

~ Golden Brown ~

“fabula rasa”, R.G. for gottrekorder e.v.
Vienna, 16.04. 2023

"We go home beaten. Our grandkids will slug it out better."¹

There ain't any more untouched nature to be found – no pure utopia; also no critical utopias!
In concrete terms: the self-including finding of a (new) world has now conquered the previously untouched and pure, and brought culture to us all. (Culture is always the manifest, the survivor of the utopian touch. World creation is and remains a handy map.)

Post-utopian rather than post-modern, this concrete post-modernism, which subjects itself to its achievements, must now assimilate the indigestible strangeness of its world-origin.

The world-horizon knows only already fondled relations of similarity and belonging, and superior and inferior as the culture of this vista. Every representation of nature is already a park where nothing grows again unless it is sown.

The *identity* of world is an absolute confabulation; is language become annexation. Space, time, cultural purification, much light and many dark words.

Those – those before, like those after, restore to us our rhetoric again – in their words. Reason? But the world knows many languages. (The names of related saviours have hardly yet risen from the atmospheric clangour when the Hominidae articulate their peculiar echo).

What concern (is to be shared here)? That of (*one, every*) beginning is for our times now, always unknown, but certain.

One can also say: Every boundary is already its transgression; the boundary cannot be determined without knowing beyond it. Or another way of describing the path, the last few centuries of Roman *virtus* towards the human globe, could be as follows: In the multiple self-revision of citation, the realistic, the documentary character of a world-drawing (map and view) is refuted. (The world is round but also circumnavigated.) The document becomes an argument; also a dogma. Those tattooed people who to this day strive to free themselves from this confirm it as best they can. That nothing could be shaken in the prevalent order has been refuted again and again since time immemorial; that powers of order rise and fall is thus necessary.

History confirms, fable instructs ... and enthralls?

Who needs no utopia, no aesthetic perspective? (Does the world shrink in its self-overhauling?).

But, one thinks, in a postmodern climate, separating political sentiment from aesthetic perspective renders the functions of social engagement indifferent. So? Well, in fact, aesthetics (and also the art of civilisation)² is rendered indifferent by the socio-political discourse.

Of civil Central Europe (civil societies as a basis for ethics) we can say that, historically, its bourgeoisie of show-down was blind by day to communal life and high by night on hope for international trade and exploitation. They believed in the ideological function of myth.³

Now they just wallow in sweaty, restless dreams,⁴ day and night, in the constant faith in the victory of socialisation, a masquerade culture of forced tattooings. For the realisation of world empires.⁵

Those stuck in the past are today's new heroes again. Under the futuristic, religious banner of a technological final solution for map and globe, their disciples parasitise on the total consciousness of a (actually provisional) world without torque – as a community (thankfully!). A holy transformation, without change of perspective. Time-tried and tested.

(The concept of a provisional to a religiously fetishised worldview is as undialectical as possible, tried and tested). One could also say: Forwards, through self-citation (self-overhaul)!

Why is that? Did they – they who came after the Post-War Dream, the formerly post-modern accelerated cohort driven to the point of fear and (oh dear!) rejuvenated by, through and on “media overload” – did they drop out of the world? Out just like that? Out of *the* world that was theirs (yes, yours!), but which, according to that very credo, would only ever let the young, that is, the perpetually irritable, have their way with it. And this, even for only a short historical sojourn. For the World Ship, as a referent of the ecological-economic guest-host function, lists to one side; exposes its and their diseased side as *pure* nature.⁶ (Pure or not pure? That is here the question!) Prevailing, hardly time-honoured states of decay in the formerly innovative, pruriently circuiting “project of world-creation”, the civilisational project. “For Western society, too, has produced something other than what the cynical system-theoretical gaze of a *desperately* hopeful critical theory read from its eyes”.⁷

: fabula rasa:

Art has a symbolic function. It points to the separation of nature and human space as cultural geography and world creation! As civilisation. It is not only a mean between ethics and aesthetics and a measure of aesthetics placed on ethics, but thus also stands at the origin of conduct and relations in the social sphere. The symbolic is a devise of social life.

Symbols as mediators and functions between world and non-world often bring with them the potential for confusion. In themselves and because of us, for the very reason of this mediation.⁸

Becoming human as *lived* confusion marks and masks the origin and also the duration of civilisations.

“The life of animals hangs on the thread of the genetic species; the life of human groups is able to realise the replacement of the genetic order by the ethnic order only under the cover of a time, a space and a society that are completely symbolic in character [...]”⁹

But even more than identity, this requires the incongruity of the symbol with the thing symbolised, and both, incongruity and identity, as proportional relations.¹⁰ A range of variation, length, depth and height, for this world and beyond the border.

For a Critical Utopia also contains that hope of not always believing the mask, although, mediated as it is by the myth, one must believe it!¹¹

Martin Luther translated “videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate nunc autem facie ad faciem” in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 12, verse 13) with the words:

“We see now through a mirror in a dark word, but then we shall see face to face.” Well then! The main thing is that the balance is drawn up correctly.

In the balancing, the details get lost in that post-nihilistic dream which is the life of post-utopian societies.

In a symbolic universe
the shards of the mirror

veritably collapse into one gaze.

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Mind the Index & Annotations!

1 Passage from “Des Geyers schwarzer Haufen” (The Vulture’s Black Host), a German peasant song from the time after the defeat of the Peasants’ Revolt in 1525; quoted in Jürgen Müller, *Martin Luther & Thomas Müntzer. Ihr Leben und ihre Zeit sowie ihre reformatorischen Wirkungen auf die Ereignisse des deutschen Bauernkrieges von 1524 – 1525*: https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/46973165/Jürgen_Müller.pdf / p. 64, accessed 15.04.2023.

2 Previously “the intellectuals”, now “the artists”, “are the boot-lickers of the ruling elites”. (Slogan of the early 1990s “indie” and other subcultures directed against the decline into “alternative”).

3 Cf. Burghart Schmidt, *Postmoderne – Strategien des Vergessens* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1994), 111 and 164: “The engine of growth capitalism, the compulsion to innovate at all costs directed towards inward market expansion that includes external economic sectors only as suppliers of raw materials or as low-wage areas for fabrication, and that therefore develops ever further downwards, seems to have run out of steam for the time being. Art has noticed this faster than it has become known in the public consciousness of the economy.”

4 Allusion to *The Sleep of Reason Gives Birth to Monsters*, etching by Francisco de Goya, Spain, 1799.

5 Note: in B. Schmidt’s “postmodern book”, he writes: “The danger is not the mask but the socialising ‘tattooing’, the rendering consciousness of the processes of simulation in which, in Anders’s and Baudrillard’s view, our present social relation to reality entangles us” (167).

The tattooing is the danger because it ideologically consolidates the role of the mask; it incorporates it. Further: “Lévi-Strauss has shown how the mask must have emerged from facial tattooing and face painting and, being able to be put on and taken off, frees the wearer from the constant bondage to his ritual role, as this is already prepared by face painting” (166).

“A mask”, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, “does not exist alone; it presupposes other masks, real or possible, alongside it, which could just as well have been chosen in its place [...]. A mask is not first and foremost what it represents, but what it transforms, that is, deliberately fails to represent. Just like a myth, a mask denies as much as it affirms. It consists not only in what it says or means to say, but also in what it excludes” (Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Der Weg der Masken*. Translated from the French by Eva Moldenhauer, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 132. Translated here from the German by J.U.).

6 In these terms, only *one side* of the world, one culture, can perish.

7 B. Schmidt., 164f and Leroi-Gourhan, *Hand und Wort. Die Evolution von Technik, Sprache und Kunst* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), 385: “[...] the progressive dissolution of mythological thinking has, within several centuries, set the most highly developed societies on the path of *l’art pour l’art* and covered over the crisis of figuration. At present, individuals are imbued with and determined by a rhythmicity that has reached the stage of practically total mechanisation (rather than humanisation).”

8 Note: Think also of the popular confusions in theological theorems. Even here, people have been

resorting to symbol and image since the early Middle Ages, because the representability and clarity of diverse dogmas in their complexity can hardly be explained with the rigour of the necessary theological formulations.

9 Leroi-Gourhan, 387.

10 Cf. Umberto Eco on symbols as an expression of a pedagogical system and a cultural policy in the Middle Ages and the mental processes typical of the time: “Symbolic attribution is thus based on a certain agreement, a schematic analogy or a connection of essence” (*Kunst und Schönheit im Mittelalter*, (München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1991), 83 ff.

11 Cf. B. Schmidt, 167: “The chance to take it (the mask) off now and then contains a moment of freedom. [...] For it is precisely through our consciousness that we are driven back to the mask of the ‘as if’.”

Translated by Jonathan Uhlener