

the school, the prison)—all form the correlate of exact procedures of power. We must not imagine that all these things that were formerly tolerated attracted notice and received a pejorative designation when the time came to give a regulative role to the one type of sexuality that was capable of reproducing labor power and the form of the family. These polymorphous conducts were actually extracted from people's bodies and from their pleasures; or rather, they were solidified in them; they were drawn out, revealed, isolated, intensified, incorporated, by multifarious power devices. The growth of perversions is not a moralizing theme that obsessed the scrupulous minds of the Victorians. It is the real product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures. It is possible that the West has not been capable of inventing any new pleasures, and it has doubtless not discovered any original vices. But it has defined new rules for the game of powers and pleasures. The frozen countenance of the perversions is a fixture of this game.

Directly. This implantation of multiple perversions is not a mockery of sexuality taking revenge on a power that has thrust on it an excessively repressive law. Neither are we dealing with paradoxical forms of pleasure that turn back on power and invest it in the form of a "pleasure to be endured." The implantation of perversions is an instrument-effect: it is through the isolation, intensification, and consolidation of peripheral sexualities that the relations of power to sex and pleasure branched out and multiplied, measured the body, and penetrated modes of conduct. And accompanying this encroachment of powers, scattered sexualities rigidified, became stuck to an age, a place, a type of practice. A proliferation of sexualities through the extension of power; an optimization of the power to which each of these local sexualities gave a surface of intervention: this concatenation, particularly since the nineteenth century, has been ensured and relayed by the countless economic interests which, with the help of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, and pornography, have tapped into both this analytical multiplication of pleasure and this optimization of the power that controls it. Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against one another; they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement.

We must therefore abandon the hypothesis that modern industrial societies ushered in an age of increased sexual repression. We have not only witnessed a visible explosion of unorthodox sexualities; but—and this is the important point—a deployment quite different from the law, even if it is locally dependent on procedures of prohibition, has ensured, through a network of interconnecting mechanisms, the proliferation of specific pleasures and the multiplication of disparate sexualities. It is said that no society has been more prudish: never have the agencies of power taken such care to feign ignorance of the thing they prohibited, as if they were determined to have nothing to do with it. But it is the opposite that has become apparent at least after a general review of the facts: never have there existed more centers of power; never more attention manifested and verbalized; never more circular contacts and linkages; never more sites where the intensity of pleasures and the persistency of power catch hold, only to spread elsewhere.

Michel Foucault TRUTH AND POWER / 1667

From Truth and Power¹

For a long period, the 'left' intellectual spoke and was acknowledged the right of speaking in the capacity of master of truth and justice. He was heard, or purported to make himself heard, as the spokesman of the universal. To be an intellectual meant something like being the consciousness/conscience of us all. I think we have here an idea transposed from Marxism, from a faded Marxism indeed.² Just as the proletariat, by the necessity of its historical situation, is the bearer of the universal (but its immediate, unreflected bearer, barely conscious of itself as such), so the intellectual, through his moral, theoretical and political choice, aspires to be the bearer of this universality in its conscious, elaborated form. The intellectual is thus taken as the clear, individual figure of a universality whose obscure, collective form is embodied in the proletariat.

Some years have now passed since the intellectual was called upon to play this role. A new mode of the 'connection between theory and practice' has been established. Intellectuals have got used to working, not in the modality of the 'universal', the 'exemplary', the 'just-and-true-for-all', but within specific sectors; at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them (housing, the hospital, the asylum, the laboratory, the university, family and sexual relations). This has undoubtedly given them a much more immediate and concrete awareness of struggles. And they have met here with problems which are specific, 'non-universal', and often different from those of the proletariat or the masses. And yet I believe intellectuals have actually been drawn closer to the proletariat and the masses, for two reasons. Firstly, because it has been a question of real, material, everyday struggles, and secondly because they have often been confronted, albeit in a different form, by the same adversary as the proletariat, namely the multinational corporations, the judicial and police apparatuses, the property speculators, etc. This is what I would call the 'specific' intellectual as opposed to the 'universal' intellectual.

* * *

Now let's come back to more precise details. We accept, alongside the development of technico-scientific structures in contemporary society, the importance gained by the specific intellectual in recent decades, as well as the acceleration of this process since around 1960. Now the specific intellectual encounters certain obstacles and faces certain dangers. The danger of remaining at the level of conjunctural struggles, pressing demands restricted to particular sectors. The risk of letting himself be manipulated by the political parties or trade union apparatuses which control these local struggles. Above all, the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for lack of a global strategy or outside support; the risk too of not being followed, or only by very limited groups. In France we can see at the moment an

¹Translated by Colin Gordon.

²The German political philosopher KARL MARX (1818-1883) believed that the proletariat within

capitalism embodied the "universal" revolutionary aspirations of the people.

and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological' struggles).

It seems to me that what must now be taken into account in the intellectual is not the 'bearer of universal values'. Rather, it's the person occupying a specific position—but whose specificity is linked, in a society like ours, to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth. In other words, the intellectual has a three-fold specificity: that of his class position (whether as petty-bourgeois in the service of capitalism or 'organic' intellectual³ of the proletariat); that of his conditions of life and work, linked to his condition as an intellectual (his field of research, his place in a laboratory, the political and economic demands to which he submits or against which he rebels, in the university, the hospital, etc.); lastly, the specificity of the politics of truth in our societies. And it's with this last factor that his position can take on a general significance and that his local, specific struggle can have effects and implications which are not simply professional or sectoral. The intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of that régime of truth which is so essential to the structure and functioning of our society. There is a battle 'for truth', or at least 'around truth'—it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean 'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted', but rather 'the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true', it being understood also that it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. It is necessary to think of the political problems of intellectuals not in terms of 'science' and 'ideology', but in terms of 'truth' and 'power'. And thus the question of the professionalisation of intellectuals and the division between intellectual and manual labour can be envisaged in a new way.

All this must seem very confused and uncertain. Uncertain indeed, and what I am saying here is above all to be taken as a hypothesis. In order for it to be a little less confused, however, I would like to put forward a few propositions—not firm assertions, but simply suggestions to be further tested and evaluated.

'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'régime' of truth.

This régime is not merely ideological or superstructural; it was a condition of the formation and development of capitalism.⁴ And it's this same régime which, subject to certain modifications, operates in the socialist countries (I leave open here the question of China, about which I know little).

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the

example of this. The struggle around the prisons, the penal system and the police-judicial system, because it has developed 'in solitary', among social workers and ex-prisoners, has tended increasingly to separate itself from the forces which would have enabled it to grow. It has allowed itself to be penetrated by a whole naive, archaic ideology which makes the criminal at once into the innocent victim and the pure rebel—society's scapegoat—and the young wolf of future revolutions. This return to anarchist themes of the late nineteenth century was possible only because of a failure of integration of current strategies. And the result has been a deep split between this campaign with its monotonous, lyrical little chant, heard only among a few small groups, and the masses who have good reason not to accept it as valid political currency, but who also—thanks to the studiously cultivated fear of criminals—tolerate the maintenance, or rather the reinforcement, of the judicial and police apparatuses.

It seems to me that we are now at a point where the function of the specific intellectual needs to be reconsidered. Reconsidered but not abandoned; despite the nostalgia of some for the great 'universal' intellectuals and the desire for a new philosophy, a new world-view. Suffice it to consider the important results which have been achieved in psychiatry: they prove that these local, specific struggles haven't been a mistake and haven't led to a dead end. One may even say that the role of the specific intellectual must become more and more important in proportion to the political responsibilities which he is obliged willy-nilly to accept, as a nuclear scientist, computer expert, pharmacologist, etc. It would be a dangerous error to discount him politically in his specific relation to a local form of power, either on the grounds that this is a specialist matter which doesn't concern the masses (which is doubly wrong: they are already aware of it, and in any case implicated in it), or that the specific intellectual serves the interests of State or Capital (which is true, but at the same time shows the strategic position he occupies), or, again, on the grounds that he propagates a scientific ideology (which isn't always true, and is anyway certainly a secondary matter compared with the fundamental point: the effects proper to true discourses).

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

In societies like ours, the 'political economy' of truth is characterised by five important traits. 'Truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power); it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education

3. Someone (regardless of profession) who directs

the ideas and aspirations of the particular social

class to which he or she 'organically' belongs, as

described by the Italian Marxist ANTONIO GRAMSCI

(1891-1937).

4. Foucault reverses Marxist accounts that see

'truth' as a superstructural product of the economic base.

ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology; but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousness—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional régime of the production of truth.

It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony,⁵ social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time.

The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology, it is truth itself. Hence the importance of Nietzsche,⁶

1977

5. A term from Gramsci: the manufactured consent that legitimates a dominant group and unifies a society. Foucault's régime of truth is a form of hegemonic discourse.

6. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900), German philosopher, who viewed truth as the product of "the will to power." Foucault, following Nietzsche, wants the story of truth to be told in a "genealogical" history that uncovers the struggles among contending forces.

WOLFGANG ISER

b. 1926

Reacting against formalist approaches to literature, notably the New Critical prohibition of considering audience response, American literary criticism in the 1970s began to pay renewed attention to the role of the reader in interpretation. Alongside French poststructuralist approaches that asserted, in ROLAND BARTHES's phrase, the "writerly" nature of reading and psychoanalytic views that studied the psychology of reading, the German "Constance School" was most prominent in advocating the investigation of *Rezeptionsästhetik*, or "the aesthetics of reception." Wolfgang Iser is a leading member of the Constance School, and he focuses particularly on the way in which texts are actively constructed by individual readers through the phenomenology of the reading process.

Born in Germany and trained as an undergraduate at the University of Leipzig and the University of Tübingen, Iser earned his Ph.D. in 1950 from the University of Heidelberg, where he studied with the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer. Thereafter, Iser held a series of appointments in English literature at the Universities of Glasgow, Heidelberg, Würzburg, and Cologne, settling finally in 1967 in Germany at the newly founded University of Constance as a professor of English and comparative literature. Iser's arrival at Constance, where he joined a research group that included HANS ROBERT JAUSS, proved especially fruitful for the development of his theories of reader response. Since the mid-1980s, Iser has also held an appointment as permanent visiting professor of English at the University of California at Irvine.

The Constance School draws on the philosophical tradition of aesthetics inaugurated in eighteenth-century German philosophy by Alexander Baumgarten, IMMANUEL KANT, and FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER, and it focuses on the affective as well as the formal dimensions of art. The work of the Constance School has also been influenced by philosophical considerations of hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation, developed by FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER (1768-1834), MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889-1976), and others. In particular, Iser's work draws on the hermeneutic

philosophy of Gadamer and the phenomenological literary theory of Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), which examines the processes of cognition through which we understand literary works.

Iser's early work includes two scholarly studies of English literature, his doctoral dissertation on the eighteenth-century novels of Henry Fielding and a book on the aesthetic views of the Victorian critic WALTER PATER. However, it was not until his inaugural lecture at Constance in 1970, "The Affective Structure of the Text," that he articulated his theory of the interactive nature of the reading experience. This was followed by the two of his books that have most influenced Anglo-American literary studies, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Becker* (1972; trans. 1974) and *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976; trans. 1978). *The Implied Reader* studies a series of English novels from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century, showing how "readers take an active part in the composition of the novel's meaning." According to Iser, literary texts provide the foundation for their interpretation, but they also imply the action of the reader. Reading is not passive or static but a process of discovery; a reader questions, negates, and revises the expectations that the text establishes, filling in what Iser calls "blanks" or "gaps" in the text and continually modifying his or her interpretation. Iser's concept of "the implied reader" recalls Wayne Booth's notion of "the implied author," elaborated in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961; rev. ed. 1983). Booth argues that although we might not be able to recover an author's intention to determine meaning (acknowledging the New Critical argument against authorial intention codified in W. K. WIMSATT JR. AND MONROE BEARDSLEY's "Intentional Fallacy," 1946; see above), we can infer intention, particularly bearing on ethical views, from the statements of the narrator. The reader, Iser maintains, can similarly infer from a text directions guiding interpretation. To borrow a phrase from the courtroom, texts ask leading questions.

Expanding on the methods in *The Implied Reader*, *The Act of Reading* offers a more programmatic explanation of the reading experience and the ways in which readers process texts. Iser argues that texts provide "sets of instructions" or a "repertoire" that the reader must assemble, so that interpretation depends on both the text and response. Interpretation does not derive from one or the other, but from their combination and interaction, forming what Iser calls "the virtual text." As Iser describes it, "the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process."

Iser's version of reader response differs from that of Jauss, who deals with the actual reception of a literary work and how that concrete history tempers our expectations and therefore influences our interpretation. We never see a text on its own, but always in the context of its reception by others. Iser focuses on the individual interactive process—the phenomenology or cognition—of the act of reading, rather than the larger literary-historical concerns that Jauss describes. Iser's investigation of response also differs from that of STANLEY FISH, the most prominent advocate of response criticism in the United States, who locates the meaning of literary texts in the interaction of the interpretive communities to which readers belong rather than in the interaction of text and reader.

Reader-response criticism takes particular aim at the once-dominant dictates of the New Criticism, codified in Wimsatt and Beardsley's "Affective Fallacy" (1949; see above), which dismisses considerations of the reader as "a confusion between the poem and its results." Provocatively turning the tables on formalistic, text-based approaches, Fish claims that the affective fallacy is itself a fallacy, since our readings are always governed not by the text but by the personal assumptions and interpretive protocols that we start with. Iser carves out a compromise position between formalist theories of literature that assume a stable object of study (witness the titles of the best-known books of the New Criticism, CLEANTH BROOKS's *Well Wrought Urn* and Wimsatt's *Verbal Icon*) and more radical reader-based approaches, such as Fish's. Iser carefully qualifies his position, insisting that reading depends on the text and that a

STEPHEN GREENBLATT

b. 1943

The leading proponent of "New Historicism," Stephen Greenblatt became a key figure in the shift from literary to cultural poetics and from textual to contextual interpretation in U.S. English departments in the 1980s and 1990s. Inspired by MICHEL FOUCAULT's historical investigations of medical and penal institutions and his theoretical understanding of power, the New Historicists see the literary work as a vessel tossed in a social sea of competing interests, antagonistic values, and contradictions. For Greenblatt, literary works are "fields of force, places of dissension and shifting interests, occasions for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses."

Greenblatt was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1943 and did his undergraduate and graduate work at Yale University, gaining his Ph.D. in 1969. For more than twenty years, he taught at the University of California at Berkeley, where he was one of the founders of *Representations*, the journal in which much pathbreaking New Historicist work first appeared. He moved to Harvard University in the mid-1990s.

New Historicism, as our selection suggests, begins its quest to be political by denying that any social world is stable and that artworks are separated from the power struggles constituting social reality. The literary work is a player in the competition among various groups to gain their ends, a competition that takes place on many levels. New Historicism accepts Foucault's insistence that power operates through myriad capillary channels; these include not just direct coercion and governmental action but also, crucially, daily routines and language. Because discourse organizes perception of the world by its categorical groupings and because symbols bind social agents emotionally to institutions and practices, conflicts over images resonate throughout the social order. Thus the New Historicist not only pays attention to such discursive disputes in particular texts but also examines how particular texts are addressed to other texts, other discursive orders, in the wider culture. A "cultural poetics" tries to identify the key images—and the values, beliefs, practices, and social structures that those images point toward—of a particular cultural moment. Unlike the old historicist, the New Historicist does not expect that cultural moment to be unified, with the literary text simply reflecting or embodying that unity. Rather, the text is a dynamic interweaving of multiple strands from a culture that is itself an unstable field of contending forces.

Any given text for the New Historicist is an attempted intervention in the ongoing struggle to influence or even dominate the cultural field. The critic's own work intervenes in his or her own present, responding to and striving to alter contemporary configurations of power. To explain how Shakespeare's *Richard II* is implicated in the power struggles of its time is both to write a history of the consolidation of power prior to our moment and to awaken today's reader to the conflicts that define our moment. The New Historicists, again following Foucault, often construct narratives in which dispersed and disputed power becomes more insidious, and dominance grows more dominant. They want to emphasize history's contingencies, its fluidity in any given moment, but they also emphasize how history reveals the growth of forms of power that continuously affect subjects' lives.

The tendency to tell similar historical tales of power's expanding reach, coupled with fairly blunt evaluations of literary works as either complicitous with or resistant to power, has opened New Historicism to criticism. Historians have objected that these literary critics read a few nonliterary texts, juxtapose them with plays or novels, and think they are doing history. But such complaints, even when justified in individual cases, largely miss the point. New Historicism is part of a broader sea change in literary studies—and in history as well. Instead of asking what a particular text means in and of itself, New Historicists ask what it *does* within the ensemble of social relations in which it is embedded. Rather than focusing on the masterpiece or on the

author of masterpieces, these critics attempt to understand the lived social reality of the era being studied. And just as New Historicism and cultural studies were beginning to emerge in departments of literature, history departments also were changing. During the late twentieth century, new prominence was given to both social and cultural history, which shift the historians' gaze away from famous actors or grand historical events to ordinary people and their mundane routines. A whole new relation to texts, which were now being read to gain insight into the society from which they sprang, along with a new definition of the goal of historical investigation, has increasingly blurred the disciplinary lines between English and history. As literary critics have become more familiar with this paradigm, they have grown accustomed to delving as deeply into archives as historians; and some historians have begun to adopt the more linguistically nuanced interpretations of sources characteristic of literary critics.

Greenblatt's work, along with that of Louis Adrian Montrose, Stephen Mullany, Jonathan Dollimore, Catherine Belsey, and numerous other literary critics, has ensured that English Renaissance studies and New Historicism have become inextricably linked. But New Historicists work has also been highly influential in studies of other historical periods, especially nineteenth-century American and British literature. Jerome McGann, for example, though not influenced so directly by Foucault as are members of the *Representations* group, has brought a New Historicist concern with social context to the criticism of British Romantic poetry. By the late 1990s, literary critics seldom explicitly identified themselves as New Historicists, but the emphasis on context over text still prevailed in literary studies.

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Introduction to *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*

"I am Richard II. Know ye not that?" exclaimed Queen Elizabeth on August 4, 1601, in the wake of the abortive Essex rising.¹ On the day before the rising, someone had paid the Lord Chamberlain's Men forty shillings to

1. An attempt against the court of Queen Elizabeth I (1523-1603, reigned 1558-1603) in February 1601, led by Robert Devereux (1566-1601),

the 2d earl of Essex. When the citizens of London failed to come to his small army's aid, Essex and his followers fled; Essex was executed for treason.

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