statements, the final formula of the speech, 'Es lebe die dadaistische Revolution', could have but a playful meaning.[93]

The Dada manifesto that followed also focused on artistic issues, hailing 'bruitistische', 'simultanistische', 'statische Gedicht' and 'neuen Materials in der Malerei'; it gives an explicit though ambiguous evidence of the links between Dada and Carnival, stating that a genuine ('echten') Dadaist is 'halb Pantagruel, halb Franziskus'. From the same text, however, we learn that 'Dadaist sein kann unter Umständen heißen, mehr Kaufmann, mehr Parteimann als Künstler sein/.../.'[94] At this point, the salesman and the partyman are placed, ironically, on the same level. But the political radicalization continues, and, in 1919 the 'dadaistische Zentralrat der Weltrevolution' proclaims, in 1919: 'Dadaisten gegen Weimar'.[95] One of the most interesting Dada documents, this time issued by 'der dadaistische revolutionäre Zentralrat Gruppe Deutschland' (Hausmann, Huelsenbeck, Golyscheff), shows an incredible contamination of Avant-Garde with Communist motives. The manifesto 'Was ist der Dadaismus und was will er in Deutschland?' opens in a strikingly ideological manner with n appeal to the 'internationale revolutionäre Vereinigung aller schöpferischen und geistigen Menschen der ganzen Welt auf dem Boden des radikalen Kommunismus' and, further on, requires 'die Verpflichtung der Geistlichen und Lehrer auf die dadaistischen Glaubenssätze.'[96]

What happened during the twenties (the Surrealist appraisal casting Dadaism into oblivion, much in the same way Dadaism took over Futurism), is the stabilization of confusion between revolutionary and carnival culture within the

Avant-Garde. The Surrealist commitment to 'the cause of the proletarians' went hand in hand with a radicalization of their theoretical language which, on the one hand, continued to borrow concepts from Marx and, later on, from Lenin (mixing them with Freudian elements), and, on the other hand, grew ever more aggressive. Dada practiced a mock-violence and attacked official ideas, symbols, themes while their more systematic, 'ideological' followers organized public trials of flesh-and-blood representatives of the cultural establishment (beginning with Maurice Barrès) and did not stop before sheer incitations to lynching or to forms of execution that were even more imaginative. Of course, no one could claim that irony or the ludicrous spirit were totally absent from these 'juridical procedures'. It is also true that, in the decisive moment of the 1936–38 trials organized on Stalin's orders by Vyshinski against Zynoviev, Kamenev, Bukharyn and many other Bolshevik old-timers, Surrealists were among the very few who publicly condemned the murderous orgy that was taking place in Moscow.[97]But adversity to Stalinism did not imply abandoning the intellectual stream of totalitarianism. The excuse that the incredibly authoritarian way in which Breton led the Surrealist International was only a mock-parallel to what happened within the Third International, the orders for which came from Moscow, does not hold. Contemporary critics claim that Breton took genuine pleasure in exercising unlimited power and that the only difference between him and other leaders of fanaticized sections of the European intelligentsia is that, by limiting himself to the domain of *belles lettres* and to the 'revolution on paper', Breton took no actual risks while enjoying the pleasures of political irresponsibility.[98]

Thus, during the rough period of *engagement* preceding and accompanying World War Two, it became increasingly more difficult to make the distinction between Carnival, as a specific cultural and spiritual orientation, and the bulk of the revolutionary trend of the epoch. This brings us to the very problem of affinities and idiosyncrasies shared by these two 'cultures'. In the deep structure, as far as such processes can be formally understood, revolution and carnival are retraceable to the same pattern: both of them imply overcoming social and political *statu quo*, both develop in conditions of crisis. They *are* cultures of the crisis. Revolutionary moments are partially fitted by anthropological descriptions of Carnival such as the one given by Victor Turner,[99] and carnival partially overlaps with contemporary theoretical models that no longer consider the use of actual violence as a revolutionary *sine qua non*.[100]

Yet, the difference is important: Carnival mutations are reversible, while the purpose of any revolutionary movement is to cause irreversible alterations of the social and political form of the world. It is true that revolutionary culture had a lot in common with the spirit of the popular feast. This was almost fatal for a type of literature for which the praise of the 'working class' and 'popular culture' became an ideological keystone. But revolutionary doctrines, of the left

as well as of the right, are quite ambiguous in their praise of 'the people': their belief in painful labor integrating men in the cosmic rhythm (shared by both Fascists and Marxians), is paralleled and surpassed by their mistrust in the capacity of the same laborers to govern themselves. Revolution, as the totalitarian consensus of the '30s seems to prove, was understood as coming from above: it was a form, created in remote laboratories of intense 'scientific' meditation, which had to be projected onto the scattered, miscellaneous reality of social life.

The literary intelligentsia that had been converted to this understanding of revolution was never populist, even if they referred periodically to the need to take a plunge in the ocean of the unsophisticated and the simple-hearted. Their treatment of popular culture is instrumental: they extract elements of symbolic or mythical thinking from their 'organic' environment and fit them into the pattern of dialectics or of 'national rebirth'. This process reached a climax when a whole trend of revolutionary literature went on inventing a socialist 'folklore' and a 'proletarian culture'. It is highly relevant that the creators of these forms were typical representatives of the intelligentsia. We may well believe that the competition between Russian Futurism and the *Proletcult* represented the competition between 'free spirit' and *l'esprit de caserne* but we still have to accept that they were representing the same ambition of the literary segment of the intelligentsia, namely that of controlling the lore of the 'masses'.[101] The experiments of Bertolt Brecht are also highly relevant of the way popular discourse was manipulated for propaganda goals. The synthesis between elements of cabaret or street theatre and the Marxian dialectic 'aestheticism' may be remarkable from the craftsman point of view. Yet it should be contrasted to the far more genuine understanding of the popular theatre of Garcia Lorca, who was no less of an experientalist, but who organically rejected ready-made ideological mappings of reality. As a playwright, Lorca is far better acquainted to carnival. His experiments with the vagrant 'popular' theatre 'La Barraca' on the eve of the Spanish Civil War are, in spite of his unconditional support for the left-wing regime, hardly related to the ideology of 'revolution'.

If the differences between a culture of the carnival, as practiced by Dada, and the teleological revolutionaries can be quite numerous and clear-cut, it may be less easy to grasp what elements, if any, separate carnival from the alternative view on revolution, carried by the anarchist movement. The burlesque coherence of carnival, the belief in an order that imperceptibly persists in the midst of continuous change and turmoil, of disparity and turbulence — a subtle order, strangely related to the gross fantasies of the 'material and corporeal' (Bakhtin) — could not be without connection to the anarchist utopia of statelessness and spontaneous organization. There are authors who regard experimental arts as representing merely one of the many trends of twentieth-century anarchy. However, there is a historical litigation between the two, which can be placed under

the authority of Zola's critique and rejection of the ideas expressed by the famous utopian thinker Proudhon in his posthumous *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale*. Zola's review of the book analizes with sharp irony the vision of an art relegated to public service, free only as long as it expresses positive values and moral consent: 'Je consents a habiter sa cité: je m'y ennuierai sans doute, mais je m'y ennuierai honnêtement et tranquillement, ce qui est une compensation. Ce que je ne saurais supporter, ce qui m'irrite, c'est qu'il force à vivre dans cette cité des hommes qui refuse énergiquement la paix et l'effacement qu'il leur offre.'[102]

What Émile Zola apparently understood in 1865 is a principle James Buchanan has also effectively expressed: from all possible social systems, anarchy is the one which depends most on the general respect for law and order.[103] Without a full internalization of social principles, of ethical norms (at least those which are regulating public dialogue), it simply cannot work. A world without a definite, autonomous, specialized power structure is a world either of extended civil war or of diffuse but ubiquitous moral *authority*. Without being a representative of the culture of Carnival, the author of *Nana* was nevertheless committed to the idea of unconditional artistic freedom. Carnival itself, rejecting authority, would automatically reject the rationalized variety of anarchy which foretells, in the manner of Fourier and Proudhon, a dictatorship of humanitarian principles.

It is equally difficult to identify the attitude described by Bakhtin as 'carnivalesque', with a form of anarchy similar to Max Stirner's hyper-individualism (for which Surrealists had great consideration). 'Individuality' is a firm and stable concept that could not resist the tide of universal burlesque. Closer to our point might be Bakunin's fascination with the 'spontaneous', 'living' revolution, with 'a popular uprising, elemental, chaotic, and merciless', with 'the rude, untamed force' of the masses.[104] But it is not really *passion* that characterizes Carnival ethos and neither is, in spite of its 'popular' appearance, the *glorification of the people*. Even if it spends huge amounts of energy, carnival is not pathetic, it is totally anti-climactic and it liberates liveliness from the moral and spiritual pressure exercised by conventional representations such as 'passion' and 'people'. In fact, the cultural pattern we have called Carnival is related to the popular mainly through the idea of universal *openness*. It is the mystique of equally approaching the sublime and the trivial as legitimate manifestations of the divine, it is a kind of synthesis between empathy and irony that feature the 'popular' appearance of Carnival. Its place is sometimes quite close to 'ludicrous' forms of worship such as Zen-Buddhism or Hassidism.[105]

It is also the 'plain' sense of humor that links Carnival as an 'intellectual' way of life to 'popular' Carnival. As already suggested, humor is seen as the highest expression of human wisdom. It is distinct from high-culture irony or from revolutionary sarcasm, because it includes pleasure and even voluptuous-

ness. Carnival humor is a kind of erotic irony and/or self-irony. The historical Avant-Garde, culminating with the Surrealist practical and theoretical revolutionary 'earnestness', lost just this feature. André Breton inoculated the movement with a taste for 'sublime' and 'heroic' theatrical exposure that grew with Sartre and the Existentialist trend of the next generation. Emmanuel Mounier made a distinction between *la gauche optimiste* and *la gauche qui pleure ou qui ne rit pas tous les jours*. The former believed in the innocence of the human being, which one only had to release from under the crippling edifice of class society in order to allow it to generate beauty and harmony spontaneously, whereas the latter was a sort of Hobbesian left,[106] which doubted the natural inclination of the human being for brotherly love, concentrated on material stability and security as well as on controlling the self-destructive impulses of an unconscious population.[107] Surrealists proved that this notional distinction could be easily neutralized: although they claimed to believe in the innate innocence of all human needs and desires, their style was that of a *gauche qui pleure*. The social *personae* they devised are morose and suggest the classical tenure of great responsibility. As for Existentialists, they match the pattern of *la gauche qui pleure* with such accuracy that, had it not been for Mounier's first publication of the essay in 1938, one could think that he had coined the formula on the very example of the Sartre of the fifties.

These are elements that help us understand the marginalization of the spirit of Carnival within the austere culture of *engagement*. They do not imply, however, that Carnival should automatically be in a better relationship with *la gauche optimiste*. It is interesting that Mounier did not use the formula *la gauche qui rit*. One could come to the conclusion that there was no place for laughter among the representatives of the revolutionary and radical intellectual culture of the late thirties. The sharpening confrontation between Nazi, Communist and Liberal ideologies and, later on, the outbreak of World War Two, which blurred the apparent logic of these confrontations, replacing them with an apocalyptic state of mind, are the objective conditions which have led to the obliteration of Carnival. After the war, the shocking reality of Soviet invasion of Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and the conflicts generated by the last colonial wars, the feelings of anger and guilt of the young generations upon their gradual discovery of the acceptance and even collaboration with Fascist regimes of older intellectuals, on the other hand, favored for the proliferation of War/Revolution cultures.[108] It was only in the sixties that one can think of the rebirth of Carnival spirit and Carnival culture as well as of a possible link between Carnival and the New Left.

Following the important moment of the *destalinization*, and the gradual abandoning of socialist realism, the premises for a new alliance between avant-garde literature and avant-garde politics seemed cast not only for the leftist

milieu of Western Europe and the United States, but also for Marxist revisionists and experimental writers of Eastern Europe. Yet, in spite of the apparent consistency of what is called today the New Left counter-culture, the sixties and the following decades witnessed a growing contradiction between revolutionary and carnival culture. Even when they still voted for the communists, writers completely abandoned the idea of creating a purely Marxist aesthetics. The more subtle theories of neo-Marxist thinkers did not create a new 'revolutionary literature' but only endeavored to put up with the rhythms of experiment. Roger Garaudy's *D'un realisme sans rivage* (Paris, Plon, 1963), perceived, especially in Eastern Europe, as a manifesto of Communist liberalism, was only an intellectual hocus-pocus aimed at preserving the illusion of a necessary link between Marxism (as the 'progressive' doctrine *par excellence*...) and artistic experiment.

The literature that followed the events of '68 was less and less 'revolutionary' and with the outburst of the Pop movement, writers began to discover that they could do better than claim to create the aesthetic counterpart of Communist Revolution. The Absurd was met with reluctance by a literary establishment centered on revolutionary myths. Beckett and Ionesco were accused of defeatism because of their radical de-ideologization of the world. For a revolutionary-oriented type of culture, satire is meaningful only if directed against a determined, 'historically bankrupt' form of power and authority, not against power and authority as such. The carnival-like sensibility which developed from Beckett onward, turned to the same strategy of complete desacralization of power, of imagining worlds in which power as such could no longer exist because its logical and affective premises were cancelled with mock-up authority. The American post-modern fiction of the sixties, which became increasingly influential in Europe, continued the same trend of thought. Carnival culture is essential to the understanding of many of the literary experiments made in Eastern Europe, after the revisionist illusions of the sixties faded away. Authors like Kundera and Hrabal, Danilo Kis, Peter Eszterhazy, Radu Cosașu are only some of the representatives of a trend which, in my view, is extremely consistent throughout most of the ex-communist countries, in spite of the fact that actual contacts between the really creative writers of those countries were, and still are, scarce.

V. Failures and Conclusions

During my ten months of working on this project, my view of the subject underwent several major changes. In the beginning, I was convinced that the best method for covering the span of time I had chosen (from *La Belle Époque* to *Mai Soixante-Huit*) was a purely historical one. I thought that my survey of

three distinct cultural moments (La Décadence, the Popular Fronts of the thirties, the students' movements in the 1960s) could be rather free of preconceived ideas and descriptive models, that is to say almost hedonistic. I am not sure that this method would not have been a better one because, by taking a different route, I have missed at least the 'historical' target I had set. Whereas the first two moments could be covered in an acceptable manner (I am exaggerating, I know), the information I had for the 1960s was poor and speculation steadily took over analysis.

Nevertheless, I hope readers will agree that this shift, from a diachronical to a synchronical presentation (to use the key words of classical structuralism) of the subject, has brought some advantages as regards cognition and comprehension. But, even if I am profoundly confident in the intelligence of my presumed readers, I shall try to give an articulate expression to the corpus of judgements on literature as a political phenomenon which either pre-existed or emerged and developed as work on the present paper progressed. I feel also compelled to mention several major limitations or faults in my treatment of this subject. Not about all of them, because this might at least double the length of this already oversized material, but about the most important of them.

I shall bravely begin by presenting the weakest points of the present approach:

Failures. Misfits. One of the most complicated matters is the use of the word 'culture'. Studies of comparative political sociology have argued the necessity of the concept of *civic* and *political culture*. The pioneering act of bridging the gap between cultural anthropology and political studies was made by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba.[109] The main aim was to refine the analysis of political processes by enlarging the system of reference. Politics should not be reduced to fully intelligible schemes of interest-group interaction, it should not be completely quantified and rationalized; motivations underlying political fields can be extremely diverse and are not reducible to a single, utilitarian pattern.

In constructing my literary-political typology, I was largely influenced by this attempt of projecting political action against the background of a certain culture, against a symbolic view of the world, comprising types of representing time or death, ways of understanding the relationship between body and the soul. Such an attempt is always risky, because one has to draw on the rather airy means of intuition, more than on sound, quantitative analysis. I am aware that, because of this, my understanding of war, revolution or carnival *culture* is quite fluctuating. It combines an 'internal' perspective on the evolution of literature, which implies 'war', 'revolution' and 'carnival' are treated as specific literary themes, as subcultures within the greater frame of the literary culture of modernity, with an 'external' perspective according to which literary development is subject to the changes which take place outside the confines of literature as such and which leads to the idea that different modern literary approaches

should be integrated into different pre-existing social, political, cultural complexes labelled 'war', 'revolution' or 'carnival'. Sometimes, this fluctuation is generated by the objective discontinuities in the object of my study: literary commitment to Marxism is, in some cases (Brecht), an obvious form of adherence to an ideological *a priori* while the literary, and even philological, anticipation of a neo-heroic political ideology (Nietzsche) is beyond all doubt.[110] But there still are a lot of situations in which one cannot make an easy decision as to who is prior to whom and what is prior to what. It is therefore difficult for me to say whether war, revolution or carnival are: *1)* personal fantasies of isolated eccentric personalities, *2)* attempts of self-representation of the literary/artistic community as a keeper of initiation rites, excepted from common moral and juridical bonds, or *3)* collective fantasies with a powerful cultural articulation with which literature modestly tries to cope. As a matter of fact, these three possibilities are not mutually exclusive and in many cases more than one explanation should be considered as valid. This would greatly hinder any attempt at giving a non-ambiguous definition of what is meant here under 'culture'.

The fact that ambiguities with respect to the status of literature are cultivated and manipulated by writers themselves also generated certain difficulties. Oscillation between a literal and a purely symbolic interpretation of their writings could be, more or less, a conscious policy of radical *hommes de lettres*. This can be noticed from the Surrealists' aggressive attitude to Sartre's incitements to murder and violence,[111] from Brecht's appearance before the Commission for anti-American Activities (where he pleaded that he was writing fiction, not pressing for proletarian world revolution)[112] to Heinrich Böll's argumentation that he should not be taken for his characters who might have passed positive judgements on the terrorist activity of the Baader-Meinhof group. [113] Such very interesting 'phenomena' would require a distinct analysis, focusing on the problem of guilt and responsibility in relation to fiction writing.

Another problem is the disparity between the status and history of themes such as 'war' and 'revolution' and the status of 'carnival'. Whereas war and revolution were overt obsessions of the *fin de siècle*, of the militant thirties and of the sixties, 'carnival' is a concept borrowed from an author (Mikhayl Bakhtin) who was completely marginal in his lifetime, a concept which only recently (and partially) came to be considered a plausible description for some developments pertaining to cultural modernity and, especially, post-modernity.[114] Carnival as such, as a *theme* or obsession, does not exist. Could it have then become an irradiating centre for that kind of symbolic consistency that has been called in these pages a 'culture'? I do not know if I succeeded in persuading anybody that it could have.

The last issue I would like to raise is the would-be pretence of exhaustiveness of the above description. Though I might have had such a false impression in the very beginning, I soon had to admit the fact that the number of 'cultures'

could have been at least double. In my opinion one could always look into the intellectual features of these decades following the line of such central themes as 'tradition', 'Christian community', 'liberalism' or the 'commonwealth'. All of them are partially implied in the three structures imagined above, but at the same time each of them represents something distinct, irreducible. For instance, it is true that 'war', 'revolution', and 'carnival' share a mystic dimension, but this is something else than the attempts at completely re-structuring modernity from a religious point of view. The 'cultures' I just mentioned and the ones discussed in the present paper have all attempted to overcome or at least reshape individual experience, and to build powerful symbolic representations of the 'wholeness' (even literary liberalism, which projects the individual on a mythical scale). It is my belief that the three symbolical entities discussed here to some length are more explicit in making this urgent need for a total experience perceivable and that they are the best starting point for advancing the hypothesis that 'totalitarianism' was more than a political phenomenon restricted to the USSR and to Nazi Germany.

With this we have reached the realm of the *provisory conclusions* of the present study. The approach to the relationship between literature and politics was based on the classical Freudian description of the subject. According to Freud, writers are individuals characterized by deep frustrations with regard to their social status and erotic performances. Their strategy consists in withdrawing from the real world and conquering personal power in the realm of imagination. In a third phase, somehow reminiscent of Hegelian dialectic, the forces of fantasy manage to take hold of the minds of more and more people and, by this detour, the Poet himself returns to reality and obtains the power and sexual rewards that he was initially denied.[115]

Like many other theories of the Viennese therapist, this one may not enjoy universal applicability but it can certainly explain some cultural and intellectual turn-of-the-century developments. This attempt at challenging the authority of the 'real world', irrespective of whether this 'reality' was understood on ontological, social or political grounds, is constitutive of literary modernity as such. It is well known that the founding fathers — Baudelaire, Rimbaud, even Mallarmé — could be found on the actual or ideological barricades of revolutions they were not really interested in, simply for the sake of this challenge. Modern literature is deeply concerned with the possibility of projecting a consistent alternative to secular power or religious authority. This may not necessarily call upon the worship of violence but the interest of the present paper was limited to literary trends that do.

However, the perspective of the present study is largely contrasting to the classical psychoanalytical description. There was no intention to limit the complexity of the cultural interaction between literature and politics to the inner

labyrinth of one author or another. At times, the history of this interaction is written by 'lonely riders', but even then the *intellectual*, self-conscious shaping of their idea of power is undeniable. If *fin de siècle* Décadence is the inflation of *aesthetic individualism* (which by no means coincides with the individualism of the liberal political philosophy), Avant-Garde introduced the corporate spirit of the *literary movement,* born of an affinity with revolutionary and totalitarian political movements, obssesive though not always intentional.[116] In both cases 'power' is not completely latent, it is not a pure 'fact' of the unconscious. 'Power' also belongs, to a large extent, to the modern writer's sphere of intellectual awareness. 'Power' is a conceptual presence in modern literature, and its aesthetic representation is subsequent to this fact. It is not my intention to deny the interference of the unconscious in the 'praxis' of literature, but I think no reasonable scholar will fail to notice the fact that 'unconscious' is, generally speaking, monitored. It is placed under the supervision of a certain global view of the social function of literature. A radical author might rush against social conventions in a berserk state of mind, but his or her outburst would be integrated in a more complex pattern of behavior and his or her inner motivation might be no stranger to the purely intellectual temptations of utopianism. 'Culture' was here used to express precisely this alternation of conscious and unconscious. I borrowed the point of view that makes 'culture' a mediator between overt, covert and unconscious needs and impulses, a subtle balance between frustration and satisfaction. 'War', 'revolution', and 'carnival' are, in my opinion, such mediators.

The Freudian scheme also includes the output, the feed-back of fiction inserting itself in reality and influencing it. This is what really ends the game, by annihilating the root inferiority complex that opened the creative cycle. Theoretically, I should also address this issue: did the cultures pictured above influence political reality in a way that is worth mentioning? And if so, what would be our chances to account for this influence? I think that to answer these questions one should not embark merely on other studies, but also on another *kind* of studies. To investigate this subject in a speculative and purely theoretical manner would not bring us very far. Sectorial sociological analysis inquiring into the political biography of writers of a certain group or generation,[117] into the relations that exist between them, into their impact on media and media policy, investigating the structure and history of the institutions which determine the socialization of literature directly (universities, public education, editing houses, literary press or TV shows, literary prizes, academies, writers' unions, international writers' organisations, censorship etc.),[118] or the diffusion and impact of modern literature on different types of audience, could only provide evidence as to the influence or lack of influence of literature over political life. Common sense tells us that we cannot speak of a single type of influence, perhaps not even of a finite number of patterns of influence, but of a large field of possibilities from which casualty and haphazard can never be excluded.

It is not possible to determine once and for all if the radical attitudes of Décadence, Avant-Garde or neo-Avant-Garde really encouraged radical intelligentsia in its terrorist or totalitarian adventures. It is also impossible to determine if the critics of the carnival-like dissidence of Eastern Europe or of carnival-like post-modernism who accuse these trends of having greatly damaged the feeling of public responsibility and the civic commitment that should underlie a sound liberal society, are completely right or completely wrong.[119] It is also not possible to know to what extent the literary component of the radical, Maoist, Trotskyist, Guevarrist, and finally Zen-Buddhist ideology of the sixties really contributed to the spreading of a radical, agressive sensivity, strongly rejected by European critics like Jean-François Revel or Kurt Sontheimer and diagnosed by the American Allan Bloom as the 'closing of the American mind'.[120] What could really be done, starting from the present study, is to speak about the analogies between literary and political imagination and about the symbolic links that may bring them together.

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a radicalization of Romantic ambitions. The ideal of the total work of art is what actually brings together 'war', 'revolution' and 'carnival'. The way this wholeness is understood makes them differ, but the essential ambition out of which all these three cultures developed is clearly recognizable. The forcing of limits and the forcing of distinctions and oppositions on which bourgeois culture was built are characteristic of all these 'revivalist' and 'renovative' attempts. Traditional conceptual pairs, like body and soul, intellect and emotion, individual and community, liberty and determination, reality and fantasy, were subjected to the same totalitarian urge for oneness, for non-contradiction. Coming into a world of the printed letter which created a fatal distance between the author and his audience, and dissolved the audience into autonomous nuclei which could not represent a community, an actual social force, the modern writer is equally always at war with his or her own status. This means that he or she tries hard to re-create the mythical link, the fascination and enthusiasm that poets of the traditional societies legitimately enjoyed.

This was not the traditional mystical aspiration toward the *coincidentia oppositorum.* The simple intuition of oneness as possibility or potentiality is not enough: it should be created here and now, it should be brought into actual existence. This tendency includes a large amount of symbolic violence and it is latent violence that creates the same connection between these three cultures as between André Breton's *Vases communicants.* And this commitment to violence, this continuous drift towards radical, ultimate solutions is what links radical literature and political totalitarian movements. The oscillation between a vision of total control and a vision of total freedom is characteristic of both literary and political *totalitarianism.* Starting from this, one might try to enlarge

the meaning of this concept so as to include not only a political project typical of Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism, but also a mood which was characteristic of the greatest part of European and European-like intelligentsia for a period of time whose limits are still to be 'negotiated'.

This brings us to a moral dilemma first expressed, in modern terms, by T.S.Eliot: how can one enjoy a literary piece that includes an ideology or a view of the world which is completely strange to oneself or of which one thinks of in terms of reluctance if not of repugnance?[121] Eliot was thinking of hard-core Protestants reading Dante or of devout Catholics reading Milton. The answer of T.S.Eliot, expressive not only of the views of Anglo-Saxon New Criticism but also of those of Russian and French structuralism, is that the literary work has a reality of its own, which transcends moral convictions and historical metaphysical systems. One can enjoy the inner *imbroglio* of poetry without paying any interest to the ideology of the text. This opinion is opposed to the Marxist view on art as being a privileged carrier of explicit or subliminal ideological messages. The school of literary criticism initiated by Georg Lukacs or the American Marxists have constantly proclaimed this as a basic truth.

I have no intention to show now a third way, to bring an unexpected solution to this question. Authoritative answers, as the ones mentioned above, present perhaps no other major inconvenience than that of being too 'easy' in the sense of coming too quickly (perhaps we should say automatically), to our minds. The point I tried to make in the present study was only that this question is one of those that does not or should not allow for easy answers and this is why it is worth asking the question.

Notes

1. Bertrand de Born was famous for his political versatility. The habit of changing camps and breaking oaths brought him the fair accusation of felony.

2. 'These people, considered as enemies who, from the point of view of the elementary dualism professed by the Christian faith, seemed to embody the armies of Evil, were no others than the knights.' Georges Duby, *Le temps des cathédrales*, Paris, Gallimard, 1981. Romanian translation, 1987, p. 86.

3. For a good account of these theories, see H.I.Marrou, *Les troubadours*, Paris, Seuil, 1971.

4. Julius Evola, *Metafisica del sesso*. Romanian translation, 1994, I, pp. 300–10.

5. Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissence in Italien*. Romanian translation, 1969, I, p. 11.

6. It is, of course, relevant that Dante was also one of the main political philosophers of his time, and that, in *De monarchia*, he felt entitled not only to advocate the divine right of the Emperor, but also to support this theory with examples taken almost exclusively from Greek and Latin epic poetry.

7. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and the Popular Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Moscow, 1965. Romanian translation, 1974.

8. As a matter of fact, Classicism was both identical with itself, in its attempt to re-establish the ancient propriety of values and of morality, and non-identical, when using classical culture in its refined work of giving sense to a world which had very little to do with the ancient. This double-sidedness suggests a vision of the arts focusing more on the means themselves, rather than on the moral purposes. This is one good reason for accepting Jean Rousset's idea according to which French classicism is more of a species of the baroque. See Jean Rousset, *La littérature de l'âge baroque en France. Circé et le Paon*. Paris, Librairie José Corti, 1954.

9. See Wolf Lepenies, *Die Drei Kulturen. Soziologie zwischen Literatur und Wissenschaft*, Rowohlt Enzyklopädie, 1988, p. III. Professor Lepenies' approach greatly appealed to my theoretical imagination. The basic idea of this study, the trinity of war, revolution and carnival, is somehow reminiscent of 'die drei Kulturen'.

10. Roger Chartier, *Les Origines culturelles de la revolution française*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, pp. 90–97.

11. Things can become very relative if the focus shifts from French to German literature. The fascinating attempt made in J.W. Goethe's *Faust*, with a view to reconciling Enlightenment with the esoteric discourse parallel to it, suddenly placed literature in a strikingly different reference system. Goethe himself did not have an immediate predecessor, he was inventing rather than continuing something.

12. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 1954. French translation: *La crise de la culture*, Paris, Gallimard, 1972, p. 158.

13. Henry Berger, 'The Renaissance Imagination. Second World and Green World', in *Centennial Review*, IX (1965).

14. Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Visions and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 19.

15. V.L. Saulnier, *La littérature française*, Romanian translation 1973, II, p. 163.

16. Th. Nipperdey, 'Der Umbruch zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft', in K.W. Hempfer, A. Schwan (eds.), *Grundlagen der westlichen politischen Kultur*, Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1987, pp. 177–9.

17. See Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism*, Harvard University Press, 1984. V. Woolf is quoted in Lepenies, p. 176.

18. Alain Besançon, *Les origines intellectuelles du léninisme*, 1977. Romanian translation 1993, pp. 91–2.

19. Christina von Braun,' 'Der Hauptmann' Dreyfus — die Brüder Lumière. Körper und simulierte Wirklichkeit' in Julius H. Schoeps, Herman Simon (eds.), *Dreyfus und die Folgen*, Edition Hentrich, 1995, p. 277.

20. Ibid., p. 277.

21. Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs*, 1927. Romanian translation 1993, pp. 123–33. Mario Praz, *Liebe, Tod und Teufel. Die schwarze Romantik*, 1988.

22. George Mosse quoted in von Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

23. See Gerhard Göhler, 'Die „Aufhebung" aufklärerischer Rationalität im Idealismus und Marxismus,' chapter 'Fichte: das übersteigerte Ich,' in K.W. Hempfer, A. Schwan (eds.), *Grundlagen der politischen Kultur des Westens*, Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1987, pp. 131–133.

24. Benda, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

25. von Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

26. Chantal Millon-Delsol, *Les idees politiques au XX^e siècle*, Paris, PUF, 1991, p. 113.

27. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen*, 1955. French translation: *Prismes*, Paris, Payot, 1986, p. 171.

28. Jean-François Revel, *Sur Proust*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1987, pp. 101–125.

29. Hannah Arendt, 'Rosa Luxemburg' in *Men in Dark Ages*. French translation: *Vies politiques*, Paris, Gallimard, 1974, p. 56.

30. One of the most shocking example of anarchist supporter is Stéphane Mallarmé. And, even if, from an explicitly political point of view, Paul Valéry was close to the conservative option, his anarchistic reveries are quite well-known today.

31. Quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, New York, Macmillan, 1967. Another American theoretician of 'the morality of war' is Captain Mahan, one of the major personalities of late 19th century in the United States. In his books, Captain Mahan convincingly argued the strategic necessity for America to become a maritime power (Romanian translation: *Trufașa citadelă*, Bucharest, Ed. Politică, 1977, p. 324).

32. Tuchman, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

33. Details of the Mann-Mann polemic are taken from Jost Hermand, 'Das Vorbild Zola. Heinrich Mann und die Dreyfus-Affäre', in Julius H. Schoeps, Herman Simon (eds.), *Dreyfus und die Folgen*, Edition Hentrich, 1995, pp. 243–247.

34. Quoted from Wolfgang Asholt and Walter Fähnders (eds.), *Manifeste und Proklamationen der europäischen Avantgarde (1909–1938)*. Stuttgart-Weimar, J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1995, p. 5.

35. This is meant to be the beginning of an original explanation of the Decadent obsession with the body. Decadent imagination oscillates between Alexandrine hedonism, a refined passion for flesh and pleasure, and obsessions with physical corruption, sickness and rot. Of course that the Decadent trademark was, in the end, the hallucinatory fusion of the two.

36. Stephen Koch, 'Bloomsbury and Espionage', in *Partisan Review* (LXI), no. 1, 1994, p. 23.

37. An account of the ambiguities that made Western Marxist thought and the Nietzschean legacy become part of one another is to be found in Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Les Aventures de la liberté*, Paris, Grasset et Fasquelle, 1991.

38. Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1990 (reprint), pp. 106–107.

39. Sorel, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

40. Even the historians of ideas seem to hesitate in drawing a line between the two mental worlds. I am thinking of Zeev Sternhell's attempt — a successful one, in my opinion — to demonstrate that historical, French-Italian Fascism was nothing else than a branch of revisionist Marxism. Marxism was the starting point of Sorel, as well as of Mosca and Pareto. Sternhell explains these 'proto-Fascist' theories as offsprings of the confusion generated among social thinkers, at the turn of the century, by the fact that Marxist prophecies about the close fall of capitalism were very far from fulfilling themselves (Sternhell, Sznajder, Ashéri, *Naissance de l'idéologie fasciste*, Fayard, 1989).

41. Michel Trebitsch, 'Les intellectuels dans le *Maitron*', in *Intellectuels engagés d'une guerre à l'autre*, Les Cahiers de l'IHTP, 6 (March, 1994), p. 25.

42. See Nina Berberova, *Alexandre Block et son temps*, Actes Sud, 1991.

43. See Peter Demetz, *Worte in Freiheit. Der italienische Futurismus und die deutsche Avantgarde (1912–1934)*, München-Zürich: Piper, p. 9.

44. The concept 'euphuisation' is used by Gilbert Durand, in *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (Paris-Bruxelles-Montréal, Bordas, 1969). It expresses one of the main mechanisms of what Durand calls 'nocturnal imagination'. 'Euphuisation' means the kamikaze identification of the spirit with the very forces of decay, death and destruction that actually

horrify it. By doing so, the consciousness overcomes its own inner tensions and, metaphysically speaking, it manages to master contradiction.

45. J.K.Huysmans, *Là-Bas*. Romanian translation: *Liturghiile negre*, Dacia, 1994, pp. 6–10.

46. Emmanuel Mounier, *Communisme, anarchie, personnalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 96.

47. Mounier, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

48. Irving Howe, *A World More Attractive*, Freeport, New York, Books for Libraries Press, 1970, p. 64.

49. Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

50. Stites, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

51. The idea could be taken even further: the role played by science-fiction in the counter-culture of the eighties, the ideology of the cybernetic society, etc.

52. Jean-Pierre Morel, *Le Roman insuportable. L'Internationale littéraire et la France (1920–1932)*, Paris, Gallimard, 1985, p. 31.

53. Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

54. Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

55. Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 43. It is worth mentioning that, after Trotsky's intervention, Victor Serge completely changed his evaluation of Pylniak, claiming that authors like him try 'à paraître révolutionnaires sans êtres communistes' (Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 44).

56. Albrecht Abetz, *Exil und Engagement. Deutsche Schriftsteller in Frankreich der dreissiger Jahre*, München: Text + Kritik, 1986.

57. From *Verfremdung*, estrangement. See Bertolt Brecht, 'Der Messingkauf. Die Straßenszene', in Henry R. Paucker (ed.), *Neue Sachlichkeit. Literatur im 'Dritten Reich' und im Exil*, Stuttgart, Phillip Reclam, 1974, p. 51.

58. Bertold Brecht, 'Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit', in *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 18, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967, p. 223.

59. Brecht, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

60. Brecht, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

61. Brecht, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

62. See Walter Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit' in *Gesammelte Schriften*, I.2, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978, pp. 467–9.

63. See Bertolt Brecht, 'Studium des Marxismus,' in *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 20, pp. 49–50.

64. From this point of view, one can see Russian terrorism as a form of strange intimacy with the powerful, a kind of highly personalized relationship that expressed, in fact, the paternalistic nature of the bind between political hierarchy and the intelligentsia. Bakunin's letter to Czar Alexander II, which contains his confession and repentance, provides a good body of evidence for such a theory. Let us also remember Alain Besançon's description of the ideal image of itself of the Russian society: a peak and a basis between which only some kind of demi-hero could dare mediate. Besançon's intuition was that this intercessor is, usually, the son of the Czar, the one who, defying his father, attracts and absorbs his fury and, by doing this, exorcises the evil from the body of the whole community (as long as the Czar-Father identifies himself with the community and the land, embodies them). This interpretation is based on the recurrent family dramas of Czars killing their disobedient sons: Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and, later on, Stalin's contempt and hatred for his only male suc-

cessor (see *Le tsarévitch immolé*, 1967). The same pattern can be applied to the relationship between writers and the highly personalized absolute political power.

65. Perhaps the leftist alternative culture of the thirties felt isolated and its representatives forced into exile because this tradition of the 'missionary' poet was no longer familiar to the German audience. The reader refused to identify with political poets because this understanding of poetry was against his/her expectancies, against his/her culture of experiencing poetry.

66. Herbert R. Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 1981. French translation: *La Rive Gauche*, Paris, Seuil, 1981, p. 194.

67. See *Politiques et pratiques culturelles dans la France de Vichy*, Les Cahiers de l'IHTP, no. 8 (June, 1988), and Gérard Loiseaux, *La littérature de la défaite et de la collaboration*, Publication de la Sorbonne, série France XIX^{e}–XX^{e}, Paris, Université de Paris I, 1984.

68. An analysis of the Moscow-directed action of manipulating writers/teaching writers the art of manipulating society can be found in Lottman, Morel and Koch. One could stress the tactics of international writers' congresses dominated by the literary intelligentsia, the visits to USSR of the 'progressive' writers, which provided the opportunity for payments of overgenerous author's rights. One should also consider the fact that a highly trustworthy and efficient Stalinist agent like Müntzenberg became a victim of the huge purges of the late thirties, after the policy of the Popular Front failed.

69. See Sheyla Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970.

70. An account on the literary tendencies of the NEP period in Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Stalin and the Literary Intelligentsia*, London, Macmillan, 1991.

71. Stites, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

72. Kemp-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

73. Kemp-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

74. Kemp-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

75. Kemp-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 68–113. The main personalities of *Proletkult* were themselves descendants from the intelligentsia. Their proletarian identity was self-asserted.

76. If this analysis is given some credit, it will be difficult to further accept the traditional opposition between 'irrational Fascism' and 'rational Communism'.

77. Quoted in Henri R. Paucker (ed.), *Neue Sachlichkleit. Literatur im 'Dritten Reich' und im Exil*, Stuttgart, Philipp Reclam jun., 1991, p. 25.

78. For instance, the Formalist theory of the dialectical relationship between high culture and the popular, stating that high literature is constantly 'feeding' on the informal, entertainment level of the narrative, that it changes itself by re-structuring and giving new meanings to motives, characters, themes, techniques it borrows from 'trivial fiction'. This thesis was authored by Yuri Tinianov and Boris Tomashevsky.

79. On the symbolic links between violence and fertility, see Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

80. 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft: das bedeutet die Saturnalien eines Geistes, der einem fruchtbaren langen Drucke geduldig widerstanden hat — geduldig, streng, kalt, ohne sich zu unterwerfen aber ohne Hoffnung — und der jetzt mit einem Male von der Hoffnung angefallen wird, von der Hoffnung auf Gesundheit, von der Trunkenheit der Genesung.' Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 'Vorrede zur zweiten Aufgabe', Leipzig, Reclam, 1990, p. 7.

81. Jacques Le Rider, *Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité*, Paris, PUF, 1990. Romanian translation: *Modernitatea vieneză și crizele identității*, Iași, Editura Universității Al.I. Cuza, 1995, p. 42–5.

82. Observations on the German legacy of irrationalism in Thomas Mann, *Deutsche Ansprache. Ein Appell an die Venunft*, 1930.

83. Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 193–220.

84. On the origins of the cult of life in the literature of the sixties, see Tony Tanner, *The City of Words*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, and Manfred Pütz, *The Story of Identity. Fiction of the Sixties*, Munich, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1987.

85. This Hinduist allusion is by no means casual. Historically, Décadence is congeneric to the scholarly interest in Oriental traditions. It somehow sets forth and refines the Schopenhauerian attempt to introduce concepts pertaining to Indian philosophy to the Western cogito. The essence of war culture, as I tried to describe it, can be found in *Bhagavad Gita*. There Krishna reveals to the warrior Arjuna the secret of the Oneness and of the non-existence of human entities. It would be absurd to hesitate before killing somebody in battle or to be afraid of being killed, as far as man is mortal by definition. The point is to understand death, which is in fact the only reasonable chance to transcend illusion and re-unite with the One. Battles should be fought with full chivalrous dedication, but without any touch passion. This 'Aryan' myth helped structure not only decadent but also Nazi imagination, as it can be easily determined from the already mentioned short quotation from Hitler.

86. Le Rider, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

87. Even though published much later, to me this novel is nevertheless a typical expression of the *fin-de-siècle* spirit.

88. A.-F. Mac Delmarle, 'Futuristisches Manifest gegen Montmartre', in Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

89. F.T.Marinetti, 'Das Varieté', in Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–63.

90. The reality of the medieval market is far from the Rabelaisian slogan 'Do whatever you like'. Market regulations were extremely strict, the control of the guilds on services and labour force sometimes exceeded even those of the Communist rule.

91. 'DADA ist weder Verrückheit, Weisheit, noch Ironie, sieh mich an, netter Burgeois.' Tristan Tzara, 'Manifest des Herrn Antipyrine', conference held on 14 July 1917 at the first Dada representation at the Waag-Saal in Zurich. Translated in Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

93. Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

94. Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

97. 'Appel aux Hommes. Le Procés de Moscou' in Asholt and Fähnders, *op. cit.*, pp. 419–20.

98. Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–109.

99. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, New York, Adine Publ. Co., 1969.

100. Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, New York, Random House, 1978, and Henri Mendras, *La seconde révolution française 1965–1984*, Paris, Gallimard, 1988.

101. The history of the Proletkult ideas is vividly rendered in Kemp-Welch and Stites.

102. Émile Zola, 'Proudhon et Courbet', first printed in *Le Salut Public*, 26 July 1865, reprinted in *Mes haines*, 1866. Here quoted from *Zola et son temps*, Pierre Cogny (ed.), Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1976, p. 14.

103. James M. Buchanan, *The Limits of Liberty. Between Anarchy and Leviathan*, Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press, 1975, I, pp. 2–6.

104. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, Marshall Shatz (trans. and ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 28.

105. We must not forget that the Dada manifestos are full of religious allusions. Let me refer only to the 'halb Pantagruel, halb Franziskus' of the Dada-Berlin, or to the countless references to Buddhism in the manifestos signed by Tristan Tzara.

106. To be exact, Mounier mentions Jeremy Bentham as *the* Liberal.

107. Emmanuel Mounier, *Communisme, anarchie et personnalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, pp. 49–50. I must confess that my résumé is a little bit distorting. As any connoisseur of Mounier's work can easily assume, his genuine treatment of the left, of the 'crying left', in principal, is more sympathetic than my account of it.

108. War-culture partially came to life in the East-European underground of the fifties, which generated a literature of heroic, noble resistance against Bolshevik 'barbarity'. In Romania, evidence of this culture can be found in the poetry written in the prisons of that period, a purely oral form of literary underground, based on a rhetoric of chivalry enriched with Christian elements. This war-culture opposed the official, 'revolutionary' culture, which was being imported from Moscow.

109. Gabriel Almond, Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963.

110. '/.../ eine gewisse Philologen-Ideologie, Germanisten-Romantik und Nordglaubigkeit aus akademisch-professoraler Sphäre, die in einem Idiom von mystischen Biedersinn und verstiegener Abgeschmaktheit mit Vokabeln wie rassisch, völkisch, bündisch, heldisch auf die Deutschen von 1930 einredet und der Bewegung ein Ingrediens von verschwärmter Bildungsbarbarei hinzufügt /.../' Thomas Mann, 'Deutsche Ansprache. Ein Appell an die Vernunft' in Paucker, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

111. About Sartre's moral support of terrorism at the time of the Algerian war, see Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, 1988, French translation: *La critique sociale au XX^e siècle. Solitude et solidarité*, Paris, Métailié, 1996, pp. 155–159.

112. Bertold Brecht, 'Anrede an den Kongreß für unamerikanische Betätigungen', 1947, in *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 20, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967, pp. 303–306.

113. 'Kunst ist Anarchie', with Günther Nenning (ORF) on 3.12.1975, in Heinrich Böll, *Interviews I, 1961–1978*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, p. 442–56.

114. The model of the 'fluctuant stability' imagined by Leonard B. Meyer (*Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Patterns and Predictions in 20th Century Culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967) might be a close approximation of what I meant by 'culture of carnival'.

115. Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band X: *Bildende Kunst und Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer Verlag, 1975.

116. There is a rich literature on the relations between Avant-Garde and Fascism, National Socialism, or Communism. Nevertheless, a synthesis on the mutual exchanges between arts and political thinking within the larger frame of the intellectual stream of totalitarianism is not so easy to find. Some interesting ideas in Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, Duke University Press, 1987, the chapter on Avant-Garde.

117. For instance, Nicole Racine and Michel Trebitsch (eds.), *Sociabilités intellectuelles. Lieux, milieux, réseaux*, Les Cahiers de L'IHTP, no. 20 (March, 1992).

118. I refer to the types of studies produced by the school of literary sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.

119. A radical critic of East-European dissent is Gáspár Miklós Támás (see 'The Legacy of Dissent: Irony, Ambiguity, Duplicity' in *Uncaptive Minds*, vol. 7, no. 2 [Summer, 1994]).

An analogous critical attitude in the Western world is expressed by Christopher Lasch (*The Culture of Narcissism*, New York, 1979), and Gilles Lipovetsky (L'ère *du vide. Essais sur l'individualisme contemporain*, Paris, 1983).

120. Jean-François Revel, *Ni Marx ni Jésus*, Paris, 1970; Kurt Sontheimer, *Das Elend unserer Intellektuellen. Linke Theorie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Hamburg, 1976; Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad 1965–1990*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

121. The idea appears in T.S. Eliot's essay *Dante* (1929). See T.S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1971.