

THE EVIL PHILOSOPHY BEHIND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando



The Nazi-Communist Roots of Post-Modernism

by Michael J. Minnicino

University of Chicago professor Allan Bloom died in October 1992, at the age of sixty-two. A translator of Plato and Rousseau, and a long-time college educator, Bloom became widely known for his 1987 book, *The Closing of the American Mind*.

At the time of its publication, it had become clear that the worst lunacies of the drug-rock-sex “counterculture” of the late 1960’s had never abated on the nation’s campuses; in fact, many of the leaders of that counterculture—now equipped with Ph.D.’s—had become the dominant minority in college faculties and administrations. This minority was consciously training their students to be a thought police enforcing “Political Correctness,” ready to denounce and punish any student or instructor deemed guilty of racism, sexism, insufficient

Francisco Goya, “The Tribunal of the Inquisition,” c.1812-1819.

sensitivity to the homosexual “lifestyle,” or of too high an appreciation of Western Judeo-Christian culture.

Bloom’s book was the first to expose this scandalous situation to the general public, and opened the door for several other books, notably Dinesh d’Souza’s *Illiberal Education*. Unfortunately, almost all who came after Professor Bloom limited themselves to neo-conservative finger-pointing at the various academic horrors perpetrated by the politically correct mafia; none tried to deepen Bloom’s investigation.

This philosophical impotence in the face of “P.C.” cadres means that, in the five years since Bloom’s book, the situation on campuses has become worse. Even as Bloom’s thesis was being debated, students at California’s Stanford University, supported in person by Jesse Jackson, were successfully overturning the university’s Western Civilization course requirement as “racist”; at their demonstrations, the students chanted, “Hey, hey, ho,

ho, Western Culture's got to go!" Across the country, students have successfully demanded that readings from "DWEM's" ("Dead White European Male" writers) be replaced by supposedly more relevant female and Third World authors. Most major universities now subscribe to quotas, to ensure a politically correct mix of whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and homosexuals. Most schools now also have speech codes, like the model code promulgated at the University of Wisconsin, which, for instance, permits a Black student to call a white "honkie," but would punish a white student for calling a Black "nigger."

Post-Modernist Hell

Most of Professor Bloom's book was devoted to a single thesis: over the past hundred years American education has been subverted by the ideas from three, nominally German, sources: the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, his twentieth-century follower Martin Heidegger, and the Critical Theory of the so-called Frankfurt School, including Georg Lukacs, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor Adorno.

"Political Correctness" was a phrase originally used in Communist Party intellectual circles in the 1930's and 1940's. It was revived by neo-conservative authors around 1990 as an insulting characterization of a general school of thought called post-modernism.

The post-modernists spend much of their time polemicizing with each other over who, exactly, has possession of the true grail of post-modernism; thus, there are structuralists, post-structuralists, feminist deconstructionists, Third World lesbian feminist deconstructionists, and so on. However, all post-modernist thought has its proximate origins, as Bloom implies, in the three sources of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Frankfurt School. The post-modernists will not deny this; most celebrate it. What, then, is post-modernism?

In 1936, Nazi Culture Minister Josef Goebbels, on orders from Adolf Hitler, formed a committee of academics to edit the complete works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Martin Heidegger was placed on that committee; in preparation, Heidegger prepared a series of lectures on Nietzsche's work. Heidegger concluded that the most important thing that he shared with Nietzsche was the commitment to extinguish the last traces in Western civilization of what he called "metaphysical humanism." This commitment was also shared by the Frankfurt School.

"Metaphysics" is the investigation of that which is not of the physical world, but which generates the physical world, or generates changes in the physical world. Many

readers will say at this point: "Something which is not generated by the world, but which operates in the world? That's God."

Now, go back to Nietzsche, the context for Heidegger's analysis. Nietzsche is probably most famous for a single sentence, written a little over one hundred years ago: "God is dead." This statement is the basis of all politically correct post-modernism. Even if some post-modernists still say that God exists, their concept of God is not God.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a professor of classics who abandoned his academic career in his thirties to write wildly polemical philosophical works. In 1888, he collapsed on the street and spent the remainder of his life in semi-catatonia; syphilis was the probable cause. Nietzsche wrote to prove that the highest concepts mankind has developed, the ideas of God, of morality, of good and evil, are foolish and false; that mankind evolved these ideas over the centuries as a self-consolation, to escape the mental pain of admitting that this material world, and our very short-lived bodies, are all that we have and all that we can expect. At the very beginning of human civilization, says Nietzsche, the physically stronger and smarter minority of the population became the rulers over the majority: "Some pack of blond beasts of prey—a conqueror and master race—which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. This is, after all, how the state began on earth." (*Genealogy of Morals*)

Morality was developed by these primordial rulers as a means of social control: Good was what they wanted people to do, and bad was what they didn't want people to do. However, the subject peoples chafed under this aristocratic rule and became vengeful, so the rulers had to invent the concept of God to justify their orders. But, this ploy by the master race contained the seeds of their own destruction. They had to create priests to administer this religion, and these priests started to believe their own propaganda, and began to oppose the aristocracy. Ultimately, you have what Nietzsche calls "the most priestly people," the Jews.

"All that has been done on earth against 'the noble,' 'the powerful,' 'the masters,' 'the rulers,' fades into nothing compared with what the Jews have done against them," said Nietzsche in the *Genealogy of Morals*.

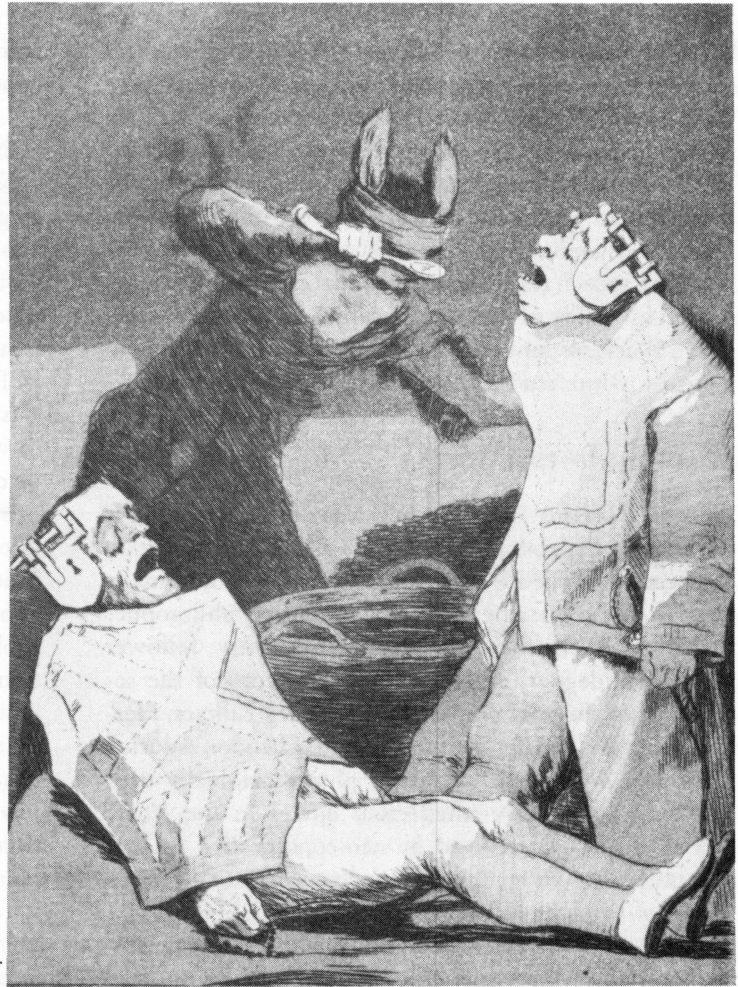
Here, incidentally, is where Hitler got the core of his anti-Semitism; even in his mass murder, Hitler was pursuing what he thought were philosophical ends. Why were the Jews bad? Because they gave us Jesus. The

Illustrations in this series are from Francisco Goya's Los Caprichos (Caprices), a group of eighty aquatint plates with full captions, first published in 1799.

Jews created an ideology which inverted what Nietzsche called the “aristocratic value equation”—they believed lowliness good, and unlimited power bad. Christianity was “the slave revolt,” the “spiritual revenge” of the Jews against the master race. “Did Israel not attain the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely through the bypass of this ‘Redeemer,’ this ostensible opponent and disintegrator of Israel? Was it not part of the secret black art of a truly grand politics of revenge, of a far-seeing, subterranean, slowly advancing, and premeditated revenge that Israel must deny the real instrument of its revenge before all the world as a mortal enemy and nail it to the cross, so that all the world, namely the opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly swallow just this bait?” (*Genealogy of Morals*)

According to Nietzsche, Christianity is thus a Jewish plot, whose conspiratorial origins are lost in the fact that the plot has been so successful over the last two thousand years. And that’s what Hitler said too: First we must eliminate the Jews, then we will deal with the enervating effects of Christianity on the Nazi master race. Therefore, Christianity is the most false of all false myths of religion. What we must do, says Nietzsche, is to return in our minds to the past—before Christianity, before Jewish monotheism, especially before Socrates and Plato, who demonstrated that there must be a self-subsisting Good which is connected to the evolution, through mankind, of the physical universe. Modern man must “eternally return” to a sufficiently primitive time, when he was starting to make his own god-myths. Homer, says Nietzsche in a famous example, was a great author not because he wrote about the gods, but because he created his own gods.

Nietzsche’s revolutionary New Man of the future, the *Urbemensch* or superman, must strip away all the values with which he has lived—equality, justice, humility—and see them as illegitimate overlays on society. We must have an *Umwertung aller Werte* (a “transvaluation” or “revaluation of all values”): each man will make his own values, make his own concept of good and evil, based upon his own physical and intellectual strength. The man of the future must be a beast of prey, an “artist of violence” creating new myths, new states based upon the



The Chinchillas. *He who hears nothing, knows nothing and does nothing. . . .*

essence of human nature, which Nietzsche identifies as *Wille zur Macht*, the “Will to Power.” At the same time, the old illegitimate metaphysical overlays must be pitilessly destroyed, starting with Christianity. As Nietzsche concludes in *Ecce Homo*:

“I am the Anti-Christ.”

‘Being Unto Death’

Heidegger and the Frankfurt School can essentially be characterized as commentators on Nietzsche. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) began his first Nietzsche lecture in Nazi Germany in 1936, by announcing that Nietzsche was “not merely so subversive as he himself was wont to pose.”

Nietzsche’s will to power, said Heidegger, still retains an unnecessary metaphysical quality, because it allows the individual ego to create a conception of the physical universe without sufficient reference to the actual objects

of the universe; that is, if God is truly dead, then objects are all we have, and therefore the sole determinant of our will and our ideas. In this context, Heidegger told his students that “Christian philosophy” is a contradiction in terms. Actual philosophy must distinguish between *Sein* (“Being” in the abstract) and *Dasein* (literally, “being-there,” the notion of being as it is lived in the world of experiences). The mental history of man is *Dasein* attempting to grasp *Sein*, or what Heidegger and his followers called the struggle to be “authentic.” The problem is that phenomena—including other people, races, social systems, as well as hard little objects—are “historicized.” They are historically specific; Plato’s concepts, for instance, were thought in the context of a specific point in history, which is not our point in history; but they are treated as real in our point in history, whereas, Heidegger says, they aren’t real.

This is why Heidegger subscribes to Nietzsche’s concept of the “eternal return”: primitive peoples are able to grasp the objects of the world in a more authentic fashion, because they have less history, less science, less intellectual baggage when they interact with phenomena. For a modern, educated person, a rock on the ground comes from a certain geological era, and possibly contains a valuable ore; but for a primitive person, the rock is simply a rock. Heidegger goes even further: Life itself is ultimately “inauthentic” because we are all mortal, and there is no immortality. Therefore, the most authentic and human we can be is *Sein zum Tode* (“being unto death”), the recognition that Being ends in death. *Sein zum Tode* being the case, the most a people can hope to do, is to find what Heidegger calls “a Hero” who will transcend the historicity which has been handed down to them, and will create a new, more authentic history. For Martin Heidegger, that Hero was Adolf Hitler; and, as is undeniable, thousands of young German intellectuals followed Hitler to their deaths, based upon Heidegger’s teachings.

The Frankfurt School—founded by Georg Lukacs, a Hungarian aristocrat who became a literary theorist—is largely Nietzsche and Heidegger, plus a Communist organizing program. Around the time of World War I, Lukacs veered from Nietzsche toward Bolshevism, and became commissar of culture during the brief Bolshevik seizure of power in Hungary in 1919. After the hundred-day “Budapest Soviet” was defeated, Lukacs fled to Moscow and became a high official of the Communist International (Comintern). There, his task was to answer the striking question: Why did Bolshevism succeed in Russia, but fail to take hold in the West despite Communist insurrection across Europe? To this end, Lukacs gathered a group of Marxist sociologists and philoso-

phers who set up the Institute for Social Research (I.S.R.) in Frankfurt, Germany in 1922; this became popularly known as the Frankfurt School.

The I.S.R. determined that the answer was, that Russia had been dominated historically by a peculiar Gnostic form of Christianity which was ultimately pessimistic. This kind of Christianity de-emphasized the role of the individual soul as a subject acting in the world, and replaced it with the kind of individual who derived identity by submerging him or herself in the “communal soul.” The Bolsheviks succeeded in Russia, said the I.S.R., because they convinced a portion of the population that their revolutionary movement represented a new secular messiah; that is, they were able to unleash, through propaganda and terrorism, all of the popular resentment—or Nietzschean “vengefulness,” if you will—against the aristocracy and the Orthodox Church bureaucracy, while at the same time maintaining the ideology of the communal soul. They were able to make a simple shift: You derive your identity not from the Church or Holy Mother Russia, but from the Party.

The I.S.R. investigators asserted that the problem was that, despite the most pessimistic efforts of Nietzsche and his followers, the West still was dominated by a Judeo-Christian culture which emphasized the uniqueness and sacredness of the individual soul. Worse than that, from the I.S.R.’s standpoint, the culture of the West maintained that the individual, through the exercise of his or her reason, could discern the Divine Will in an unmediated relationship; this meant that the individual could change the physical universe in the pursuit of the Good—that mankind could have dominion over nature as commanded by the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. Thus, individuals in the West were still optimistic, however buried this might be; they still believed that the divine spark of reason in every man and woman could solve the problems facing society, no matter how big those problems were. This meant that the West could not have a successful Bolshevik revolution. And thus, in 1914, Lukacs could write his great complaint, “Who will save us from Western civilization?”

The I.S.R.’s particular contribution to the theory and practice of post-modernist Hell was to realize that Western culture could be manipulated in such a way as to self-destruct. All that is in culture had to be abolished through an active theory of criticism, while at the same time, new cultural forms had to be created—forms which would not enlighten nor uplift, but which would expose the true degradation of life under capitalism and the false myths of monotheism. The I.S.R. criticized

Nietzsche and Heidegger for being merely “ivory tower” pessimists. What was needed was what Lukacs called the “abolition of culture,” a new “culture of pessimism,” a world in which the individual did not believe that he or she could have a personal destiny, but only “a destiny of the community in a world that has been abandoned by God.”

For forty-five years after 1922, the I.S.R. spun out theory after theory (collectively known as Critical Theory), designed to forcibly remove the joy, the divine spark of reason, for our appreciation of art, literature, and music. Critic Walter Benjamin, who is very popular on campuses today, took on the question of artistic creativity. Like Nietzsche and Heidegger, Benjamin and his colleagues were determined to locate the origins of philosophy elsewhere than in Plato and his teacher Socrates.

Benjamin admitted that most people think that Socrates initiated philosophy, by his hypothesizing the nature of the physical universe and seeking successively higher hypotheses to better his understanding. But this is wrong, according to Benjamin. Philosophy begins with the material object, not the mind. Way back in the primordial past man was confronted with the objects of physical reality; philosophy began with man’s naming these objects. But, owing to that “great evil,” human progress, man became estranged or alienated from the objects of nature. Creativity is merely the attempt by man to get back to that primordial name or essence of the object, past the impediments of capitalist society. But creativity can never be immortal or universal since it is based on the material world—the creative act must be specifically related to its point in history; again, the historicity of Nietzsche and Heidegger. The creative act of a Mozart or a Shakespeare cannot be known today as Mozart or Shakespeare understood it at their point in history, but only as we understand it in our own, “alienated” point in history.

Therefore, there is no universal history; there is no universal truth; there is no natural law. The best art in the modern period, says Benjamin, cannot be judged by the bourgeois concepts of good and evil. Benjamin gives the example of the consciously evil art of the French Symbolists and Surrealists: their “satanism,” as he calls it, cannot be judged as bad, because it exposes the false morality of “capitalist art.”

Another Frankfurt School ideologue, Theodor Adorno, himself a musician, made the same analysis of music. Beethoven, says Adorno, actually yearned to write atonal music, and this is supposedly shown by his chord structure; however, Beethoven simply didn’t have the guts to break with the social structures of his period,

which would not have accepted the revolutionary change to atonalism. Today’s music must be atonal because atonalism is ugly, and only ugly music tells us the truth about the ugliness of our own miserable existence.

The purpose of art, said Benjamin, is to organize pessimism, and “[t]o organize pessimism means nothing other than to expel the moral metaphor from politics.” Thus the Frankfurt School was not satisfied with theory; they attempted to put this nonsense into practice. The entire Institute (with the exception of Benjamin, who died in 1941 of a self-administered drug overdose) decamped to America as Hitler was coming to power. Sponsored by such institutions as CBS, Columbia University, the American Jewish Committee, and the B’nai B’rith, the Frankfurt School became the dominant force in sociological and communications theory. It developed the concept of the “authoritarian personality” to get scholarly justification for its irrationalism, defining as “authoritarian,” anyone who had too high a regard for family, nation, or reason itself. The Frankfurt School’s Critical Theory is the basis for today’s “entertainment industry,” a phrase which the School coined; it is the theoretical basis for today’s television, film, and music programming. It is the basis of the public opinion polls that have become the determining factor of politics in America. It is the theoretical basis upon which the overwhelming majority of modern artists and composers today can create ugly works—and be praised by critics for their “authenticity.”

Adorno summarized his intentions in an article about music in 1938: He said that putting Classical musical compositions on the radio was potentially useful because it forced the mind of the listener to “fetishize” the composition rather than understand it. Rather than taking the piece as a whole, the listener separates it in the mind into those parts that entertain, and those parts you don’t understand. “They listen atomistically and dissociate what they hear,” he wrote, “but precisely in this dissociation they develop certain capabilities which accord less with the traditional concepts of aesthetics than those of football or motoring. They are not childlike . . . but they are childish; their primitivism is not that of the undeveloped, but that of the forcibly retarded.” Nothing but the primordial stupidity espoused by Nietzsche and Heidegger!

Know Your Enemy

The politically correct post-modernism outlined above is the essential curriculum taught on today’s campuses. Its practitioners may quibble about the details, and they

may wish to suppress the particular quotes which I have quoted, but anything beyond this core philosophy is merely commentary.

This is what is behind all the nonsense about DWEM's. "Why are you forcing us to read Homer, Plato, and Cervantes? These are all male writers who share a common Western culture; all they can write about are their own experiences and their own values. They can't say anything important to a woman or a Black person, or a homosexual. You have to read female authors, and Black authors and gay authors for that, because, as we all know, mental life is delimited by materialism—all we can say about life is how our different instinctual and genetic structures, as women, as men, as Blacks, as homosexuals, interrelate with our experienced existence ("Dasein") as men, women, Blacks, or homosexuals."

In 1967, a Frenchman named Roland Barthes founded



What a golden beak! This looks a bit like an academic meeting. . . .

the literary theory of "post-structuralism" with a single statement, basing himself completely on Benjamin and in conscious emulation of Nietzsche's famous sentence. He said, "The author is dead." He meant by this: Let's go all the way and admit that any important literary figure was so completely determined by his conscious and unconscious interaction with his material existence that to talk about "the author" is obsolete, and to say that some past author has anything to say to you today, is hopelessly naive; even the words which the author used are freighted with the meanings imposed by the ruling class of that specific period, so the words themselves are suspect because they subtly convey capitalist oppression. Thus, in 1979, while accepting a prestigious professorship in Paris, Barthes concluded: "Language is fascism."

This is the reason behind the teaching of many university instructors today that dialogue has to be abandoned:

That's "logocentrism," the dangerous authoritarian belief in the Western tradition of using words to convey advanced concepts and to debate the values of good and evil.

We have all seen reports of the experimental Rainbow Curriculum in New York: children have to be taught tolerance for the homosexual lifestyle, the satanic lifestyle, and so on. This is called "values clarification" in new educational texts. "Excuse me," says the parent, "Could you teach some family values, some universal values of good and evil?" The school responds, in effect: "Universal values? Are you an authoritarian? Are you a religious fanatic? The only universal truth is that a syphilitic Nazi was right: We all create our own values—*Umwertung aller Werte*." It comes as no surprise that John Dewey, the founder of modern American educational theory, was a public and committed follower of Friedrich Nietzsche.

Post-modernist educational theory has been matched by post-modern psychology, based especially on the work of two French psychoanalysts, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. Foucault created a whole school of Nietzschean psychotherapy which identifies neuroses as the conflict between the will to power and society's attempts to instill "bourgeois morality."

When the students of Stanford University chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Culture's got to go!" did they realize that they were answering—seventy-five years after the fact—Lukacs' famous question, "Who will save us from Western civilization"?

Deconstructionism: The Method In the Madness

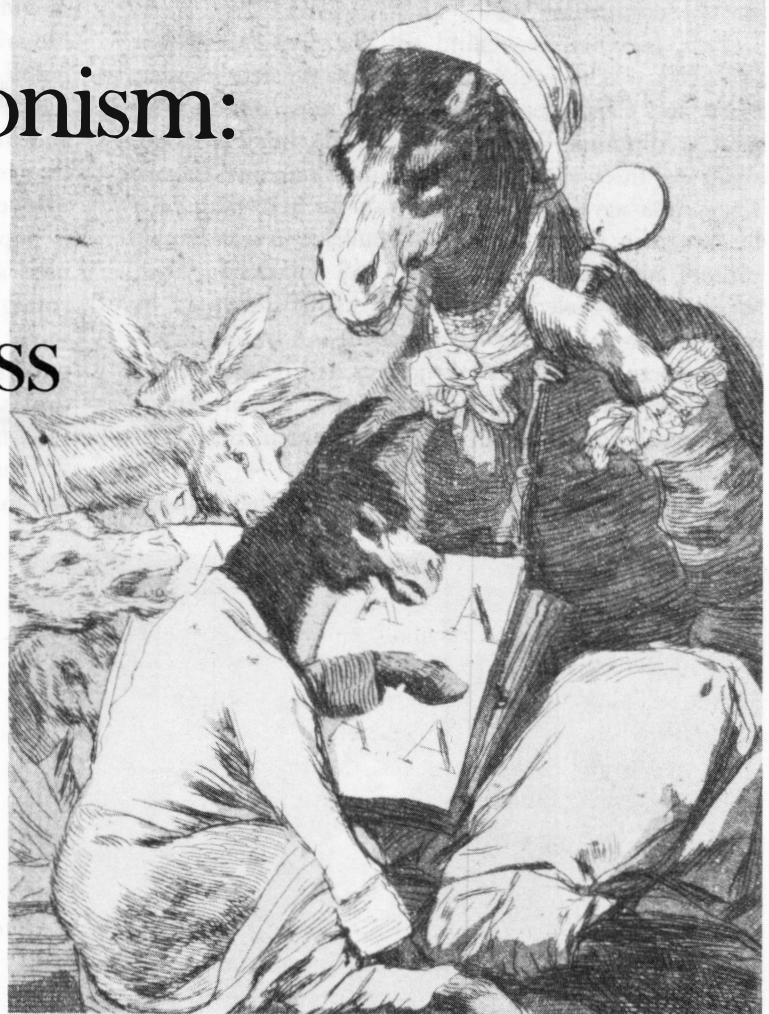
by Webster G. Tarpley

American college and university campuses are increasingly crippled by a form of mass irrationalism called Political Correctness. The purveyors of this doctrine proclaim that everything important in history can be summed up under the headings of race, gender, ethnicity, and choice of sexual perversion. They condemn Western Judeo-Christian civilization, and inveigh against the Dead White European Males who predominate among the scientists of the last six hundred years.

True to the spirit of Herbert Marcuse's 1968 essay on "Repressive Tolerance," the Politically Correct demand the silencing of any speech that might be offensive to themselves and their radical feminist, homosexual, or ethnic-group clientele. Meanwhile, they busy themselves with coining absurd euphemisms for plain English, fashioning labyrinths of pedantic circumlocution.

It needs to be appreciated that the P.C. creed is coherent with an obscurantist philosophical doctrine which is the rage in academia today: namely, deconstructionism.

The leading expositor of the deconstructionist creed is a French writer named Jacques Derrida, a professor at the School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences in Paris. Since his appearance at a celebrated conference at Johns Hopkins University in 1966, Derrida has been a frequent guest professor and lecturer at many American universities. Although Derrida is not a household word, he is the dominant academic philosopher in the world



Might not the pupil know more? One cannot say whether he knows more or less. . . .

today. Ironically, his support and readership is greater in the United States than in France or any other country. American higher education is now decisively influenced by Derrida's deconstructionism, a patchwork of fragments scavenged from the twentieth-century ideological junkyard of totalitarian movements.

Deconstructionists are radical nominalists, which means they are virtual paranoid schizophrenics. Books are filled with the humorless politically correct Newspeak of post-modernism: "vertically challenged" instead of "short," "differently hirsute" instead of "bald," etc. But changing words does nothing to change real situations. If tens of millions are unemployed and starving in today's depression, then they need jobs and economic recovery, and not terms like "momentarily downsized" or other new ways to euphemistically express their plight.

Derrida the Deconstructionist

Jacques Derrida was born to a Sephardic family in El Biar, Algeria in 1930. He began writing in the early 1960's, and his first important books, *Writing and Difference*, *Disseminations*, and *Of Grammatology*, came out in 1967-68. Derrida's existential matrix is the May 1968 destabilization of Gen. Charles de Gaulle's government. This intellectual milieu was dominated in the 1950's by the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and in the 1960's by the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss (whose networks spawned much of the terrorism plaguing Ibero-America) and the Freudianism of Jacques Lacan, spiced by the Hegelianism of Jean Hyppolite. During the late 1960's, Derrida was built up by the group around the magazine *Tel Quel*, including one Felix Guattari, later an apologist for the Red Brigades terrorists.

Derrida's immediate academic lineage at the elite Higher Normal School illustrates his intellectual pedigree. Start with Louis Althusser, the structuralist Marxist of *Reading Das Kapital*. Already in the late 1940's Althusser was suffering frequent mental breakdowns; in 1980, he murdered his own wife by strangling her, and was committed to an asylum for the criminally insane. In the late 1940's, Althusser acquired a disciple: this was Michel Foucault, a young homosexual who made such periodically abortive attempts at suicide that he was allowed to live in the school's infirmary. Foucault, an enthusiastic reader of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, became under Althusser's influence a Marxist and a member of the French Communist Party, where he was rumored to work as a ghost-writer for Jean Kanapa, a Stalinist member of the Politbureau. Later Foucault would discover themes like the glorification of insanity, liberation through masturbation, and the like. Foucault ended up at Berkeley, where he frequented the chains-leather-riding crop homosexual and sado-masochistic scene. He died of AIDS in 1984.

But Foucault also had a disciple: Jacques Derrida, who took his course at the Higher Normal School: "I was struck, like many others, by his speaking ability. His eloquence, authority, and brilliance were impressive," said Derrida later of his mentor. Derrida was taken by Foucault to the psychiatric hospital of St. Anne to hear patients examined. Derrida has been less of a political exhibitionist than Foucault. Derrida was arrested by the Communist authorities in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1981 on charges of drug trafficking; he said that he had come to meet dissidents and was released after protests.

Foucault and his pupil Derrida quarreled during the 1970's, and Foucault has provided some trenchant summations of Derrida's work, which he rightly called ob-

scurantist because Derrida deliberately writes in an incomprehensible way. Foucault said of Derrida: "He's the kind of philosopher who gives bullshit a bad name."

Those who try to read Derrida find a smokescreen of infuriating jargon. What is Derrida up to behind the smokescreen? His task at one level is simply to destroy the literate languages of Western Europe, with their developed capacity to transmit advanced conceptions. Derrida also knows that in order to destroy the efficacy of these languages, he must also destroy the heritage of Plato.

For this operation Derrida proceeds in the spirit of an ultra-Aristotelian radical nominalism which abolishes any relation between language on the one hand, and concepts and reality on the other. Such an outlook is always closely linked with paranoid schizophrenic mental pathologies. The operation is far from new, but has been attempted many times during the centuries. Derrida is like David Hume, who began with the usual "Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses" and soon ended up denying the possible existence of truth, the world, causality, knowledge, and the self.

But Derrida's irrationalism has more flair than that of his plodding factional adversaries in the older Anglo-American linguistic analysis schools. When Derrida was a young boy, he was locked by his sister in a cedar chest in the family home and kept there by her for what seemed to him to be an eternity. During this time the child Derrida thought that he had died and gone to another world. After he had been rescued from the cedar chest, he somehow conceived the idea that he had been castrated. He came to see himself as the Egyptian pagan god Osiris, who had died and been dismembered, but then reassembled and brought back from the dead (minus his male organ) by Isis. Derrida told his Paris students of the early 1970's that this decisive experience in his life had led him to write the book *Dissemination*, which includes much elaboration of the theme of seed that is scattered. Derrida felt compelled to narrate the Isis-Osiris-Horus myth in detail in the chapter of *Dissemination* entitled "Plato's Pharmacy," which is otherwise a document of his hatred for both Socrates and Plato.

Derrida was much influenced by the French writer Emmanuel Levinas, who helped to direct Derrida's attention to Heidegger, who was also profoundly influencing French thought via Sartre. Just as Heidegger is a commentator on the proto-fascist Nietzsche, so Derrida can be seen as a commentator on the Nazi Heidegger. Derrida's endorsement of Heidegger is indeed very strong: "I maintain . . . that Heidegger's text is of extreme importance, that it constitutes an unprecedented, irreversible advance and that we are still very far from having exploited all its critical resources."

Slaying the 'Tyranny of Reason'

Derrida is always heavily larded with Freud (who was a Cabbalist mystic, homosexual, and morphine addict himself). This opens up new possibilities for deconstruction: in "Plato's Pharmacy" [SEE page 51], Derrida exerts himself to show that Plato's notion of the *logos* had strong fatherly and paternal overtones. From here it is not far to Derrida's idiotic neologism of "phallogocentrism." Derrida seems to think that his *confrère* Lacan does not go far enough in liberating himself from phallogocentrism. Derrida comments: "Freud, like his followers, only described the necessity of phallogocentrism. . . . It is neither an ancient nor a speculative mistake. . . . It is an enormous and old root." (*Le Facteur de la Vérité* [*The Factor of Truth*]) Infinite variations on this psychotic revolt against the tyranny of reason, featuring the related need to slay the father and fight phallogocentrism, are now playing—often at taxpayers' expense—at your local campus.

Deconstruction is Destruction

Karl Mannheim wrote in his *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) about the need to promote the *Destruktion* of self-deceiving ideologies. Heidegger wrote after the war in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* of the need for a "destructive retrospect of the history of ontology" whose task would be to "lay bare the internal character or development" of its objects of study.

The Nazi Heidegger's notion of *Destruktion* is the immediate starting point for Derrida and his entire school. In the first published edition of *De la grammatologie* (*Of Grammatology*) published in Paris in 1967, Derrida does not talk about "deconstruction" but rather about "destruction" throughout. Derrida says that in deconstruction, "the task is . . . to dismantle [*déconstruire*] the metaphysical and rhetorical structures which are at work . . . not in order to reject or discard them, but to reinscribe them in another way" (*Marges de la philosophie* [*Margins of Philosophy*]).

With deconstruction thus revealed as a slyly disguised form of destruction, the next question is to determine what is to be destroyed. Derrida wants the destruction of reason, the deconstruction of the *logos*, which he

identifies as the central point of the Judeo-Christian philosophical tradition. (The Greek word *logos* can mean reason, but also lawfulness or ordering principle, as well as word, discourse, argument, and speech.) That tradition is what the deconstructionists are attacking when they rail against "Western metaphysics." Derrida writes:

The "rationality"—but perhaps that word should be abandoned for reasons that will appear at the end of this sentence—which governs a writing is thus enlarged and radicalized, no longer issues from a *logos*. Further, it inaugurates the destruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the deconstruction, of all the significations that have their source in that of the *logos*. Particularly the signification of *truth*. All the metaphysical determinations of truth, and even the one beyond metaphysical onto-theology that Heidegger reminds us of, are more or less immediately inseparable from the instance of the *logos*, or of a reason thought within the lineage of the *logos*, in whatever sense it is understood: in the pre-Socratic or the philosophical sense, in the sense of God's infinite understanding or in the anthropological sense, in the pre-Hegelian or the post-Hegelian sense. (*Of Grammatology*)

How then can the *logos* be destroyed? Derrida attempts to accomplish this by mystifying the concepts having to do with language.

For Derrida, using a terminology that is borrowed from the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, language is at first the realm of "sign" and "signifier":

The difference between sign and signifier belongs in a profound and implicit way to the totality of the great epoch covered by the history of metaphysics, and in a more explicit and more systematically articulated way to the narrower epoch of Christian creationism and infinitism when these appropriate the resources of Greek conceptuality. This appurtenance is essential and irreducible; one cannot retain . . . the scientific truth . . . without also bringing with it all its metaphysico-theological roots. (*Of Grammatology*)

In other words, Platonic Christianity is the basis for modern science, and that is the enemy Derrida seeks to liquidate by destroying language. The scientific tradition "begins its era in the form of Platonism, it ends in infinitist metaphysics."

Exalting Writing over Speech

Derrida asserts that the Western languages are "logocentric," that they are based on reason in this way. "With

this *logos*," says Derrida, "the original and essential link to the *phonē* [sound] has never been broken." In other words, human reason and human speech are inextricably bound up together. The connection of speech and reason is the organizing principle of Plato's dialogues and of all the literature based on them, through St. Augustine to the Italian Renaissance. The theater of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Schiller represents a continuation of this tradition in a slightly different form, while we know that the classical poetry of Homer, Dante, and Chaucer was meant to be spoken or sung aloud. If "the scar on the paper" were to replace all this, colossal cultural damage would of course be the result.

Western language is therefore not only logocentric, but also *phonocentric*: that is to say, Western language recognizes the primacy of the spoken language over the written language. Derrida obviously cannot deny that spoken language "came first." But he is hell-bent on reducing everything to writing and texts as the only sense data the individual gets from the world.

In order to attack the *logos* and reason through the



Neither more nor less. He is quite right to have his portrait painted. . . .

spoken word, Derrida sets against them his notion of writing: *l'écriture*. Derrida explains that what he means by writing is "a text already! written, black on white" (*Dissemination*). Thus, Derrida attempts to establish the ontological priority of writing over language and speech. Nothing in the way of proof is offered in favor of this absurd idea: the argument proceeds through a "we say" and ends by lamely hinting that the computer revolution will also help reduce all spoken words to black marks on the page.

This is Derrida's new pseudo-science called "grammatology," which studies the marks (*grammata*) on the paper. Each *grammē* (*grapheme*) can be endlessly commented upon. For Derrida, the black marks on the white paper are the only reality, as he very radically asserts in *Of Grammatology*: "The axial proposition of this essay is that there is nothing outside the text."

Derrida exalts writing over speech, but logocentric-phonocentric Western thinking refuses to go along with him. Derrida directs his rage against Plato by "deconstructing" the dialogue *Phaedrus*. The result is the essay "Plato's Pharmacy," which appears in *Dissemination*. This is classical Derridean obfuscation, playing on the multiple meanings of the Greek word *pharmakon*, which can mean variously poison, remedy, magic potion, or medicine. But the fields of meaning are even more complicated: Socrates, at the beginning of the dialogue, recounts the story of the nymph Orithye who was playing with the nymph Pharmakeia when Orithye was blown over a cliff by Boreas, the north wind. Pharmakeia was herself associated with a healing fountain. *Phaedrus* has brought some written texts for Socrates to read, and these are compared to a drug (*pharmakon*) which has lured Socrates to leave Athens in order to meet with him and see the texts. Are these texts a healing drug or a poison? Socrates narrates the fable of the Egyptian god Theuth, a Hermes-Mercury figure who had invented counting, geometry, astronomy, dice, and letters (*grammata*) for writing. Theuth wants to share all these arts with the people of Egypt, so he goes to Amon Ra (Thamus) and offers them to him. Amon Ra rejects the letters, explaining that these will weaken memory and make available only the appearance and presumption of knowledge, but not true knowledge. Derrida explodes with rage against Socrates and Plato: "One begins by repeating without knowing—through a myth—the definition of writing: repeating without knowing. . . . Once the myth has dealt the first

blows, the *logos* of Socrates will crush the accused.” (*Dissemination*). He then proceeds to an obsessive recounting of the Isis-Osiris story. Derrida also makes much of the fact that although Plato includes reference to Socrates as *pharmakeus* (poisoner, medicine man, sorcerer), he does not free-associate from *pharmakon/pharmakeus* to *pharmakos*, meaning scapegoat. The idea is that Socrates really became a scapegoat at his trial, while Plato is making a scapegoat of “writing.” The conclusion is that “the *pharmakon* is neither the cure nor the poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing” (*Positions*). Through a hidden pattern of ambiguities, the text, in addition to saying what Plato might have meant, also says what Plato cannot have meant. *The dialogue thus deconstructed is hopelessly contradictory and impossible to interpret or construe.* Q.E.D.!

Nietzsche had called himself Plato in reverse, and had railed against “Socrates, he who does not write.” Derrida attacks Plato in another interminable book, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Half of this book is made up of a series of wildly dissociated, stream of consciousness letters that revolve around a postcard Derrida says he found at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The postcard depicts a miniature from an old manuscript showing Socrates seated at a desk writing, with a smaller

Paradoxes

The crowning moment of any deconstruction is the moment of *aporia*, or insoluble conflict discovered within the writing. Contradictions like these are very easy to find, of course: for, as Gödel’s proof shows, no formal system can ever be complete, and avoid contradiction at the same time. Even individual words have contradictory meanings, as poets have always known.

The chop-logic Zeno made *aporia* into his stock in trade, proving, for example, that time *is* and *is not*, and so forth. Zeno’s paradoxes gave rise to an entire school of skepticism called the aporetics. Whenever a deconstructionist charlatan reads a book or article, he can always be sure to find *aporia* and then pronounce the text deconstructed. The solid ground of truth and meaning thus supposedly falls out from under Plato and his followers, and the Western world suddenly finds itself suspended over the abyss of chaos and delirium. This is the abyss caused by Derrida’s exercise in dishonesty and malevolence.

Plato behind him, appearing to Derrida “dictating, authoritarian, masterly, imperious.” Upon seeing this, Derrida naturally went wild: “I always knew it, it had remained like the negative of a photograph to be developed for twenty-five centuries—in me of course.” Hundreds of pages of babbling follow, always returning to Derrida’s desire to rewrite the history of philosophy by securing the greatest possible attention for this postcard: “[D]on’t forget that all of this took off from the wish to make this picture the cover of a book, all of it pushed back into its margins, the title, my name, the name of the publisher, and miniaturized (I mean in red) on *Socrates’ phallus*.” Other essays in this book evoke Freud and his comparison of the human psyche to a “mystic writing pad” as another way of undermining the *logos*.

Call it Fascism, or Deconstructionism?

Other than grabbing endowed chairs and foundation and government grants, what is the point? It is, once again, to destroy civilization. A society that submits its future leaders to education at the hands of deconstructionist con artists cannot survive. Rage is doubtless one of the ruling passions of Derrida and his cohorts, timid academics though they may seem. Derrida praises a

way of thinking that is faithful and attentive to the ineluctable world of the future which proclaims itself at present, beyond the closure of knowledge. The future can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger. It is that which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity. (*Of Grammatology*)

Derrida writes elsewhere of

the as yet unnamable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity. (*Writing and Difference*)

The old epoch is ending, and a new form of horror is arriving for which we do not even have a word. Maybe it will be called a new fascist era. Or maybe it will be called the living hell of deconstructionism.

But Derrida urges his cohorts forward, recommending that they not look back with nostalgia at the old world of Western civilization they are determined to bury. Let us act, he says, like Nietzsche’s superman, whose

laughter will then break out toward a return which will no longer have the form of the metaphysical

return of humanism any more than it will undoubtedly take the form “beyond” metaphysics, of the memorial or of the guard of the sense of being, or the form of the house and the truth of Being. He will dance, outside of the house, that *aktive Vergesslichkeit*, that active forgetfulness (*oubliance*) and that cruel (*grausam*) feast [which] is spoken of in the *Genealogy of Morals*. No doubt Nietzsche called upon an active forgetfulness (*oubliance*) of Being which would not have had the metaphysical form which Heidegger ascribed to it. (*Marges de la philosophie* [*Margins of Philosophy*])

An Admirer of Artaud

How Derrida might be found celebrating is suggested by his abiding interest in the well-known French cultural degenerate Antonin Artaud, to whom Derrida has dedicated a great deal of admiring attention over the years. Artaud was yet another profoundly disturbed personality who was repeatedly committed to mental institutions, where he spent the years from 1937 to 1946, approximately the last decade of his life, and who is known for his “theatre of cruelty.” *Writing and Difference* contains not one but two essays on Artaud, “The Whispered Word” and “The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation.” Derrida is also a co-editor, with Paule Thévenin, of a collection of Artaud’s sketches and portraits published with full-color plates in 1986. To this volume Derrida has contributed an essay. Artaud’s drawings and paintings are pathetic and sick, but Derrida obviously takes them very seriously. Artaud must rank as an influence of the very first magnitude upon our philosopher. Let us sample “The Whispered Word” for satanic, pornographic, and coprophiliac motifs. Weak stomachs should skip this passage. Derrida writes:

Let us not be detained here by a possible resemblance to the essence of the mythic itself: the dream of a life without difference. Let us ask, rather, what difference within the flesh might mean for Artaud. My body has been stolen from me by effraction. The Other, the Thief, the Great Furtive One, has a proper name: God. His history has taken place. It has its own place. The place of effraction can be only the opening of an orifice. The orifice of birth, the orifice of defecation to which all other gaps refer, as if to their origin. . . .

“Now, the hideous history of the Demiurge/ is well known/ It is the history of the body/ which



And so was his grandfather. This poor animal has been driven mad by *Genealogists*. . . .

pursued (and did not follow) mine/ and which, in order to go first and be born,/ projected itself across my body/ and/ was born/ through the disemboweling of my body/ of which he kept a piece/ in order to/ pass himself off/ as me. . . .”

God is thus the proper name of that which deprives us of our own nature, of our own birth; consequently he will always have spoken before us, on the sly. . . .

In any event, God-the-Demiurge does not *create*, is not life, but is the subject of *oeuvres* and maneuvers, is the thief, the trickster, the counterfeiter, the pseudonymous, the usurper, the opposite of the creative artist, the artisanal being, the being of the artisan: Satan, I am God and God is Satan. . . .

The history of God is thus the history of excrement. Scato-logy itself. . . . “For one must have a mind in order/ to shit,/ a *pure* body cannot/ shit./ What it shits/ is the glue of minds/ furiously determined to steal something from him/ for without a body one cannot exist.” One can read in *Nerve-Scales*: “Dear

Friends, What you took to be my works were only my waste matter. . . .” Like excrement, like the turd, which is, as is also well known, a metaphor of the penis, the work *should* stand upright. (*Writing and Difference*)

The ‘New Criticism’

After Derrida’s 1966 appearance at Johns Hopkins, deconstructionists began to colonize U.S. university facul-

Imposed Meaning

Since nothing has any meaning anyway, the exterminating angels of deconstructionism are free to impose on a piece of writing any meaning they want *simply by an act of force*. For, hadn’t Nietzsche himself claimed that, “ultimately, man finds in things nothing but what he himself has imported into them?” This is now standard campus exegetical practice.

Philosophical hucksters have always played games with dualisms, which deconstructionists call binary pairs. Many phenomena exhibit such apparent dualism, as in the cases of cause/effect, spirit/matter, speech/writing, and so forth. The secret of these apparent dualisms is that, as they are better understood, they reveal underlying coherence, since all of them must co-exist in the same universe, being governed by the same lawfulness. Hucksters like Derrida have made a living for thousands of years by picking up one side of the dualism, and stressing that to the exclusion of all else.

Derrida talks about “the coupled oppositions on which philosophy is constructed.” (*Margins of Philosophy*) He says that these always contain “a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms controls the other . . . holds the superior position. To deconstruct the opposition is first . . . to overthrow the hierarchy.” (*Positions*) The subordinated term is first placed up top, then removed from the dualistic pair, and finally given a new jargon name to signify its new top-banana status.

Take, for example, the familiar dualism of men/women. To reverse sexism, exalt women over men, and then change their name to “womyn” to remove the residue of the previous dualistic pairing. Any campus will immediately offer dozens of such examples, usually of incredible banality.

ties. They did not find employment first as professors of philosophy, but usually as literary critics in English, French, Romance languages, and comparative literature departments. These English departments especially were still dominated in those days by a school of literary studies called the New Criticism. These departments became the line of least resistance to deconstructionist infiltration.

Some of the New Critics exhibited fascist sympathies, as in the case of Paul de Man, the Belgian-born literary critic who helped make Yale University’s high-powered English department the leading American nest for deconstructionists during the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. In 1988, some years after his death, de Man was widely accused of having written collaborationist, pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic articles for the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* of Brussels between 1941 and 1943. Derrida and many other deconstructionists, including Geoffrey Hartman, rushed to defend their former colleague. Deconstructionism has never been characterized by high moral tension. De Man himself had once written:

It is always possible to excuse any guilt, because the experience exists simultaneously as fictional discourse and as empirical event and it is never possible to decide which one of the two possibilities is the right one. The indecision makes it possible to excuse the bleakest of crimes. (*Allegories of Reading*)

After examining the cases of Heidegger and De Man, plus the implications of Derrida’s own work, it would be perfectly in order to brand deconstructionism as fascism warmed over. But this may not convey the magnitude of what the deconstructionists are attempting. Shortly after the Berlin Wall came down, Derrida spoke at a symposium in Turin, Italy, and indicated what his next move would be. At the very moment when Europe had a chance for historical renewal, Derrida talked about Europe, which he inevitably described as “the point of a phallus.” Derrida repeated his usual litany that Europe is old and exhausted, that Europe must make itself into something that it is not, far out of the European tradition. Then he announced that it was time to go back to Marx so as to be able to deconstruct both left-wing dogmatism and the counter-dogmatism of the right. This will allow a new critique of the new evils of capitalism. The main thing, he stressed, is to tolerate and respect everything that is not placed under the authority of reason. Since Derrida has never written at length about Marx, this represents his bid to bring former and future communists into his phalanx as well. Deconstruction thus advances its candidacy to become the undisputed focus of intellectual evil in the late twentieth century.