

The production of moral ideology

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My aim in this paper is to throw some light on the nature of moral ideology by examining its origin and function in terms of psychoanalytical theory, as well as of Marxism. My assumptions at the outset are that any moral ideology serves a socially repressive function, and that a form of practical reason is possible which is in no sense moral or socially repressive; the elimination of moral ideology is therefore taken as a rational desideratum.¹

I take it that the critique of moral ideology belongs to two sciences: Historical Materialism and Psychoanalysis. I shall start with an attempt to justify my use of psychoanalytical concepts, and to delimit the scope of such concepts in relation to the historical materialist analysis of ideology in general.

In the second section I shall consider the social function which moral ideologies serve in social formations based on class exploitation and domination; and the characteristics which any moral ideology must have in order to serve this function (and which all moral ideologies do have); and also the specific requirements of the capitalist mode of production in the area of moral ideology. This section will belong entirely to the historical-materialist critique of ideology; it is intended (as is the whole analysis contained in this paper) to be applicable equally to the theoretical expressions of moral ideology developed by philosophers and other ideologists, and to popular moral ideologies. If explicit reference is made mainly to the former, this is because I personally am not qualified to undertake the (perhaps more profitable) analysis of popular moral ideologies; there is anyway no space in this paper for a detailed account either of such ideologies or of systems of moral philosophy. But precisely because all moral ideologies, popular or theoretically worked out, share certain common features, and must share them in order to serve their social function, such detailed analysis of particular ideologies is not necessary for the purposes of this paper.

In the third and final section I will take up my findings concerning certain characteristics of moral ideologies from section II, and relate them to certain concepts belonging to psychoanalytical theory; on this basis I hope to uncover the unconscious process of the production of moral ideology, and make a few observations on the prognosis for the possible dissolution of moral ideology in a socialist society which had revolutionised the family-system.

1. The Theoretical Framework

Clearly the judgement that moral ideology has a socially repressive function is derived from Historical Materialism. It might be thought that this is a sufficient explanation of such ideology - that the ruling class will more or less consciously inculcate the moral ideology most convenient to it, and that this ideology will prevail. This view has several objections

to it: (a) It overestimates the role of consciousness in the production of ideology. Men's ideas are a product of their social conditions, not primarily of their societal conditioning. It is methodologically incorrect from the standpoint of Historical Materialism to proceed directly from the specification of the superstructural forms (political or ideological) best serving the interests of a particular ruling class or - what is essentially the same thing - the needs of the dominant mode of production in a given social formation, to the superstructural (political or ideological) effects actually produced in that social formation. (b) It fails to explain why members of a subject class should accept ideas antagonistic to their interests. After all, one does not believe everything one is told, and if everyone did, there would be no possibility of an oppressed class revolting against its oppressors. (c) It does not allow for dysfunctional ideological developments within a social formation. The character-structures produced in capitalist social formations and the ideologies associated with them, are by no means wholly useful from the point of view of the successful cohesion and development of these social formations, though they must no doubt be largely so, for capitalism to survive. For instance, the prevalence of neurotic disorders adversely affects the aims of capitalist production, as it interferes with the working capacity, as well as the happiness, of the individuals concerned. Yet these disorders are the effect of a type of family which is essential to capitalism. There are ineliminable contradictions in capitalism at the level of ideology, as well as of politics and economics - in this case a contradiction between the ideological needs and the ideological effects of capitalism.

Ideological State Apparatuses

One of the most stimulating discussions of the production of ideology in recent Marxist thought is Althusser's essay 'Ideology and the State',² but it seems to me to be unsatisfactory in important respects. Its approach to the problem of ideology in terms of the needs of the capitalist mode of production concerning the reproduction of suitable agents of the productive process and of relations of domination/subordination between the representatives of capital and the labour-force is absolutely correct for understanding the ideological requirements of capitalism, but for the reasons noted above, that does not make it a theory of the production of ideology in a capitalist social formation. (It is surprising that Althusser should neglect this point in view of the fact that he more than anyone else has contributed to our understanding that a social formation does not express its material foundation in the way that a Hegelian totality expresses its ideal foundation.³)

Ideology appears in Althusser's essay as a content communicated (however unconsciously) by institutions which for the most part (the exception is the family) exist precisely to fulfil this function. The production of ideology appears (to parody Althusser's own terminology) as a conspiracy without a subject. To be sure, ideology is not produced by cynical liars in high places, but everything is as if it is. But this would be a serious error; of course there are plenty of cynical liars in high places, with immense means of the dissemination of ideas at their disposal; but ideology is largely produced without their intervention, and the whole practice of ideological struggle should be carried out in a way which is quite unlike that in which it would have to be

carried out if a conspiracy-theory (with or without a subject) were true.

For instance, if it were the case that racialism were propagated among the workers by the bourgeois press, anti-racialist propaganda produced by the left would seem to be the most effective antidote. In fact, however, it arises spontaneously and largely against the influence of the official propaganda of the bourgeoisie, and is most effectively overcome by the organisation of black and white workers in a common struggle against their class enemies.

However, at least in the case of moral ideologies, the major role of the action of 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (ISAs) cannot be denied. Moral ideology cannot be presented - as economic ideology can, should be, and has been - as an objective appearance, contrasted with the essence of the reality of which it is an appearance, but deriving from that reality within the object.⁴ Moral ideology is produced in the first place in the minds of individuals. There is also an appearance of reality corresponding to a moral outlook, but it is 'subjective', it is produced by the moralistic psychic structure. 'There are no moral/phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of the phenomena' - Nietzsche.⁵ The evil in the world appears (from the moral point of view) as the product of individual wickedness; motives (such as greed, lust, pride, vanity) appear at once as self-explanatory givens and as 'attitudes' taken up which could equally well have been rejected, etc. But these interpretations are dependent on the presence of moral ideology which is in the first place not an interpretation of reality, but an ego-ideal and a set of imperatives, operating at the level of unconscious mental processes and reflected in conscious ones.

I shall therefore use the terminology of ISAs (despite some doubt about the usefulness of referring to them as state apparatuses), but I shall make certain criticisms of Althusser's views. I take as a starting point a passage in the article 'On Social Classes' by Nicos Poulantzas⁶ in which he refers to Althusser's essay on ISAs.

In talking of state apparatuses, we must recognize that these apparatuses neither create ideology nor are they even the sole or primary factors in reproducing relations of ideological domination/subordination. Ideological apparatuses only serve to fashion and inculcate the dominant ideology. Thus, Max Weber was wrong in claiming that the Church creates and perpetuates religion: rather it is religion which creates and perpetuates the Church. [p52]

Now this is absolutely correct, but if it is true of all ISAs, ideological forms which cannot be accounted for as objective appearances seem inexplicable. The clue to a solution however can be derived from a point made by Poulantzas later in the same paragraph:

... the reproduction of positions in the relations of ideologico-political domination does indeed invoke the apparatuses, but it also invokes apparatuses other than the state ideological apparatuses - most importantly the economic apparatus itself. As a unit of production in its capitalist form, an enterprise is also an apparatus, in the sense that, by means of the social division of labour within it (the despotic organization of labour), the enterprise itself reproduces political and ideological relations concerning the places of the social classes.

Structural Domination

This points out the striking absence from Althusser's list of ISAs - the workplace itself. The relative autonomy of ideology, which should certainly be stressed when it is the effect of ideology which is in question, has been illegitimately extended to the production of ideology. How does the workplace produce ideology? Its role in the production of specifically economic ideology, which is in part its own objective appearance, has been discussed elsewhere. I am concerned here with the point that Poulantzas makes - its production of the ideological aspect of class relations by the *despotic organization of labour*. This gives the clue to the error in Althusser's account. He sees the ISAs as producing ideology by communicating a certain ideological content, rather than by effecting specific character-structural modifications. The ISAs as described by Althusser are not the producers of ideology, but that description is not adequate. Let me illustrate this with reference to the ISA which Althusser (incorrectly, as I believe) regards as the foremost one at the present time - the educational ISA. Much has been made recently of 'subtle' forms of indoctrination in schools - many of them so subtle that one cannot believe them to be seriously effective. What is effective is the authoritarian structure of the educational system. It is not the fact that a schoolmaster says 'the English legal system, like the pre-revolutionary French one, has never had a class bias', but that he says 'Say "Sir" when you speak to me!'. Short of direct reactionary political interference, the content communicated in the educational apparatus will I believe tend to become more objective, within the present system (of bourgeois democracy), though there is no doubt a limit to this tendency. The primary locus of ideological struggle within the educational system should not be the content communicated but the relations of domination/subordination, the authoritarian structure, with its divisive ramifications (prefect system, streaming, certain forms of assessment, segregation of the sexes etc.)⁷

This clearly has important practical consequences, not only for the immediate ideological struggle, but for the manner in which the ideological apparatuses of the state are to be smashed and replaced in the workers' state. The view which emphasises the communication of ideological content will tend towards proposals for ideological dictatorship, i.e. the use of the repressive apparatus of the state to prevent the dissemination of bourgeois ideas and promote that of marxist ones. I do not deny that there is a place for this in the early stages of revolution. Bourgeois society largely excludes subversive social sciences from its university syllabus (i.e. Marxist political economy from economics courses, psychoanalytical theory from psychology courses etc), and a revolution must make room for these sciences at the expense of their ideological substitutes. But such measures in themselves would leave the ISA intact as a producer of bourgeois ideology by its production of the requisite character-structure by means of its despotic organization. A too intensive and prolonged ideological dictatorship would actually prevent these transformations of the educational ISA which would, by dismantling its authoritarian structure, make it a suitable instrument of enlightenment and socialisation in a society not based on class exploitation.

The relative success of the churches in surviving into the modern age in state-capitalist countries as compared to capitalist western Europe, despite the use of the repressive state apparatus against them, can perhaps be explained by the greater authoritarianism of state-capitalist societies - of which such use of the repressive state apparatus is an aspect - producing the character-structural determinants of religious ideology. Another example might be Solzhenitsyn's novels. Whatever one's view of their

merit as art and as social comment (*The First Circle* seems to me among the world's greatest novels), there is a pervasive moralistic ideology in them, which in the case of *Cancer Ward* seriously detracts from its artistic value: a glorification of man's capacity to tolerate misery, at the expense of his capacity to strive for happiness; a tracing of all evils to the personal wickedness of the men in power; an historical humanism; all of which lead to the conclusion; let each individual live up to the highest standards of (state-capitalist) society; if only the leading bureaucrats did so all would be well. This ideal of virtue unaffected by the vicissitudes of real life is epitomised in Kostoglotov's ethereal love for the woman doctor who is emasculating him 'for his own good'. It was certainly not the intention of the Stalinists or their successors to produce this ideology, which on the contrary they suppress; yet it is just as certain that it is precisely the savage repressiveness of that regime which produces this ideology. The diagnosis of this unmarxist moral ideology in Solzhenitsyn, so far from justifying his persecution, is a further sharp indictment of the repressive character of the state-capitalist regime.

If it is the domination-aspect rather than the communication-aspect of the ISAs which produces ideology, several conclusions follow:

- (a) ISAs which have no domination-aspect can be relegated to a secondary role. These are precisely those ISAs which are most purely ideological in function (media, churches etc). They cannot be counted among the producers of ideology.
- (b) The workplace itself, as noted above, becomes one of the primary ISAs.
- (c) The effectiveness of domination in producing ideology (rather than e.g. simply resentment) needs to be explained. This requires reference to psychoanalytical concepts. It will become clear from this that the family is the dominant ISA.

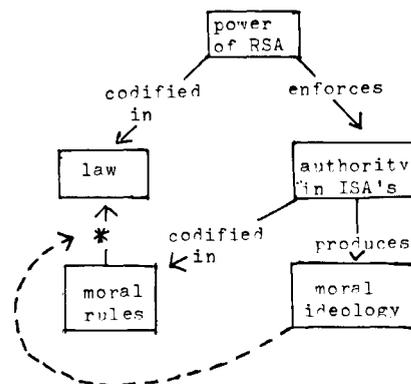
Regularisation of Moral Ideology

It is perhaps useful here to look at the relation of law to morality under the aspect of ideology. Law is naturally located on the juridico-political level of the superstructure, but in many ways it is an ideological aspect of that level (though like any ideological form it has its own political and economic effectivity). Its ideological aspect is in that it is normative, i.e. it says how certain things are to be done, sets up institutions to secure adherence to these norms, etc. It does not however determine how things are done - that is ultimately determined by laws of a different kind, i.e. the structural laws governing the social formation in question. Rather it regularizes the way in which things are to be done, just as marriage does not cause but regularizes sexual cohabitation (even in a society, if there were such, in which this never occurred outside marriage). The repressive function of the political power of one class over another is regularized in law. The specific function of this regularization is an ideological one - the legitimization of that power, and hence its functioning without bringing the repressive state apparatus into action. Law may thus be characterized as the ideological expression of the 'Repressive State Apparatus' (RSA).

Morality has a very similar structure to law, but no direct connection with the RSA. Its similarity lies first in its normative, universalistic, prescriptive, restrictive nature, and its concern with responsibility, guilt etc. Often it appears as the ideal reflection of law; law makes external demands, morality (of certain kinds) requires inner acceptance of those demands; the law aspires to be moral and assumes morality as its supplementary norm. Hence though it is not illegal to be immoral, it is illegal to conspire to corrupt public morals, etc.

Morality is not enforced or moral ideology

produced by the RSA; it is the ISAs which have this function. They impose morality as a quasi-law (the 'rules' of the family, the school, the workplace etc). However moral ideology does not consist in these rules, which rather express, concretize and codify its practice, as certain social practices are expressed, concretized and codified by law proper. It is certainly not produced primarily by these rules, but by the authoritarian structure of the institutions in question, which bears the same relation to these rules that the repressive nature of the state does to law proper. However insofar as ISAs are ideological apparatuses, not part of the RSA, this relation differs. Laws are enforced by the RSA, moral rules are not for the most part enforced by the ISAs, they are legislated by them, but enforced by the 'inner' sanctions of moral ideology. Insofar as this is also true of law, it is only because of a moral imperative to obey the law. Hence, insofar as the function of law is ideological, it is dependent on moral ideology for its effect. However moral ideology as produced by the authoritarian character of the ISAs, is in the last analysis dependent upon the underwriting of this authority by the RSA. This structure may be represented thus:



* Moral rules secure observance of law without recourse to repressive force of 'inner' sanction of moral ideology.

The Family

At first glance, the separation of moral ideology and moral rules here may be confusing. This is due to the constraints of working with a three-level base-superstructure model, which I shall forthwith abandon in favour of Plekhanov's five-level model. At the same time I shall shift discussion from ISAs generally to that which (for reasons derived from psychoanalytical theory) I believe to be primary - the family.

The levels distinguished by Plekhanov are:

- 1 The state of the productive forces;
- 2 The economic relations these forces condition;
- 3 The socio-political system that has developed on the given economic 'base';
- 4 The mentality of men living in society; a mentality which is determined in part directly by the economic conditions obtaining, and in part by the entire socio-political system that has arisen on that foundation;
- 5 The various ideologies that reflect the properties of that mentality.⁸

The relevant advantage of this model is the distinction made between levels 4 and 5, often simply lumped together as 'ideology', which is then either explained (in a mechanistic fashion) directly in terms of the economic base, or is seen as mediated by consciousness, which leads to idealism. In situating the object of psychoanaly-

sis within this historical-materialist model, I shall be using certain concepts derived from Wilhelm Reich ('character-structure', Reich's analysis of the relation between psychoneurosis and actual neurosis, etc). Reich was after all one of the first to attempt to bring these two dialectical-materialist sciences together, and to do so in a consistently materialist fashion.

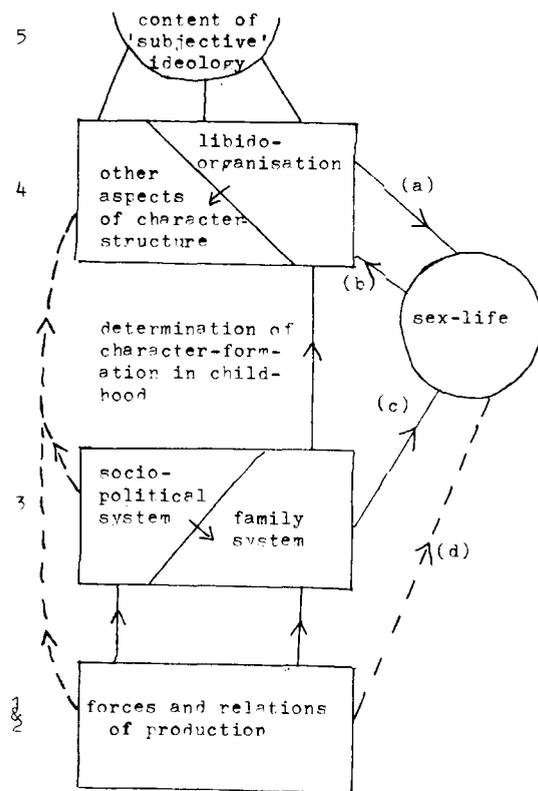
In order to put psychoanalytical theory to work in producing a general theory of ideology, it is necessary to work with a concept of the psyche as a whole, not merely with specific symptoms. The concept of character-structure as used by Reich is such a concept, and also emphasises the materiality of this structure - its physiological anchoring, its production by the interaction of needs of physiological origin with the social and physical environment in which alone these needs can be satisfied, but which also presents obstacles to their satisfaction, and determines their vicissitudes.

The point about actual neurosis and psychoneurosis is briefly this: actual neuroses are those caused by current disturbances in the sexual life, psychoneuroses those caused by defensive formations built up in infancy. Reich argued that every neurosis derives its energy from an actual-neurotic element (this is the economic principle of the libido governing the occurrence of neurosis), while its form is laid down by a psychoneurotic element. The relevance of this will appear shortly.

Insofar as 'character' is conceived of here as a set of restraints, produced by past frustrations, on present possibilities of satisfaction - and is this not also how this concept was used by the moralists who talked about 'character building'? - the dissolution of character is a rational desideratum.⁹

I identify character-structure with Plekhanov's level 4. I take it that the organisation of the libido is the dominant element in this structure. The chief determinant of libido-organisation in level 3 is the family-system; the family is not (in advanced societies) the dominant element in level 3. But it determines the dominant element in character-structure in two ways: (a) through its determination of the vicissitudes of the libido in childhood, during the formation of the character-structure; (b) through its determination of the objective sexual possibilities open to the individual in adult life. Character-structure and sexual life are mutually determinant, insofar as character-structure determines the subjective sexual possibilities of the individual, and sexual frustration reinforces the infantile defensive formations in the character-structure, while

sexual fulfilment liberates the individual from these restraints on his subjective possibilities, sexual and otherwise. This set of inter-structural relations can be represented thus:



- (a) determination of subjective sexual possibilities
- (b) economic principle of libido
- (c) determination of objective sexual possibilities
- (d) some direct effect (physical exhaustion from work, overcrowded housing, etc.)

The manner in which the family-system is dominated by the other aspects of the socio-political system is quite different from the way in which the libido-organisation dominates the character-structure. In the former it is an external domination-relation; the other aspects (law, state apparatuses etc) simply take priority in advanced class societies, as being more directly functionally related to the economic base, and as being the locus of greater power. Character-structure however is dominated internally by libido-organisation; it is a case of the latter being the pattern of all aspects of life; the same structures formed by the vicissitudes of the libido for its organisation, direction and restraint determine the way in which the individual relates to the world in ways not specifically sexual as well (cf. Nietzsche: 'The degree and kind of a man's sexuality reaches up into the topmost summit of his spirit'.¹⁰)

Now if we look at the determination of ideology, we see that it will be determined by a structure in which the libido-organisation is dominant. Hence we can expect that the whole moral ideology of an individual will be most clearly represented by the aspects of it relating to sexuality, as these directly express the dominant element in the structure which determines his whole moral ideology. Thus when critics of moral ideology (e.g. Reich) concentrate their attack on sexual morality, while claiming that it is morality as such which they

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are attacking, they are not merely 'speaking with the vulgar' and using the word 'moral' to mean 'sexually moral'; their practice is justified by sound theoretical considerations.

2. The Social Function of Moral Ideology

Historical Materialism must treat morality as an ideology with a function in any society based on class exploitation. Any exploiting class will benefit from the prevalence of an ideology which will reconcile the exploited to the deprivation of possible satisfactions which they will suffer as a result of their exploitation. Hence the required ideology must be antagonistic to natural values (happiness, the satisfaction of wants) and lead its adherents to be prepared to sacrifice them. Its function is thus negative, but it must make this negative aspect appear as in some way a positive value. Its imperatives must stand independently of and in opposition to naturalistic ones. Finally it must persuade its adherents to change themselves - abandon wants they have in favour of ones which can be fulfilled in the context of the class society in which they are exploited.

A moral ideology must therefore (a) be independent of and antagonistic to naturalistic values; (b) be conducive to the attempt to change oneself rather than to change the world; (c) find a source of appeal other than that based on conduciveness to satisfaction. If we examine the way that any moral theory seeks to seduce its victims we can easily see that it is by flattering their vanity.

Anti-Naturalism, Self-Change and Self-Flattery

Let me say a little more about each of these characteristics of moral ideologies. (a) There is a whole class of moral theories which place value in moral action itself, not in any end of moral action. This tradition, deriving from Stoicism and the more irrationalistic forms of Christianity, found its clearest expression in Kant and Fichte, but also has left its mark on most modern moral philosophy, e.g. existentialism, prescriptivism. This is the clearest form of moralism in its aspect of independence of and antagonism to naturalistic practical reasoning. An unbridgeable gap is placed between natural values and moral imperatives, and the latter are supposed to take absolute priority. Other modern theories, such as utilitarianism, share the form of these theories; they derive their moral imperatives from natural values, but create a gap between those values and those imperatives by introducing the principle of universality, viz. that it is the (naturalistic) good of all which is to be pursued by each individual; this moral imperative taking absolute priority over the naturalistic good of each individual to whom it is addressed. These theories I have suggested elsewhere¹¹ are contradictory insofar as the rational content - the naturalistic aim - cannot be realised by the sort of practice dictated by their moral form - the responsibility of each individual to pursue disinterestedly the good of all, but only by collective practice in the self-interest of all. Imagine a community of strict utilitarians - Godwinians for example - allowing their mothers to burn to death while they rescued great scientists from the flames.¹² The aim of all their actions would be universal happiness, but can anyone believe that they would get even averagely near achieving that aim. (NB this is not the 'hedonistic paradox'. It is the altruism, not the hedonism of the utilitarians which is self-defeating).

Finally there are moral theories which are axio-

logical in nature, but put forward values which are not of a naturalistic kind, i.e. are not based on a scientific theory of human needs, wants, motivation etc. The realisation of these 'higher' values (why do we assess values in terms of distance from the ground? This is also something that psychoanalysis can answer - 'displacement upwards') is given priority over that of natural values, hence the characteristic of moralism that a subclass of putative reasons for acting (moral ones) are given precedence over others is preserved.

Now it is by no means the case that the removal of moral motives would leave man motiveless; it would leave him to rationally pursue his naturalistic ends. Practical reason of a non-moral kind involves understanding one's own needs, developing them in such a way that their most satisfying form of satisfaction is possible, gaining knowledge of and therefore power over the world, selecting the best means for the satisfaction of needs, etc. Practical reason in this sense is not universalistic in nature, i.e. it does not necessarily take 'the good of all' as its end; but it by no means follows that it is 'egoistic', in that (i) motives that are other-regarding (though not disinterested) will enter into it - i.e. love, friendship, etc. (ii) It will often be in the collective mode, i.e. the question will be not 'what shall I do' but 'what shall we do', collective naturalistic self-interest being the ground for choice. The prescriptive mode here is conditional on and hence in no way independent of or antagonistic to natural values (which by no means precludes conflict of values, and hard decisions). The introduction of an 'autonomous' form of practical reasoning, antagonistic to natural values is not inevitable, but serves the function of making people decide against themselves, and hence for their exploiters.

(b) An exploited class can react to the frustration of its needs by seeking to change society so that they need no longer be frustrated, which will involve revolting against its exploiters, if possible overthrowing them. The exploiting class has an interest in the adoption of the alternative reaction to frustration on the part of the exploited, i.e. the effort to change themselves, to adapt their needs to the possibilities open within the exploitative system. Every moral ideology enjoins self-change as opposed to the effort to change the world. It calls on its victims to take sides with the world as it is, against their own needs, and hence, in a society in which exploitation is the main source of frustration, to take sides with their exploiters against themselves.

These two practices can be seen in history, progress consisting largely in the transition in one area after another from self-change to world-change as the primary means of resolving problems. Progress is the replacement of fear of God by lightning-conductors, of prudence by social insurance, of courage by safety, of chastity by contraception, of charity by social services, of hard work by technology. The progress of science and the widening of the strata of the population with a share in power over their destinies, involves the progressive redundancy of the virtues, of all that involves self-control, resignation, self-denial, responsibility, etc.

(c) Thirdly there is the question: wherein lies the attraction of these antinaturalistic moralities, requiring as they do a degree of self-change which can only be described as violence towards oneself? Their appeal I have suggested is in their flattery of human vanity, and anyone can verify this claim easily by reference to any moral argument, whether at a popular or a philosophical level. A person's vanity is flattered when his differentia from other beings are praised. In most cases in the moral sphere, it is the differentia of humans from other species which are made

the basis of this flattery; men are praised for being unlike animals, and urged to cultivate those characteristics which differentiate them from animals, and despise those which they share with them. There are even arguments about what really distinguishes man from the beasts, the point of which appears to be: whatever it is, that we should cultivate. Thus philosophers such as Aristotle have claimed that man is essentially the rational animal, and hence most human when doing philosophy (note how professional as well as human vanity is operative here); some Marxists have given a moral twist to Marx's conception of the importance of social labour in differentiating men from beasts, and regarded man as most human when building power stations; and it has been alleged in hippy literature that man is the only species of which the female can achieve orgasm - with obvious implications. (There are also various theories, of less philosophical interest, which take arbitrary subgroups of the human species - Aryans, males, females - as the group whose differentia are to be cultivated; and certain versions of existentialism - e.g. Kierkegaard's - appear to aim at accentuating individual particularities.

One may perhaps use Rousseau's dichotomy of self-love and vanity (*amour de soi* and *amour propre*) to characterise this dichotomy between forms of practical reason which aim at the satisfaction of desires (self-love) and those which serve to increase self-esteem (vanity). There have been various relative evaluations of these motives. For Rousseau, self-love is preferable as not leading to conflict except through scarcity, whereas vanity creates infinite wants, and is in a sense intrinsically scarce (i.e. my vanity is gratified by injuring yours). A similar view has been held by the Taoists, and also the hippies. Self-love is 'doing your own thing', vanity is 'ego-tripping'. On the other hand, for classical bourgeois morality in its Christian and idealist forms, self-love is 'selfishness' and is deplored, while there is a veritable cult of self-esteem, 'not losing ones self' etc, i.e. of vanity. Of course, insofar as the former condemn 'ego-tripping' morally they are merely inconsistent and in no better case than the latter. The attempt to eliminate vanity from human motivation could only be motivated by vanity. The point against vanity with which I am concerned here relates to its ideological - one might say its cognitive - effect. Self-love requires knowledge of oneself and the world as a necessary means to satisfaction. Vanity on the other, leads to egocentric errors (arguing from one's own experience and intuitions, overvaluing one's own - supposed - qualities even when they are intrinsically undesirable, etc). Hence it should be eliminated from the determinants of theory, even though it may be indulged in practice.

It should be noted that one of the characteristics of the moralities of vanity is that they take as a value not the ends supposedly secured by morality, but the practice of morality itself, for it is this which, for one reason or another, is invested with esteem. Hence morality conditions axiology rather than vice versa. This has implications for the aspect of these moralities as altruistic. If it is better to suffer evil than to inflict it, it is better also to give others the privilege of suffering evil rather than inflicting it. Hence the welfare of others comes to include their 'moral welfare', and in general, the restraint of their self-love and the gratification of their vanity. According to this view, one moral obligation is to treat people as persons i.e. as responsible moral subjects whose self-conception is generally correct, etc. This involves, as the idealist forbears of personalist ethics saw, punishment rather than treatment of offenders, etc. No one with even a nodding ac-

quaintance with Marx and Freud can believe that people really are 'persons'. Even if the term 'person' does not have the specifically moral connotations that it does for our Kantians, it is certainly a concept intended to differentiate humans from other beings, and pander to the vanity arising from the differentiation. Apart from this the concept is pointless for 'ethics'. The prevalent contemporary moral ideology seems to centre on the idea that it is moral to treat people as persons, immoral to treat them as not-persons. Yet one literally never treats people simply as persons - it is always more specific than that; rather one treats one person as a friend to have a beer and a chat with, another as a lover to go to bed with, a third as a comrade to sell revolutionary papers with, and yet another as a bore to be avoided (these are of course not all mutually exclusive). There is no way of treating someone simply as a person. But neither is there a way of treating someone as not a person - except in the narrow legal/moral sense of 'person', in which it is correct to treat people as not persons. (A psychopath perhaps might stub a cigar out in someone's face, not for kicks like Maggie's Pa in Bob Dylan's song, but simply because he wanted to put out his cigar, and the face was conveniently ready to hand; this perhaps would count as treating someone as not a person; Maggie's Pa's behaviour on the other hand could not be so described; his kicks presumably depend on it being a person that he is treating in this way.¹³)

In politics likewise one should not treat people as 'persons', but as workers or bourgeois, comrades or class enemies, etc. The normal political implication of personalist ethics is 'classless' liberalism, though it can also issue in a sort of metaphysical revolt seeking political outlets, which, because it seeks real solutions to imaginary problems, tends towards fascism.

A further feature of this appeal of morality to vanity is the conception of freedom as freedom from needs by means of the negation of needs, rather than by satisfaction of them. Subordination to necessity is taken as an affront to human vanity, and hence an attempt is made to portray man as capable of achieving freedom from his needs, not by satisfying them and creating a 'realm of freedom' beyond the 'realm of necessity', but by escaping from the latter. In the name of this freedom the urge to satisfaction is denied. Because needs require external objects for their satisfaction, this concept of freedom is characterised as independence of the external world, as opposed to power over the world, which would coincide with freedom in the materialist sense. Perhaps it is this point that makes clearest both the role of moralism in the service of exploitation, and the interconnection of the three features of moralism - its antinaturalism, cult of self-change, and self-flattery. Of course no one can in reality be independent of the material world or of his fellows, and the belief that one can is at once an illusion of the privileged (who are actually freed from need in the genuine, materialist way, by their satisfaction) and an ideology commending itself to the self-esteem of the underprivileged, serving both to justify their deprivation and promote their atomisation. It can easily be seen that this cult of independence has a strong appeal to vanity, urges self-change rather than world-change, and manifests the hostility to natural needs characteristic of all moralism.

Finally it may be noted that the mystification of the deprived by the vanity of morality is for the most part spontaneous. When one is deprived of the means to satisfy one's needs, one wants their satisfaction, but in the absence of their satisfaction one wants to retain one's self-respect vis-a-vis the privileged. There is therefore a spontaneous tendency to - quite literally - make a virtue out of a necessity. But one then clings to one's virtues - i.e. one's necessities,

one's dissatisfaction - for reasons of 'vanity'. (Cf. Nietzsche's account of the genesis of slave-morality.¹⁴)

It is especially important for leftist political groups to recognise the existence of these self-producing ideologies of the oppressed, and to combat them. Any oppressed class will tend, for motives of 'self-esteem' to make virtues out of its own characteristics as an oppressed and therefore deprived class, and to cling to and propagate these 'virtues'; yet this is just what is most conducive to the continuation of their oppression and deprivation.

Moral Ideologies Under Capitalism

It may be worthwhile at this point to say something about the moral ideologies specific to the capitalist mode of production. The optimum moral ideology in any mode of production will be that which produces in each class acceptance of the obligation to fulfil its function in that mode of production. Simultaneously, it must appear that no class is 'losing out' in the process. Thus in 'feudal ethics' each class is assigned different duties and/or privileges, and this is justified in terms of the proper function of the respective classes in the state. In capitalism, however, class oppression, no longer hallowed by the 'divine order of things' has to be denied in ideology - so far as possible the fact of the existence of classes has to be repressed. This manifests itself as a generalised petty bourgeois appearance - the dominant ideology treats everyone as a petty bourgeois, and corresponds most nearly with the realities of petty bourgeois existence. Everyone appears as the autonomous possessor (and possible vendor) of his property and his 'properties'. Everyone has something to sell - the capitalist sells his product, the worker sells his labour-power. Both receive the same benefit in exchange - money. The qualitative differences between labour-power and other commodities, between the need for food and shelter and the need for surplus value, between dominance and subordination in the factory, is suppressed, in the image of a universal petty bourgeois market place where reign 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'.¹⁵ The illusoriness of this generalised petty bourgeois appearance is familiar to readers of *Capital*; but it has its effects at the level of moral ideology, as has often been noted. The individual is divided into a 'person' (autonomous and inviolable) and his properties or works (saleable at will).¹⁶ This is of interest primarily because it reinforces what I have already argued to be the formal characteristics of any morality - universal individual responsibility; and because it contributes to the obliteration of the structured hierarchy of needs in favour of a mass of interchangeable wants.

Now let us leave the apparently ubiquitous (or ubiquitously apparent) petty bourgeois, and look at the functions of the members of the two main classes in the capitalist mode of production - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Both bourgeois and proletarian appear in two roles - in production and in consumption. Inherent in the capitalist mode of production is the pressure to hold down the wage of the worker and increase the intensity and duration of his work. This means that a morality of self-sacrifice is requisite. But the bourgeois, as capitalist, has the function of accumulating capital, he is the instrument of capital's self-expansion. Hence the requirements of the system are against his self-indulgence by taking too much revenue out of the surplus value produced, and thus reducing the fund for the self-expansion of capital. Thus the requirement of self-sacrifice is laid on the capitalist as well, and if the sanction of necessity does not force this on him with the same rigour as it does on the worker, it is all the more important that the

ideological sanctions should not fail (and indeed the workers have never been such devotees of the puritan secular asceticism of work as the bourgeois once were).¹⁷

Hence it can be seen that the negativity of morality is quite universal in the capitalist mode of production. However there is another tendency combatting it; both worker and bourgeois are consumers, as well as fulfilling roles in the process of production.¹⁸

The ethic of consumption (the requirement to pursue maximum quantity of an unlimited and undifferentiated series of goods) is likewise general. Thus whereas in previous modes of production the class contradictions specific to those modes of production were reflected in the addressing of different moral imperatives to members of different classes, within a single moral code, the class contradictions of the capitalist mode of production are not reflected in the morality of that system. However the contradictions of capitalism are reflected in morality as a contradiction within morality - i.e. contradictory imperatives are addressed to everyone, rather than different imperatives being addressed to different classes - and this coincides with the repression of the fact of the existence of classes in bourgeois ideology.

However, the 'consumer' aspect of capitalist 'ethics', though it is the 'civilising' aspect, still suffers from a repression of class difference, which here leads to the assumption of the inter-exchangeability of wants, and the elimination of the concept of needs, as already noted.

Hence the two broad types of moral theory noted above - those which exclude naturalistic values altogether, and those which interpret them on a monetary model (utilitarianism). The non-quantitative conception of happiness which dominated pre-capitalist moral theories has disappeared.

3. The Psychic Economy of Moral Ideology

Three characteristics have been noted which all moral ideologies must have if they are to fulfil their cohesive function in societies based on class exploitation: they must be antagonistic to naturalistic values rather than serving them; they must enjoin self-change rather than change of the world; and they must appeal to the vanity of the oppressed as against their material satisfaction. These three differences between moralistic and naturalistic practical reason can immediately be aligned with three pairs of psycho-analytic concepts; the superego and the ego; auto-plasticity and alloplasticity; narcissism and object-libido.

Practical reason in the service of human needs and wants is a function of the ego; moral requirements, as antagonistic to these needs and wants are derived from the superego. Hence the conflict between the naturalistic and moralistic forms of practical reason takes place in the individual psyche as a conflict between ego and superego. The ego has the task of mediating between the instinctual demands of the id, and reality. It seeks the most advantageous means of satisfaction for these demands and acts on the world accordingly. The superego is originally the internalisation of paternal authority, but this forms the core of a complex structure in which later authorities, directly mediating societal norms, are also incorporated.¹⁹

Thus in his paper 'On Narcissism: an Introduction',²⁰ in which Freud used the concept 'ego-ideal' for what he later called the superego, he says:

For that which prompted the person to form an ego-ideal, over which his conscience keeps guard, was the influence of parental criticism

(conveyed to him by medium of the voice), reinforced, as time went on, by those who trained and taught the child and by all the other persons of his environment - an indefinite host, too numerous to reckon (fellow-men, public opinion).

... The institution of conscience was at bottom an embodiment, first of parental criticism, and subsequently of that of society. [p53]

Now Freud tells us that the gratification obtained in serving this ego-ideal is essentially narcissistic. This is made quite clear in the following passage from the same paper, which it is worth quoting at length, as indicating the place of morality in the psychic economy:

Repression, as we have said, proceeds from the ego; we might say with greater precision: from the self-respect of the ego. The very impressions, experiences, impulses and desires that one man indulges or at least consciously elaborates in his mind will be rejected with the utmost indignation by another, or stifled at once even before they enter consciousness. The difference between the two, however - and here we have the conditioning factor in repression - can easily be expressed in terms of the libido-theory. We may say that the one man has set up an ideal in himself by which he measures his actual ego, while the other is without this formation of an ideal. From the point of view of the ego this formation of an ideal would be the condition of repression.

To this ideal ego is now directed the self-love which the real ego enjoyed in childhood. The narcissism seems to be now displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, deems itself the possessor of all perfections. [pp50-51]

This makes clear the psychological mechanism by which the demands of the superego for instinctual renunciation in the interests of a socially required anti-natural morality, present themselves as gratifications of narcissism, and hence acquire a grip on the individual. Moreover the greater the frustrations of the object-libido (i.e. in the central case - of sexual desire for another person) imposed by this morality, the greater the supply of libido narcissistically withdrawn from the world, available for investment in the ego-ideal. Such narcissistic gratification must be viewed as a neurotic or psychotic alternative to gratification in the real world; it is an alternative use of energy, a withdrawal of cathexis from other people to one's ego-ideal.

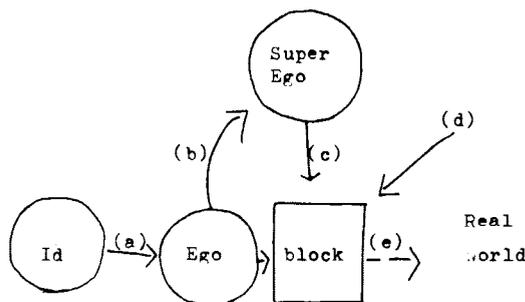
In his paper on 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis',²¹ Freud characterises neurosis, psychosis and psychic health in the following way:

... in neurosis a part of reality is avoided by a sort of flight, but in psychosis it is remodelled. [i.e. not remodelled by practice, but 'in the mind'] ... neurosis does not deny the existence of reality, it merely tries to ignore it; psychosis denies it and tries to substitute something else for it. A reaction which combines features of both of these is the one we call normal or 'healthy'; it denies reality as little as neurosis, but then, like a psychosis, is concerned with effecting a change in it. This expedient normal attitude leads naturally to some active achievement in the outer world and is not content, like a psychosis, with establishing the alteration within itself; it is no longer auto-plastic but allo-plastic. [pp279-80]

Thus, in self-change as an alternative to changing the world, carried out from narcissistic motives in response to the demands of the superego, we see the three characteristics of moral ideology united into a system in the neurotic

psychic economy. Psychosis is a further stage in the misconception of reality developed on this basis.²²

The psychic economy of moral ideology may be represented thus:



- (a) libidinal demands
- (b) narcissistic gratification by identification with ego-ideal
- (c) moral restraints
- (d) aspects of the real world antagonistic to satisfaction
- (e) gratification of object - libido

Certain of my assertions in the earlier parts of this paper can now be justified. As internalised parental authority is the core of the superego, the patriarchal family must be the basis of all moral ideology. Later authorities have psychic force only because the superego is already formed in the family situation, and feelings which originated in relation to the father transferred onto them. Libido is diverted from sexual objects to provide the energy for this essentially narcissistic cathexis. Hence the ISAs are necessarily authoritarian and anti-sexual; therein lies their effectivity.²³

As long as the superego is strong, frustrations imposed by the present structure of social reality will reinforce moral ideology; weaken the superego, and they will be seen as intolerable restraints, to be resisted and if possible abolished by the overthrow of that structure. Recent ideological history has tended to verify this view: as sexual freedom has made advances (albeit limited ones) in western society, there has been less tolerance of the irrational authority of bosses and bureaucrats by young people. Reich's claim that the less sexually repressed an individual was the more likely he would be to fight class exploitation and political oppression, has been confirmed, and the concept of 'repressive de-sublimation' exposed as a mystification.

Of course Freud himself was far from being a political revolutionary and did not draw these conclusions. Yet he was a true scientist, and as such was 'of the devil's party without knowing it'. He was not unaware of the historical dimension of moral ideology, or of its neurotic form. This can be seen from papers such as that on "'Civilised" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness',²⁴ or from the following passage:

In our research into, and therapy of, a neurosis, we are led to make two reproaches against the super-ego of the individual. In the severity of its commands and prohibitions in troubles itself too little about the happiness of the ego, in that it takes insufficient account of the resistances against obeying them - of the instinctual strength of the id (in the first place), and of the difficulties presented by the real external environment (in the second). Consequently we are very often obliged, for therapeutic purposes, to oppose the super-ego, and we endeavour to lower its demands.

Civilisation ... merely admonishes us that the harder it is to obey the precept the more meritorious it is to do so. But anyone who follows such a precept in present day civilisation only puts himself at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the person who disregards it.²⁵

He even concludes that a change in the relation of human beings to possessions would be of more help than any ethical commands, though he combines this with a criticism of socialists (not, I fear, unjustified) for having 'a fresh idealistic misconception of human nature'.

The Fight Against Moral Ideology

The implications of the foregoing analysis for the immediate ideological struggle of the workers' movement are easily stated:

(1) Propaganda (the dissemination of ideas) must always be seen in a wider context of the unconscious determinants of ideology. For instance the appeal of fatuous slogans like 'firm and fair rule' or 'people matter' can only be understood in terms of the idealised father and infantile narcissism respectively.

The ideological practice of the left should be based on the materialist recognition that ideas are not produced by ideas but by material/social conditions; propaganda must be subordinated to other forms of ideological struggle, as a mere accessory. The organisation of collective action on the part of the workers, and also of other oppressed groups, to achieve their ends by struggle against their oppressors, already transforms the micro-social structures which perpetuate ideology, by overcoming atomisation, deference etc, as ways in which these situations are lived. This forms a basis for the transformation of ideas. All this applies to other forms of ideology as well as moral ideology, and is generally accepted by left-wing organisations, though there is a tendency among unorganised leftists to miss these points.

(2) In relation to specifically moral ideology, the main task is to eliminate it from the determinants of propaganda. There exists on the left a deplorable tendency to couch political propaganda in terms of conspiracy and betrayal, and to attack 'corrupt' individuals rather than capitalist institutions, thus playing the same diversionary game as Heath's talk of 'unacceptable faces of capitalism'. The nauseating hysteria of certain socialist journalists over the Lambton affair is a striking, if politically unimportant, example of this.

(3) Recognition of the role of the family, sexuality and character-structure in the production of ideology means that the vexed and dangerous question of 'life-styles' cannot be avoided. This issue is dangerous because, once raised, it is extremely difficult to avoid moralistic solutions. This results from the fact that it is only on the basis of socialist institutions that the determinants of character-structure can be changed, and to require people to change within present society would be no more than a moralistic impertinence.²⁶ It is best therefore in this connection to formulate some negative principles:

(i) There is no moral basis for socialism, no such thing as 'living as a socialist' within capitalist society, and no imperatives incumbent upon socialists as such other than that of working for socialism. How a socialist gets his money or his kicks is politically irrelevant.

(ii) The structure of a revolutionary organisation cannot be the same as that of an ISA (e.g. the army or the church as described by Freud). While it is true that the workers' party in no way prefigures in its organisational form the future society, it must not reproduce the ideology of bourgeois society either.²⁷

Beyond this all that can be said is that

socialists should take psychoanalysis more seriously, not only as a theory, but as a practice; and, in general, should take every opportunity to promote the weakening of the 'cultural superego'.

The final question which I wish to raise (without any hope of reaching a solution) is that of the fate of moral ideology in a socialist or communist society. The classical position of marxism on this subject is that morality as an autonomous form of practical reason would disappear with the abolition of class antagonisms.²⁸ This is perfectly correct, if what is meant is that moral ideology would be a dysfunctional historical anomaly if it existed in a socialist society which had abolished classes, the state and material scarcity.

Freud saw the superego as potentially functional as an ally of the ego against the id. This view however assumes a degree of antagonism between impulse and prudential reason, a degree of necessity for gratification-deferment, which would not exist in the type of society in question.²⁹ The collectivization of man's prudential and altruistic concerns would make it increasingly possible to live by impulse. Moreover there is nothing in Freudian metapsychology to support the conclusion that a rational content can be given to the demands of the superego; it is essentially negative in relation to the instinctual demands of the id.

However it is not a priori impossible that the psychological determinants of moral ideology would prove to be ineliminable. The question of their possible elimination must be posed at the level of the character-structural effects of material conditions (including social institutions).

Clearly a struggle against moral ideology at the level of ideas would be at best insufficient, at worst just another moral ideology. The only way to prevent the formation of a superego would be the transformation of the family-structure, to the extent that there was no one in that relationship to the child that the parent of the same sex occupies in present society.

Suppose the unit for the care of children were a commune, comprised of several adults of both sexes, whose sexual life was not monogamous, and who shared tasks in relation to their children. It need not be supposed that sexual relationships would be completely promiscuous, or that the children would have no closer relations with their parent(s) than with other adults. There would nevertheless be no one person who would be the source of authority and security for the child, and the rival for the affection of the parent of the opposite sex. The core of the superego - the prohibiting parent, internalised as a precipitate of oedipal conflicts - would be absent; given the absence too of the producers of the secondary aspects of the superego - authoritarian apparatuses - and of social obstacles to sexual freedom, one can envisage the withering away of the superego and the emergence of a generation of people who could resolve the conflicts between their desires and the world by an informed and co-operative practice without the intervention of moral motives. Whether or not this is possible, it is only in this direction that socialists can look for the elimination of a type of ideology which can be useful only to a society based on class-exploitation. What must be decisively rejected is any attempt to inculcate a 'higher socialist morality', whether this is old bourgeois morality writ large, as in state-capitalist countries, or some new ideal worked out in abstraction from real human needs.

Notes

1 Let me provisionally distinguish morality from the non-moral or 'naturalistic' practical

reason that could replace it in this way: Moral imperatives are addressed in a universalistic way (to anyone, by anyone, for anyone) to individual responsibility, with blame (possibly punishment) as a sanction for default; 'naturalistic' practical 'imperatives' are addressed in a particularist way (to a specific group, by that group, for that group - the individual as 'unit group' being the limiting case) to collective action for the satisfaction of needs, the sanction for default being that those needs remain unsatisfied.

- 2 In *Lenin and Philosophy*, New Left Books, 1971.
- 3 See his essays 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' and 'On the Materialist Dialectic', in *For Marx*, Penguin, 1969.
- 4 For two such accounts, see Normal Geras' 'Marx and the Critique of Political Economy' in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. Robin Blackburn, and John Mepham's 'Ideology in Capital', in *Radical Philosophy* 2.
- 5 *Beyond Good and Evil*, 'Epigrams and Interludes', 108.
- 6 In *New Left Review* 78.
- 7 See also Jacques Rancière's criticisms of Althusser in his essay: 'On the Theory of Ideology - the Politics of Louis Althusser' in *Radical Philosophy* 7.
- 8 *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, p80.
- 9 I make no reference to Reich's later speculations. His apostasy alike from scientific rigour and socialist politics has led to a regrettable neglect of his contribution to science by serious Marxists. This neglect has been reinforced by the peculiarly pharisaical form which his amorality often takes - at once upholding the perfection of unrestrained man, and bristling with self-righteousness at any deviation from this ideal. However it is as easy to peel off Reich's romanticist ideology from his scientific contribution as it is to peel off Freud's classicist ideology from his.
The views of Reich that I refer to in the text are best set out in the middle section of *Character Analysis. The Sexual Revolution and The Mass Psychology of Fascism* are useful applications of those ideas to the study of ideology.
- 10 *Beyond Good and Evil*, 'Epigrams and Interludes', 75.
- 11 In my article 'Truth and Practice', *Radical Philosophy* 5.
- 12 See Godwin's *Political Justice*, bk.2, ch.2, 'Of Justice'.
- 13 The song is 'Maggie's Farm' on his LP 'Bringing it all back home'.
- 14 In his *Genealogy of Morals*. It may be noted however that the master-morality too is motivated by vanity - i.e. self-differentiation from the slaves. It is not a naturalistic practice aimed simply at satisfaction.
- 15 *Capital*, vol.I, p176.
- 16 On this point, interesting work has been done by Herbert Marcuse ('A Study on Authority' in *Studies in Critical Philosophy*), C B Macpherson (in *Possessive Individualism*), and Istvan Meszaros (on 'universal saleability' in *Marx's Theory of Alienation*). One of the sources of the personalist ideology referred to earlier can be seen in this feature of bourgeois society. Unfortunately the market relations which form the basis of this ideology are criticised in part from the standpoint of this ideology itself, which is as self-defeating as Proudhon's attempt to criticise bourgeois property relations from the standpoint of the bourgeois justice to which they gave rise.
- 17 Thus in his 1844 manuscripts Marx says of bourgeois political economy:
... its true ideal is the ascetic but extortionate miser and the ascetic but productive slave...

Thus political economy - despite its worldly and wanton appearance - is a true moral science, the most moral of all sciences. Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its cardinal doctrine. The less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc, the more you save - the greater becomes your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour - your capital.' [p110, Moscow edition]

- 18 In the *Grundrisse* Marx says:
... although every capitalist demands that his workers should save, he means only his own workers, because they relate to him as workers; and by no means does this apply to the remainder of the workers, because these relate to him as consumers. In spite of all the pious talk about frugality he therefore searches for all possible ways of stimulating them to consume, by making his commodities more attractive, by filling their ears with babble about new needs. It is precisely this side of the relationship between capital and labour which is an essential civilising force, and on which the historic justification - but also the contemporary power - of capital is based.
[quoted by Martin Nicolaus in his essay 'The Unknown Marx in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. Robin Blackburn]
Perhaps socialists should stop carping moralistically about the evils of the advertising industry and recognise in it an unwitting ally - arousing the workers' awareness of the good things of life which the forces of production developed by capitalism can produce, but which the capitalist relations of production prevent the mass of workers from obtaining.
- 19 See *The Ego and the Id* for Freud's systematic elucidation of the formation and interaction of the 'institutions of the psyche', ego, superego and id.
- 20 In *Freud's Collected Papers*, vol.IV.
- 21 *Collected Papers*, vol.II.
- 22 Cf. Marx's 4th thesis on Feuerbach:
... the fact that the secular foundation lifts itself above itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is only to be explained by the self-cleavage and self-contradictories of this secular basis. The latter must itself, therefore, first be understood in its contradiction and then, by the removal of the contradiction, revolutionised in practice. Thus, for instance, once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be theoretically criticised and radically changed in practice.
- 23 See Freud's account of the army and the church in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.
Freud argues that the cohesion of these groups depends on their members identifying with their fellows at the level of the ego, projecting their ego-ideal onto the leader, whilst 'the love relation between men and women remains outside these organisations.' [p73]
- 24 *Collected Papers*, vol.II.
- 25 *Civilisation and its Discontents*, pp79-80.
- 26 Cf. Engels in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*:
Only very exceptionally, and in no case to his and other people's profit, can an individual satisfy his urge towards happiness by preoccupation with himself. Rather it requires preoccupation with the outside world, means to satisfy his needs, that is to say, means of subsistence, an individual of the opposite sex, books, conversation, argument, activities, objects for use and working up. Feuerbach's morality either presupposes that these means and objects of satisfaction are given to every

individual as a matter of course, or else it offers only inapplicable good advice and is therefore not worth a brass farthing to people who are without these means.

- 27 To avoid misunderstanding, let me say that (i) I don't see much danger of revolutionary organisations propagating the ideas of the official bourgeois apologists (with occasional exceptions like the scandalmongering about individual bourgeois figures already mentioned). Rather it is a question of possibly reproducing the unconscious determinants of ideology; (ii) it is not the official bourgeois ideology which these organisations are in danger of perpetuating, but the regressive ideologies of the oppressed (in the sense of Nietzsche's account of Christianity). Contemporary examples of such ideologies which have infected sections of the left might be 'ouvrierism' with its concomitant anti-theoretical cult of practice, and radical feminism.
- 28 See e.g. the references to morality in *The Communist Manifesto*, or in Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*.
- 29 Marcuse's concepts of surplus-repression and the performance-principle (as the forms which gratification-deferment and the reality-principle take under capitalism) are of value here. See his *Eros and Civilisation*.

The significance of Yves Klein's 'Ritual'

Grahame White

(for Cathy)

Yves Klein is probably best-known as the painter of huge monochrome canvases, such as the International Klein Blue series. However, like the majority of the Neo-Dadaists, he placed much emphasis on the event, the 'happening', as opposed to the finished article. It is such a 'happening' which is the subject of this essay. However, before embarking upon the main part of my argument, I wish to briefly consider the achievements of the Neo-Dada movement as a whole, attempting to demonstrate what an outstanding, innovating figure Klein was, in an otherwise tepid, repetitive movement.

Unfortunately, the majority of the Neo-Dadaists fell into the trap offered by historical repetition and attempted revival. As Marx wrote in the 'Eighteenth Brumaire':

Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

Not only was much that the Neo-Dadaists 'achieved' farce (this they would not have objected to in many cases), it was farce of the worst kind, being dull and unoriginal. The judgements made by Marx on the relative values of 'the Uncle' and 'the Nephew', have been reiterated by probably the most un-Hegelian mind of the century - Salvador Dali:

The first man to compare the cheeks of a young woman to a rose was obviously a poet; the first to repeat it was possibly an idiot.

[Preface to *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, Thames and Hudson, 1971, p13]

Whereas it is undeniably the case that Duchamp, Tzara and Picabia were original thinkers of a high standard, it is harder to make similar judgements in the case of the Neo-Dadaists. Among the exceptions of the later movement, Klein is a particularly interesting figure; and I think that the deepest philosophical implications of his whole oeuvre are to be found in the 'Ritual'.

What, then, is the 'Ritual'? Its full title: the Ritual for the Relinquishment of the Immaterial Pictorial Sensitivity Zones. Klein exchanged certificates of Zones of Immaterial Pictorial Sensitivity for gold leaf. These Zones were 'immaterial' therefore, they could not be seen or held. In a word, they were intangible. The gold leaf with which these zones were purchased was anything but immaterial - it had to be the genuine 22-carat article! These certificates were valid only when they and half the gold had been either destroyed or irretrievably lost. The 'Ritual' manifesto, which Klein wrote in justification of the 'happening', ends with the following words:

From this moment on [the certificate having been destroyed, and half of the gold lost] the immaterial pictorial sensitivity zone belongs to the buyer absolutely and intrinsically. The zones having been relinquished in this way are then not any more transferable by their owner.

[Yves Klein, 1928-1962, *Selected Writings*, Tate Gallery Publications, p83]

Several distinct concepts are questioned implicitly by the 'Ritual' and these will now be discussed.

So, according to Klein, money can buy a zone of immaterial pictorial sensitivity. This may at first seem absurd, but like all the best absurdities, there is method in the apparent madness. Despite the heavy attacks which it is undergoing at the moment, 'art' in our society is still an essentially elitist category of interest and participation. The concepts of 'art' and 'property' remain inextricably linked. Art still essentially refers to possessions. These 'possessions' need not necessarily be the country manors and parkland, the finery and wealth of the landed gentry. These are primarily material possessions. The possessions to which much modern, avant-garde art refers, are intellectual. Consider how much modern art is based upon making allusions. *Finnegan's Wake* and *The Waste Land* are the two literary examples *par excellence*. Composers as far removed from each other in their working methods as Stockhausen, Stravinsky and Hindemith capitalize upon the audience's familiarity with the music of Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. The visual arts present similar manifestations of this trend. Consider the allusions which a painter as un-theatrical as Soutine was making with his painting of a flayed ox (which assumes an uncanny human shape) which only becomes fully comprehensible when one knows of the Rembrandt 'Flayed Ox' in the Louvre. Duchamp's notorious LHOOG similarly makes sense only when the spectator knows of the reputation and cultural 'sanctity' which has become attached to Leonardo's 'Mona Lisa'.