

On Disenchanting Discourse: “Minority” Literary Criticism And Beyond

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In order to introduce and integrate, within the space of this paper, several “new objects of knowledge” which cannot meaningfully exist within the discursive *vrai* (truth) of our present “fundamental arrangements of knowledge”¹ nor within the analogic of its “(ethico-) theoretical foundations,”² I shall make use of a series of epigraphs placed at different points of the argument. Their function will be to project the possibility of a “demonic observer” ground³ *outside* the consolidated field of meanings of our present analogic, a ground in which these “new objects of knowledge” can find their efficient criterion/

1. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1973), 387.

2. The term *ethico-theoretical* is a progression on Derrida’s usage of ethical-ontological distinction in “Limited Inc. abc” in *Glyph*, no. 2 (1977): 247.

3. In an article—“Demonic and Historical Models in Biology”—Alex Comfort coins the term “demonic models” to refer to “logical representations of reality which exclude a space-time oriented observer.” We have adapted the concept here to suggest the possibility of an observer/site of observation that is non-analogically oriented, that is, one outside the present discursive formations and meaning “fields” of our present order and its related episteme. For Comfort’s paper, see *The Journal of Social and Biological Structures* 3, no. 2 (April 1980): 207-216.

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condition of truth.⁴

The new objects of knowledge to be presented here call equally for the construction of new conceptual tools and theoretical foundations, which this time go beyond *not* only the hegemonic paradigms of literary criticism but also beyond the grounding analogic of the episteme or “fundamental arrangements of knowledge” of which our present practice of literary criticism (in effect of normal “majority discourse”) is an inter-connected component.⁵ Our present arrangements of knowledge (and therefore their grounding analogic) were put in place in the nineteenth century as a function of the epistemic/discursive constitution of the “figure of Man.” This represents, in our projected new terms, the first purely *secular criterion* of human being (or regulatory metaphysics) encoded in the “descriptive statement” of the human on the model of a natural organism and its related ontology. For our proposed new objects of knowledge to be receivable, we accordingly need to go beyond the ontology of the figure of man and the empowering *normalizing* discourses with which this “figure,” as the projected model/criterion of being of the globally dominant Western-European bourgeoisie, is still enchantedly constituted—now dangerously, in the context of our post-atomic environment.

I shall propose in this paper, therefore, that the unifying goal of *minority* discourse, if the term *minority* and its related discourse is to constitute itself as the “institutional” (and therefore ontological) fact that it is rather than as the “brute”⁶ or empirical fact that it is strategically⁷ projected to be within the coercive analogic of our present onto-episteme,

4. Fernand Vandamme develops this concept convincingly in “Register Linguistics: A Nominalistic Language Interpretation and Its Implications for Some Central Problems in Glossogenesis” in *Glossogenetics: The Origin and Evolution of Language. Proceedings of the International Trans-disciplinary Symposium on Glossogenetics*, Eric de Grolier, ed. (New York: Harcourt Academic Publishers, 1983).

5. This concept is extrapolated from the new theory of cognition called “*connectionism*” developed by David E. Rumelhart, James L. McClelland and the P.D.P. Research Group in *Parallel Distributed Processing: Explorations in the Microstructure of Cognition*. Volume 1: *Foundations*, Volume 2: *Psychological and Biological Models* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1986).

6. John R. Searle makes this distinction in *Speech Acts: An Essay on the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 51: “They (i.e., institutional facts) are indeed facts. But their existence, unlike the existence of brute facts, presupposes the existence of certain human institutions. It is only given the institution of knowledge that certain forms of behavior constitute Mr. Smith’s marrying Jones.”

7. The concept of discursive “strategy set” has been adapted from the use of the

will necessarily be to accelerate the conceptual “erasing” of the figure of Man.⁸ If it is to effect such a rupture, minority discourse must set out to bring closure to our present order of discourse, as the nineteenth-century Western European bourgeoisie did from their parallel ontologically subordinated status *vis à vis* the “enchanted” discourse of the then hegemonic pre-industrial landed gentry.⁹ But more, this must occur as utterly as Ralph Ellison’s novel *Invisible Man* has brought closure to the novel form as a meaningful existential genre, and therefore to the first form of that secular mutation at the level of “regulatory human feelings”¹⁰ which the novel’s new generic onto-aesthetic field had effected, in the moment of the originary rupture caused by Cervantes’s novel *Don Quixote*.

*On Disenchanting Discourse: From The Semiotic Strings
of Feudal Noble Blood to Those of Monarchical “Rational Nature”*

“You are right, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote; “but I have told you already that there are many kinds of enchantments; and time may have changed the fashion from one kind to another. It may be usual now for people under a spell to do all that I do, although they did not before; so that there is no arguing or drawing conclusions against the customs of the times. I most certainly know that I am enchanted, and that is sufficient to ease my conscience, which would be greatly burdened if thought that I was not under a spell, and yet remained in this cage like an idler and a coward, defrauding the many distressed and needy of the succour I could give them.”

—Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

term “strategy set” by biologists. See, for example, Maynard Smith, “Game Theory and the Evolution of Cooperation” in *Evolution from Molecules to Men*, D.S. Bendall, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

8. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 387.

9. For the implications of this usually non-recognized Event, see Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), as well as J.G.A. Pocock, “Civic Humanism in Anglo American Thought” in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1973).

10. The interconnected concepts *onto-aesthetic fields* and *order-specific regulatory feelings* (or *feeling-sets*) have been coined on the basis of a central Darwinian point further developed by M.T. Ghiselin, *The Economy of Nature and the Evolution of Sex* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

The exchange cited above takes place between *Don Quixote* and his squire, Sancho Panza, in part 1, chapter XLIX of the novel. In this episode, Don Quixote's friend, the Priest and the Barber, trying to get him home to his village, had disguised themselves, overpowered him while asleep, and shut him up in a cage, telling him that his imprisonment has been procured by a wicked enchanter and planned to last for a set period of time. Don Quixote has therefore resigned himself to his imprisonment, induced to do so by the fact that in the system of inference-making generated from the chivalric code/model of identity of the romances that he has read, enchanters, as counteragents of the supernatural, are the key explanatory device by which he manages to "save the appearances" of any event that contradicts the view of reality inferred from the mimetic model of the fictional knight-errants of romance.

Sancho, however, has caught sight of Don Quixote's friends and suspects the trick being played on his master. He tries to *disenchant* Don Quixote by a series of arguments designed to prove that he, Don Quixote, cannot be "enchanted"—that rather than being "under a spell" Don Quixote instead has been "humbugged and fooled."¹¹ His syllogistically argued¹² and seemingly irrefutable proof is that since it is commonly held that when under a spell people cannot eat, drink, or satisfy the urgent needs of nature and since his master has the desire to do all three, it follows that his master cannot be enchanted. But this proof is at once crushed by Don Quixote's irrefutable answer: that enchantments change their kind according to the "customs of the times." The exchange here functions both at the level of the disputes of the literary theory of the time and at the wider level of the abduction

11. See Miquel de Cervantes Saavedra. *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, trans. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985), 431.

12. See Alban Forcione's discussion of this scene and of "the elements of parody in this *mock-discorso* between Sancho . . . and Don Quixote. As Forcione notes, Sancho, "in attempting to reveal the absurdity of his master's belief by subjecting it to the scrutiny demanded by the canon's principle of *Verisimilitude*," employs the syllogistic reasoning characteristic of the neo-Aristotelian theorists.

However, Forcione's interpretation of the *mock-discorso* differs considerably from both Edwin Williamson's and my own. See Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle and The Persiles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). For an overview of the implications of the ethico-theoretical concepts of both the *marvellous* and of *verisimilitude*, as well as of the dispute between them (and which is central to the *mock-discorso*, as well as to the overall onto-aesthetic [our term] of the novel), see E.C. Riley, *Cervantes' Theory of the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

schemas¹³ or system of inference-making. The opposed schema were generated respectively from the explanatory schema of supernatural causality generic to the current of twelfth-century philosophical idealism whose discourse-system underlay both the aristocratic ethos and the romances of chivalry expressive of that mode of fantasy, and from the newly emergent emphasis on the explanatory hypothesis of natural causality. The latter schema establish equally the “*true* [vs. “legendary”] *history*” characteristic of the new monarchical ethos and the order of things of which ethos and its new discursive ideologic, the novel *Don Quixote*, was the innovative expression.

An epochal rupture has therefore taken place between the new genre of the novel and the old genre of chivalric romance, together with its enabling discourse of philosophical idealism and its still religiously guaranteed descriptive statement or criterion of being, in whose context the imitation of established traditional models had been projected as an ethico-aesthetic imperative. For the new genre was no longer to be based, as that of romance had been in the last instance, on a still pervasive theo-logic, but rather on the *ideologic* of a new order of discourse based on varieties of an ontologized “natural law,” and its related secularizing variants/models of human being. These variants, beginning in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries, were to realize their purely secular summa in the nineteenth/twentieth centuries with the emergence of the criterion of being encoded in the figure of man and its constitutive discourse of *biological idealism*.

At the level of literature, the rupture from *supernaturally guaranteed* descriptive statements or criterial conceptions of being and the mutation to the first form of a now secularly guaranteed one were to be effected by the emergence of the new discourse of Neo-Aristotelian literary theory and poetics.¹⁴ An equivalent rupture and mutation occurred at the level of the supernaturally guaranteed modes of verbal/semiotic symbol-matter information systems by means of which human

13. See Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), where he develops this central concept of *abduction*, as a mode of thinking based on inference-making.

14. The term is adapted from the concept of organic *speciation* linked to the role played by regulatory genes that, by placing a limit on out-breeding, constitute the *inter-breeding unit* as a “species.” See Erik H. Erikson, *Toys and Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), and E. Mayr, *Evolution and the Diversity of Life: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

populations/orders are integrated as “composite wholes” in that process of pseudo (or fake) speciation first identified by Erikson as the mechanism at the level of human life through which the individual members of a group come to experience themselves as co-identifying conspecifics.¹⁵

The integrative analogic (or semantic closure principle) which underlay the religio-aesthetic system of the genre of romance and its chartering discourse was still based on the central Platonic concept “of a rationally and harmoniously ordered universe in which the Divine Idea expressed itself by means of imperishable and immutable forms, existing beyond the material world.”¹⁶ These *intelligible* forms were then prescribed as the *only ones* worthy of imitation, as distinct from the projected inferior forms/models of the antithetical world of historical actuality. With the chartering of the new analogic of neo-Aristotelian literary theory, however, the world of historical actuality and the actions of men within it were released from their earlier ontological subordination or “deferent” role.¹⁷ For through this poetics, the “reality” of a now legitimated world of empirical action could be imitated so as to reveal the universal value expressed through it, by imitating, as Aristotle had advised, “according to a true idea.” This concept of a true idea would be taken in a special didactic sense, one which led to a preoccupation with the *moral* in literature and to Cervantes’s concept of the *exemplary novel*. Through the mediation of this master-concept, the “universal” ideas they expressed would not in any way contradict the true idea of the counter-Reformation faith, and the related ideologies of the Spanish monarchical-imperial state¹⁸ would not be contrary to “good

15. An illuminating essay by Peter Dunn on the exemplary novels of Cervantes and their relation to the newly emergent Neo-Aristotelian literary theory/poetics, reveals the “endowment,” which this theory helped to effect, of an entirely new secularizing attitude of both seeing and acting on the world, a new attitude *configured* in the novel form itself and in its founding generic analogic. See Peter N. Dunn “Las novelas ejemplares” in *Suma Cervantina*, J.B. Avalor-Arce and E.C. Riley, eds. (London: Tamesis Books, Ltd., 1973).

16. *Ibid.*, 85.

17. The *intelligible/sensible* distinction was the philosophical expression or philosophy of the feudal aristocratic code of symbolic “life” and “death.”

18. In his prologue to *The Exemplary Novels*. See Cervantes, *Obras completas* (Madrid: A Valbuena Prat., 1956), 769-70. See, for a less onto-political, more strictly literary interpretation, Alban Forcione’s Introduction in his *Cervantes and the Humanist Vision: A Study of Four Exemplary Novels* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

customs” but would instead provide honest yet entertaining(*sabroso*) models of being/behaving appropriate to its way of life and the “true idea” about which the now hybridly religio-secular state integrated itself. Nor indeed would *Don Quixote*, the first fully achieved form of the novel as an existential genre, which gave expression to the analogic of the new literary theory by its fictional endowing of the particular experiences of its hero Don Quixote with representative (i.e., universal) value. For its emplotment led from the *parodic* life of a hero, governed by the mimetic non-true ideas of a text now projected as false and deluded, to the paragon death-bed conversion scene of a new text when, awakening to the “true idea” of his monarchical “rational nature,” he comes exemplarily to his “true” self, his “true nature”¹⁹ now as a Christian-monarchical subject of the same nature as his “real” text.

For the universalizing “true idea” of the new state form had entailed a relatively democratizing shift from the earlier purely supernaturally guaranteed descriptive statement and optimal signifier of “noble blood” to the first primarily statal-secular (although guaranteed in the last instance by the faith) descriptive statement, with the optimal criterion becoming that of “rational nature” and of degrees thereof. At the metaphysical/aesthetic level, lack of rational nature displaced lack-of-noble-blood, even if the latter continued to be partially hegemonic at the level of the social-systemic. To lack rational nature was to be governed by purely sensory nature with the latter defined as the “nature” common to men and animals. As such, this nature could not of itself be the basis of the ontologized natural law with its projected universally binding precepts. Instead this law was based on reason as the peculiar attribute of mankind (although already the humanist scholar Sepulveda denied this rational nature to the “Indians,” as the native Ontological Other).²⁰

19. See René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965). Here Girard’s innovative and original reading of the hero’s awakening from *mimetic desire*, as the first expression of that *conversion* central to the novel form, errs only in one aspect—that is, he sees the hero as awakening to *truth*, in general, to his *true self*, rather than to a *specific mode* of the *self*, coherent with the monarchical historical-ensemble or system: that is, to a new secularizing mode which begins to project the concept of “*true nature*” as an absolute in place of Christian and other transcendent *natures*.

20. See Bernice Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth Century Spain: A Study of the Political Ideas of Vitoria, De Soto, Suarez and Molina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

Now the former behavior-orienting struggle between spirit and flesh became, for the new intellectual laity, the secularizing one between the individual's *sensory* nature as his appetitive nature expressed in an imaginative faculty capable of good (creation) or ill (seduction to act outside the universal "true idea" embodied in the religio-political order of state/faith). If *sensory nature/imaginative faculty* is to act for the good, it must therefore be curbed by rational nature which alone knows how to resist the temptation of falling into the new ontological threat represented by the contingency of fortune, and the instability of the particular.

Neo-Aristotelian literary theory, the first form of our present system of literary scholarship, and whose *prescriptive* rules functioned at the level of theory to replicate this governing binary code (rational/sensory nature) and its analogic of the level of the emerging field of secular literature, can therefore be seen here in its widest context as the expression of an epochal shift out of the earlier mythico-religiously and theologically guaranteed orders of discourse. For if, as Derrida argues, philosophic speech can only institute itself by the fettering and humiliation of another speech, projected as the new fool to the crowned king of its Logos,²¹ with the device of "attaching lunacy" and transforming the earlier religio-aristocratic discourse into the fool of its now partly secularizing, partly religious statal/monarchical model of Being/Logos, Cervantes and the novel form effected that great discontinuity by which "rhetorical man" now enters.²² His descriptive statements, or models of identity, are now guaranteed no longer by the religious but by the *aesthetic*; the "rhetorical man" brings with him what is to be for all humans a new historico-phenomenological space of being/discourse.

Whilst Don Quixote died exemplarily, the novel form which he, as hero, initiated was to transform itself, over the succeeding centuries. These transformations were to be effected through internal mutations with respect to the "sensory nature," tropological complex of the Renaissance schema of civic/monarchical humanism, including its transmuted "landed gentry" form. In this mutation the topos of "sensory

21. In the essay "Cogito and the History of Madness" in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 61.

22. See R. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

nature” would now become that of a projected “primal nature” encoded, at the global level, in the *native* (with its zero degree signifier form as the *nigger*)²³ whose ideologic was to be disseminated by the mode of the novel and by its founding discourse of biological idealism. And this new discourse was to be projected about the new exemplary bourgeois “figure of man” just as the empowering discourse of philosophical idealism had been projected about the then exemplary figure of the chivalric-aristocratic figure of the Knight.

*Attaching “Blindness” To The Controllers of Reality.
Disenchanting the “Figure of Man”*

And that a little black man with an assumed name should die because a big black man in his hatred and confusion over the nature of a reality that seemed controlled by whites whom I knew to be as blind as he was, was just too much, too outrageously absurd. And I knew that it was better to live out one’s absurdity than to die for that of others whether that of Ras or Jack’s.

—Ellison, *Invisible Man*

If *Don Quixote* laughed away the ideal Christian-chivalric model of the human, Ellison’s *Invisible Man* attaches the ironic metaphor of *blindness* to the characters who embody the three differing variants of the contemporary order of discourse of biological idealism. Of the three variants, the first is that of Liberal Positivism embodied in Norton and Emerson: Norton, a pragmatic philanthropist who plays God to southern Blacks by giving money to Southern Black colleges designed to

23. The “figure of the nigger” was to function as the negative signifier of the mode of being embodied in the bourgeois “figure of man” (as the *mad* had functioned in the “rational nature” order of the landed gentry, and within its empowering analogic or discourse of humanism). Whilst the *mad* embodied the extreme form of a projected subordination to *sensory nature*, the nigger would project the extreme form of an ostensibly “primal human” which had remained subordinated by the processes of evolutionary natural selection, as such subordinated to natural necessity, and as such *non-autonomous*. Note that the word *nigger* projects the human as *pure object*, the antonym of the pure ostensible autonomously willing “figure of man.” If the *mad* functioned to signify its opposite as *normal* reason, the *nigger* does so to signify its opposite as *normal being*. “Racism” is a behavioral competence of this analogic. See in this respect the book by Jacob Pandian, *Anthropology and the Western Tradition: Towards an Authentic Anthropology* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1985).

provide a second-level education for a secondary Black middle class, the other a “concerned” liberal for whom “poor Blacks” are the means by which to realize his liberal “concern,” just as Don Quixote needed the “many distressed and needy” to succour in order to realize his knight-errantry. The second is that of Marxism-Leninism with its “true idea” imaged in Brother Jack, Hambro, and the leadership of the Brotherhood. The third is the Black variant of the discourse of “Romantic Nationalism” which is embodied in *Ras*, the fictional projection of Marcus Garvey and his movement.²⁴

Yet all three discourses are generated as phenotexts from the same founding genotextual discourse which is itself generated from the underlying *archia* or descriptive statement of the model of the human as a “natural organism.”²⁵ And whilst the version imaged in the character of Norton is original and *projective* in that it encodes the new origin “beliefs” and related ontological schema, this is not so with the versions of Brother Jack’s Stalinist-Marxism nor with that of *Ras*’s Black romantic nationalism. For these are both *reactive* to the *systemically* functioning economic rationality and morality encoded by Norton’s Liberal Positivism in that, by taking the ontological “facts” of class and of race as if they were “brute” facts, they remain trapped in the context and the code of the hegemonic order of discourse and its system of motivation.

Both movements were therefore to prefigure the temptation that

24. The real life challenge of Marcus Garvey to the “*class first*” empowering discourse of the Marxian Euroamerican intelligentsia (and its black fellow-members of the intelligentsia) functioned on two levels. At the first level (the level enacted by Ellison) it functioned within the nineteenth-century discourse-model of Romantic nationalism. At another level, it challenged the *ontological subordination* of the black within the overall analogic of the nineteenth-century model of being. The contradiction of Garveyism derived therefore from this duality of discourse/praxis as it both assimilated to, and broke from the dominant schema and mode of mimetic desire, and as such dually functioning within the bourgeois analogic, whilst moving towards post-western and post-bourgeois cultural forms and modes of self-organization. And whilst Marxism’s theory of *economic* subordination provided a dazzling set of explanatory hypotheses, the more foundational concept of *ontological* subordination (reacted against empirically by the Garvey movement) had/has yet to find its “theoretic frame” (Cruse). This thesis is developed more fully in an ongoing work entitled *By means of a Creature: Essays Towards a Science of the Human*.

25. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 310. See also Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric and Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980) for the concept of *archia* which we have linked to the idea of a founding “descriptive statement” (Bateson) or *analogic*. See also G. Bateson, “Conscious Purpose vs. Nature” in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, D. Cooper, ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1968).

confronts minority discourse at this juncture, the same temptation to which the differing *isms* that emerged in the Sixties and Seventies all succumbed: that is, of taking the ontological “facts” of ethnicity (non-White and White) as well as of gender, sexuality, and culture as if these were things-in-themselves, rather than “totemic” signifiers in an overall system of resemblances and differences.²⁶ Taken as such, these terms are only meaningful within their reinforcing systemic function as the “specifying” negative Ontological Others of the first purely secular and therefore non-transcendentally guaranteed model of human being/identity.

For if Marx had zeroed in on the economic opposition between owners/non-owners of capital, he had overlooked the ontological aspect of the opposition between them. He overlooked, that is, the Ontological Other coding role in which those groups categorized under the signifier Labor functioned as the antithesis²⁷ that verified, through ostensive negation, the new archia by which the industrializing bourgeoisie self-signified itself by its ownership of capital as the incarnated embodiment of the new metaphysics of life/death, which now constituted the generalities of the post-landed gentry ordering of “real life.” For in this new metaphysic/code, projected in the “figure of man”²⁸ and its ordering discourse-system and episteme, a transumption had been made from the earlier code in which “ownership of land,” put forward in the Anglo-American variant of the discourse of “civic humanism” as the single matrix and source of both empirical and metaphysical well-being, had functioned to legitimate the exclusive control of decision-making power in the hands of the then hegemonic gentry. The counter-discourse of the new figure of man, generated from a model of being projected from the life-activity of the rising industrial bourgeoisie, had posited the analogic of a counter-metaphysical schema, one no longer based on the landed gentry’s

26. See C. Levi-Strauss, *Totemism* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

27. The oversight of this signifying ontological function of the “working classes” in addition to their role in economic production has enabled the intelligentsia to use the category/projection of the “figure of the proletariat” for their own group empowerment. Ellison catches this discursive sleight of hand powerfully in his portrayal of Brother Jack and of Hambro in relation to their group strategy set of “scientific objectivity.”

28. The proposal here is that the “figure of man” encodes the bourgeois criterion of being as the “figure of the yeoman” did that of the “landed gentry” and the “figure of the proletariat,” that of the education owning/information controlling intelligentsia-as-a-social category.

topos of the “natural benevolence of the land” but rather on the inversion of that topos, the new topos of the “avarice of nature” and the “natural scarcity” of the land.²⁹ It was on the basis of this new topos of causality that the new master-discipline of economics was to be erected, together with the other disciplines of its complex, including that of literary criticism/literary studies.

In Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, Mr. Norton incarnates the exemplary activity of the autonomous, decision-taking investor/speculator whose calculative intelligence is projected as rationality-in-general, and not as a systemically constituted *relative* mode of intelligence. A central “blindness” with respect to a reality which the decision-making of men like Norton was now supposed to control would therefore be functional to the behavior-inducing order of discourse which underlay the new mode of life just as another variant of blindness had been centrally functional to that of the landed gentry. Thus the inferential logic of the new discourse by which the Nortons of the world regulated their behaviors would have to *invisibilize* those aspects of reality which contradicted this system-functional mode of perception. Most crucially, of all, if the contribution of accumulated “moveable wealth” or *capital* were to continue to be perceived as the symbolic *source* of the “surplus-value” of material “life,” then both the existence of the multiple other factors which contributed to the always systemically produced surplus-value and of the concrete flesh and blood human whose life-activities and culturally coded needs/desires are the causal source of these processes would have to be overseen and controlled. For this human with its always culturally determined desires existed concretely outside the procrustean *conception of the human*, that is, outside a conception that was essential to the system of inference making of the discourse of *biological idealism*.

As J.F. Danielli hypothesizes, an internal reward system (I.R.S.) should be seen as functioning as the central mechanism by which human individuals are motivated to sacrifice their individual interest for that of others with whom they are co-identified—in effect for the sake of the common good.³⁰ The pleasure centers and the functioning of the euphoria-inducing family of substances would “reward” behaviors which further “altruistic” integration (good) and inhibit dysfunctional

29. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 256-57.

30. J.F. Danielli, “Altruism: The Opium of the People,” *Journal of Social and Biological Structures* 3, no. 2 (April 1980): 87-94.

behaviors (*evil/deilos*), thus providing “the rudiments of a physiological basis for some aspects of motivation.” However, he points out, what still remains missing to complete the hypothesis is “any knowledge of the *social* conditioning of the I.R.S.,” that is, of how it functions “so that *rewards are provided which relate to the necessary or desirable roles of an individual in a specific society.*”³¹

Danielli’s “missing components of knowledge” can be both linked to and understood in the context of the macro-metaphor of *blindness* which Ellison attaches to the first purely secular and *guaranteed* post-landed gentry criterion of being, embodied in the character of Norton.

Through the formidable conceptual instruments of Mandeville, Adam Smith, and Ricardo, on the one hand, and of Malthus/Darwin, on the other, allied to a new fiction which functioned at the level of the onto-aesthetic field of “regulatory feelings,” the bourgeoisie had disenchanted the discourse-system of the order of the landed gentry. The *grounding premise* of a criterion of being attached to the ownership of land was revealed and displaced along with the criterion-specific and “participatory” nature³² of the classical episteme in whose system of inference they themselves were ontologically subordinated and proscribed as the owners of unstable, “moveable wealth.” They nevertheless found themselves confronted with a major problem. Whilst the solution to this problem would be found, it would be found only at the price of the specific kind of “blindness” exemplified in Norton and in the revelatory fiction of Ellison’s *Invisible Man*.

The problem was that of finding the necessarily non-transcendental mechanism by which the first purely secular criterion of being, projected by the Western European industrializing bourgeoisie to take the place of that of the landed gentry, could now be *absolutized*. For only by means of such a mechanism of absolutization could the metonymic process, by which the new criterion of being about which our global order still auto-hierarchizes and auto-regulates itself, be stably attached to the euphoric reward system of “feeling good.” Only by this could the new post-landed gentry order be literally “enchanted” and “rewards” provided “which, by relating to the necessary or desirable

31. *Ibid.*, 90.

32. See Francisco Varela’s theory of the “participatory” nature of all human modes of knowledge as developed in his book, *Principles of Biological Autonomy* (New York: North Holland Series in General Systems Research, 1979).

roles of individuals” (Danielli) in our specific power-prestige order, would ensure its stable replication.

For the now purely secular order of the western bourgeoisie a series of signifying others remaining in their prescribed places would now function as the “real/empirical model”—like that of Freud’s *mimetic* anatomical model³³—whose existential reality now functioned to *absolutize* the secular criteria of being of which they were the ostensive negation. Hence the analogic with which, in the case of Ellison’s Mr. Norton and the other “normal” characters of the novel, the series of multiple Others would have to be regularly “invisibilized” so as to be “seen,” discoursed upon, and treated, not as they were, but as they were “needed to be” within the a priori inferential logic of the collective “inner eyes” constituted by the discourse of biological idealism. To these inner eyes *Invisible Man* now attaches the label of “blindness”:

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me . . .

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality.³⁴

To disenchant his hero’s invisibility, Ellison here attaches to an ostensibly autonomous seeing/willing model of being/perceiving the label of a pre-determined mode of inner eyes which controls how its subjects see and act upon reality. He shows these inner eyes to be constituted by a system of inference, determined by the specifications of the mimetic model of being (or “reigning conception of man’s hu-

33. In Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 15.

34. Ralph Ellison, *The Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1972), 3.

manity”) which the systemic subjects—like the narrator of *The Invisible Man*—struggle above all else to achieve. These specifications are absolutized and embodied negatively in an empirical series of Ontological Other categories which, taken together, signify *damnation* in the new secular motivational schema in which salvation is equated with freedom from natural necessity both at the material and cultural levels. The “thematic object” of the narrator’s sought-after “briefcase” in *The Invisible Man* embodies this new ideal of being as Don Quixote’s “helmet” did for him.

Both function as Danielli’s opiate-inducing signifiers; both intoxicate their heroes to the point of ‘blind’ madness. The socio-systemic ontological category of the “Poor” (for whom, as in the case of Trueblood, the signifier of the briefcase is an impossibility) is the embodied category now central both to motivating escape from poverty (newly projected as a metaphysical evil) and to the negative specification of freedom as freedom in its bourgeois modality. For the category of the poor/Trueblood now functions to incarnate the signifier of metaphysical “death” in the new governing code of the bourgeois “formation of human existence,” providing the secular-empirical yet ontological “place of the damned” in the systemic apparatus of motivation by which order-maintaining behaviors on the part of its subjects (keep the Nigger Boy running!) are stably generated. The category of the Poor (and the poverty archipelagoes) would therefore have to be produced as such a systemic category, that is, *as a system-maintaining function* of the order’s stable autopoiesis.

If the category of the Poor functioned as a hyper-sign within the “natural unit” of the nation at the level of the *family*, the Ontological Other slot was filled by the category of gender, of the woman, appearing at this level as one bearer-category of the lack of bourgeois rationality embodied normally in the *male* as the signifier of rationality. Here, the ontologically privileged male receives, as Virginia Woolf noted as early as the 1920s, the opiate reward (*cocaine* in her words) of the narcissistic advantage of a prescribed feeling of innate supremacy.³⁵

However, at the global level of the new ordering of things, the central Ontological spot of the *Poor* at the level of the nation, and of the *woman* at the level of the family, was filled by the category of the *native* as the projection not only of the lack of bourgeois-occidental rationality but

35. In her essay, *A Room of One’s Own* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1929).

also of the lack of metaphysical Being. The *natives*, nevertheless, also constituted a hierarchy of projected degrees of lack, measured both by nearness to the ultimate *evolved* mode of Indo-European physiognomy and ideal-type culture³⁶ and by degrees of distance from the ultimate zero degree category of an ostensibly “*primal*” human nature whose differentiation from a lurking *bestiality* was dangerously imprecise and uncertain, so uncertain as to call for a question mark to be placed with respect to the humanity of this zero-degree category. Like the woman in the male/female relationship, this enabled the experiencing of euphoric supremacy at the level of race and culture—that euphoric supremacy that it is above all the function of South African apartheid to protect. For the Ontological Other slot of this ultimate negative specification of the bourgeois conception of human being was/is filled by the empirical reality of *Africa/the Negro* and the related tropological complex of representation projected in the emergent philosophical discourse of nineteenth-century Europe. The Negro represents the Negative Signifier of an allegedly “*primal*” human being totally subordinated to “*natural necessity*.”³⁷ As such, the tropology of *Africa/The Negro* was to provide a foundational constant of the system of inference-making of biological idealism and to be constantly projected, as Chinua Achebe notes, as “the antonymic foil to Europe’s spiritual grace,” as the projection of that primal/near bestial nature which Europe and the bourgeoisie had overcome in themselves. And they had done so, the analogic runs, by means of their material development as well as of their creation of “*high Cultures*.”

Both these empirical activities functioned not only as markers of an ontological difference in bio-substance between the two groups, thereby making conceptualizable our present ordering principle of differential degrees of human genetic value, but also, and even more so, as markers of the vast difference which now separated the West’s refined “*cultivated sensibility*” from the primal human nature which still threat-

36. See George L. Mosse, *Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), where he traces the processes by which the aesthetic criteria of Greek classical culture, “whose villains outside the tribe” were the Jews and the Blacks, was developed by nineteenth-century European scholars and provided the basis for the Nazis’ Aryan “myth of origin.”

37. See M. G. Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), where the latter traces the role played by this concept, both in Kant and later in Hegel’s philosophy.

ened ontologically in the form of *Africa/the Negro*, into which, unless presented by a bourgeois mode of being/feeling/knowing, one could atavistically relapse.

*Attaching Non-Autonomy to the Autonomous,
“Blindness” to Scientific Objectivity, Futurity to Romantic Nationalism:
Not Who but What Controls?*

To study Metaphysics as they have always been studied, appears to me to be like puzzling at astronomy without mechanics He who understand baboon [sic] would do more towards metaphysics than Locke.

—Darwin, *Notebooks*, 1838

“When Marx said that ‘religion is the opiate of the people,’ he spoke with greater accuracy than he realized. The . . . decline of religion . . . [has] . . . tended to transform society so that we could now say that ‘Ideology is the opium of the people.’ What none of us has realized until the last few years is that . . . unless society provides mechanisms for the release of endogenous opiates, i.e., for activating the I.R.S. . . . social cohesion is lost and collapse . . . may be imminent.”

—J. F. Danielli, 1980

It is this enchanting “opiate inducing” system of figuration that Ellison ironically reverses in his portrayal of the encounter between Norton as the bearer of the “cultivated sensibility code of High Culture” and Trueblood. For Trueblood is here the bearer of ‘Field Niggerism,’ projected in the overall schema as the negation of High Culture and introjected though the overall conditioning apparatus of the official representation system as primal and backward. He represents the Black Southern American culture from which the young, upwardly mobile narrator, in order to “be” in the “reigning conception of humanity,” must develop a “learned” aversion, must run and run, never responding to the subversive rhythms of its sounds, always religiously choosing the signifiers of toast and orange juice over Ontologically Other pork chops and grits, never relapsing into eating Field Niggerism’s hot baked yams out in the life of its streets, into exchanging that “signifying” repartee of the dozens that heretically defines the human as “life that has

speech,” but instead must run and run in order to “be” according to the specifications of the mimetic model of being of the bourgeoisie, running from everything that the Narrator’s historical people have been and are: Keep this Nigger Boy running! For, in the dominant order of discourse in the U.S., Field Niggerism functions as the analogue of Africa/the Negro. As such it places a question mark on the Narrator’s humanity, a question mark reinscribed by the very “High Culture” taught at the school, from which all “taint” of an antithetical Field Niggerism is excluded. And its “cultivated sensibility code” is incarnated in rich white trustees like Norton, whom the young Narrator, still caught up in his borrowed desire, chauffeurs reverentially around as the incarnation of that “true” model of human “life” to which he aches mimetically to attain.

The first of the series of confrontations/experiences which, like Don Quixote’s pratfalls, will lead to the Narrator’s eventual “awakening” and conversion/revolt against the hegemonic order of discourse and its behavior-directing signs, is the encounter between Norton and Trueblood, an encounter which the Narrator’s mistake precipitates, and of which he is the helpless and horrified witness. For the strange bond which emerges between Norton and Trueblood is the fact that the latter has breached the *normative* sexual code and its prohibition of incest, which, like the prohibition of non-genital sexuality, functions to constitute such sexual practices as signifiers of an ostensible relapse into that “bestiality” that threatens ontologically to overwhelm the distance which the bourgeois ideal model of being struggles to place between itself and an ostensibly primal human.

Norton has long had an incestuous sexual attraction to his daughter, but one repressed because of the simultaneously physical and metaphysical nature of his desire: his daughter as a white woman is also the bearer of the bourgeois conception of ontological “purity,” of which the “sexually promiscuous” black woman is the negation.³⁸ He is fascinated by Trueblood, whose attraction to his daughter is purely physical, because the latter has, while half-asleep, inadvertently committed incest with her and yet remains unashamed, since his concept of being a “man” differs so profoundly from the dominant conception embodied in Norton for whom being in charge, always in conscious

38. I have developed this thesis more fully in an essay entitled “After Feminism: Towards a Theoria for Our Times” in *Black Women Writing: Political and Cultural Imperatives*, J.M. Braxton and Andree Nicole McLaughlin, eds. (Rutgers University Press, forthcoming).

control, is the major imperative.

As Norton listens, stirred and seduced by Trueblood's narrating of the episode, he is overcome by his aroused sexual urges towards his own "pure" daughter, loses control and faints. In the scene that follows, Ellison attaches not the "stuff of lunacy," as Cervantes did to the chivalric code, but, rather, in the context of the new order of discourse, the stuff of non-control over urges that have ostensibly been "tamed" and refined out of existence; and even more of non-control over a will that is ostensibly autonomous, free from subordination to natural necessity, and as such empowered to make decisions which determine the collective destiny of the peoples of the global order. In this scene, Ellison uses Trueblood's narration to reveal that Norton's will/desires are mediated by speech/rhetoric/discourse, that for the human it is discourse and its system of inference which determine. For they do so, once in place, beyond subjective consciousness, by giving system-specific *verbal* shape and form to the originary dynamics of the genetic motivation system of our purely physiological heritage. This is transferred to the third level of existence, human life, by the strategies of opiate-inducing rhetoric which exist at the interface between the symbol-matter information system of the genome and the linguistic symbol-matter information systems by which all human modes of being effect their autopoiesis as systemic forms of always symbolic codes of life/death.³⁹ For in the *human* beginning it was indeed the Word.

Here, therefore, Ellison disenchants the ordering systemic discourse which Norton incarnates by attaching both the labels of "blindness" and of non-autonomy of desire. He shows Norton here as never really "seeing" Trueblood, but rather only *inferring* him as an abstraction on which to project the desires which he, like the Narrator, *must* firmly repress in order to realize himself in the dominant conception of being. Again, Norton, the criterion/model-of-being, canonized in "real life" as the bearer of exemplary life activity, that of freedom from subordination to the "iron laws of nature" (i.e., natural necessity, natural scarcity), is here shown as bereft of that pure autonomy which in the

39. For the concept of "symbol matter information systems," see H.H. Pattee, "Clues from Molecular Symbol Systems" in *Signed and Spoken Language: Biological Constraints on Linguistic Forms*, U. Bellugi and M. Studdert-Kennedy, eds. (Berlin: Verlag Chemie, 1980), 261-274, and "Laws and Constraints, Symbols and Languages" in *Towards a Theoretical Biology*, C.H. Waddington, ed. (Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh Press, 1972), 248-258.

governing behavior-regulatory analogic of our present order confers on him the right of decision-making as to when and where to invest in accord with the calculative mode of intelligence which makes these decisions on the basis of the analogically *True Idea*/criterion of their return-on-investment potential. Hence the paradox: Norton's absolute power over processes of decision-making determines the negative destinies of others like Trueblood and condemns their lives, stigmatized as lacking in bottom-line "return-on-investment-potential," to the poverty archipelagoes that are as inferentially logical to the ordering discourse of Logical Positivism/Liberal Humanism as the Auschwitz archipelagoes were to that of Nazism and its a priori criterion of *genetic* inferiority/superiority, or the Gulag archipelagoes to that of Stalinism and its a priori of "scientific truth" versus "ideology," and of the superiority of the Party-line criterion of "true" Proletarian origin over non-Proletarian origin; yet Norton's autonomy of desire is an autonomy itself coded by the discursively constituted conception of being.

Thus if it is clear that Trueblood, as the *Lumpen* underclass, exists *outside* the dominant order of discourse and its reigning "conception of man's humanity," Brother Jack and Ras, whom the Narrator will later confront in a further series of painful, humiliating experiences, are themselves paradoxically caught up in the very conception of man's humanity against which they fight, one in the name of "class," the other in the name of "race."

For Jack, and his discourse-variants, the unskilled, jobless lumpen Blacks in Harlem are the discursive antithesis of the "deserving" destined ruling class of the *workers*, within the analogic of Marxist theory whose new criterion of being is "labor" or the projected source of surplus-value, and for which surplus-value is generated *only* in the process of production,⁴⁰ and which, therefore, finds its ideal model of being in the "*Proletarian*" in place of Man. The jobless lumpen are necessarily "outside history." As such they are metaphysically irredeemable, a force only fit to be deployed in carefully staged riots, allowed to function only within the tightly controlled overall master-plan of the Brotherhood. Hence, in a series of brutal experiences, the Narrator must learn the terrifying truth that he has been used to make his own

40. See Samir Amin, *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1978), and Abdel-Malek, "Historical Surplus-Value" in *Review* III, no. 1 (1979). See also, Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

people into a sacrifice, this time in the interests of Jack and the Brotherhood, as the price of his own honorary incorporation into the party structures of power as a pseudo-cosmopolitan, non-lumpen, secondary intelligentsia member, hired to *talk* but not to *think*. Even more tellingly, he must learn too, that for Brother Jack, blinded by the inferential logic of his scientific objectivity, Blacks are only abstractions, mere ciphers in Jack's as in Norton's group's particular projects which they represent as universals. The price to be paid for his upward mobility in the context of either one of the exemplary projects of these two men, both of whom are "blind" (Brother Jack has a glass eye) to the reality which they have set out to control, is his betrayal of the Black lumpen Harlem majority. For this lumpen proletariat is stigmatized as outside the productive economy and as such "like discarded machinery" in the system of inference of one project and "outside history" in that of the other. In both it is finally expendable, only useful, on the one hand, as voting power or, on the other, as cannon fodder in the "spontaneous riots" orchestrated by the New Class of the Brotherhood in their non-conscious thrust to hegemony over against the bourgeoisie.

In the series of scenes in which the scales fall from the Narrator's eyes, the revelation of the purely instrumental abstraction that the Blacks of Harlem are for the Brotherhood is central to his own final self-disenchantment and to his own eventual holing up underground in his basement. Here he takes refuge from an entire order of being, pledging to go up tomorrow, yet never actually going up, holding out in the name of all invisible humans—"perhaps in the lower frequencies I speak for you"—the possibility of their/our recognition of this imposed "invisibility," which leads to a new demand for another concept of freedom, another possibility of livable being that culminates in his recognition of his "alterity:"

... And now I . . . saw Jack and Norton and Emerson . . . each attempting to force his picture of reality upon me and neither giving a hoot in hell for how things looked to me. I was simply a material, a natural resource to be used. I had switched from the arrogant absurdity of Norton and Emerson to that of Jack and the Brotherhood, and it all came out the same—except I now recognized my invisibility.⁴¹

41. Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 497.

Whilst Don Quixote dies after his moment of lucidity, the Narrator has to confront the world again from the perspective of his disenchanted view before he can regain safety in his “hole.” But before he does so, he finds himself caught in the conflict between the “scientific objectivity” of Jack and the Romantic nationalism of Ras. Ras’s discourse variant does *not* deal in Jack’s abstractions, since he shares with the Lumpen-Black the same humiliating experiences, and his semi-millenarian discourse comes much nearer to recognizing the ontological coding function to which Blacks are subordinated, since it inverts and attacks the grounding symbolic template of the order, challenging the metaphysics of the figure of “man” for which the figure of the Negro is the imperative antithesis. Nevertheless, in taking “Race” as an in-itself, as against the more sophisticated class analysis of Jack, Ras remains blinded to the realities of the powerful forces grouped against any possible realization of his empirical, empowering Back-to-Africa-dream. He remains “blinded,” too, to the fact that without what Cruse calls a “theoretic frame” of superior explanatory power to that of Logical Positivism and of Marxism-Leninism, one that is able to disenchant their discourses, the attempt at violent *physical* resistance by vastly outgunned Blacks could only end in futility. And because both Brother Jack and Ras overlook the reciprocally reinforcing *systemic* function of “class” and “race”—and indeed of “gender,” “culture,” “sexuality,” etc.—and because each, as members of the emerging new class, controllers of the means of information rather than owners of capital, logically struggle to project the “priority” of his own “ism,” the clash which erupts between their “proletarian” and Lumpen forces—a transposition of the “real life” competitive clash between Marcus Garvey and the Communists—entrap the now disenchanted Narrator in the final conflict between the two over the absolute truth of their respective versions of reality, over which category is to take primacy, “class” first or “Race/Nation” first.⁴²

The passage just cited, therefore, reveals the narrator confronted by Ras, who is determined to kill him at the very moment when his experiences have led him to opt out of the normalizing discourses, at the

42. The *Race first/class first* clash is now being re-enacted in the *race first/gender first* clash, with both generated from the ostensible *universality* of the *class* and *gender* categories, projected from a Western-European/Euramerican perspective. The category of “race” necessarily functions as the “deferent” category in both cases.

very moment when he has stumbled onto the new question: not *who* controls reality but *what*?

Fiction as a Higher Level of "Truth:"
Obtaining Access to What Controls Reality To Our Cognitive Domain

The idea of a dynamic structure of desire which transcends rhetorical conventions, even historical cultures, but which nevertheless is truly constitutive of the literary works which are our objects of study, cannot be seen as a Freudian idea, since it clashes head on with psychoanalysis. And it clashes head on also with all the actual forms of literary criticism, whose evaluative and classificatory criteria it must necessarily reject, transgressing all its principles.

Basically, this reformulation suggests that literary works defined as works of genius . . . may well conceptualize in a manner superior to our own . . . such a reformulation cannot therefore be made either in the name of science, nor in the name of literature as both are understood today.

—René Girard, 1975

The above epigraph suggests that it is by means of a new approach to narrative discourse that we might best explore the question as to what controls "reality," what in effect determines the specifications of those "inner" eyes or modes of systemic consciousness by means of which we know the world, orienting our behaviors by this knowledge within shared uniform parameters of perception and motivation.

The epigraph puts forward René Girard's seminal proposal with respect to the "objective" functioning of the *dynamics of desire*—which is parallel to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the systemic functioning of a machinery of desiring production.⁴³ It is this dynamics that we have put forward as the proposed *rhetorical motivation system*, the analogue for humans of the genetic motivation system for organic species. In this context, Girard's dynamics of desire suggests a possible explanatory key that may at last elucidate the laws of functioning of the directive signs that govern human behavior in the same way as genetic "directive signs" govern the dynamics of the behaviors of organic species.

43. In G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

We propose here further that the dynamics of desire exists “objectively” as a *transferred* human variant of the “desire” for reproductive potency that functions as the proximate mechanism by means of which the stable and optimal replication of species-specific organic modes of life are secured. Desire is shifted by means of the process of discursive regulation by which humans are conditioned to desire the signifier-criterion of well-being or governing code of symbolic “life.” Accordingly, what Girard calls the “dynamic structure of desire” is none other than the “fake” motivational system by means of which the desire for the signifier of potency specific to each culture or form of life, once enculturated in its systemic subjects as an opiate-inducing signifier in the context of the analogic of founding narrative schemas, functions to induce the collective set of behaviors of human subjects, behaviors which in turn bring each criterion/model of being into autopoietic living existence.

Here we differ from Girard in one crucial respect. For we propose that it is precisely by means of *rhetorical conventions* encoded in narrative orders of discourse that each system-specific signifier of potency is constituted as an opiate-inducing signifier of desire. Here we link Girard’s concept of the determining functioning of an “objective” dynamics of desire—knowledge of which is most lucidly provided by fictional narrative—to Frantz Fanon’s parallel concept of the systemic functioning of an inculcated *mimetic* model of aversion by which his Black patients had come to be aversive to their own existential selves, desiring to “be” in the mode of a whiteness that is systemically invested with all that is desirable.⁴⁴ Fanon’s further exploration of the role of discourses such as that of psychiatric medicine and their regulatory functioning in the inculcation of learned self-aversion, when linked to Girard’s proposed dynamics of desire, and illuminated in the light of *Don Quixote* and *Invisible Man*, suggests that human discourse is never neutral. It is everywhere a *function* of the maintaining in being of the systemic *rhetorical motivational systems* which, rather than the autonomous “inner man” or will of the individual subject, determine and orient the parameters of our ultimately system-maintaining behaviors: a function of the maintaining-in-being, then, of the dynamics of desire (aversion being a mode of desire). This dynamic, rather than objective reason out there, determines the mode of rationality or “participatory

44. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 146-51.

epistemology” through which the always already systemic human subjects must necessarily know self, other, and world.

All genetic motivation systems of *organic* species are constituted through regulatory criteria of well being/ill-being which select and judge self and world in relation to what is good or bad for the survival/realization of the mode of the species. All human rhetorical motivational systems are themselves constituted on the basis of an underlying ontological schema or regulatory metaphysics which functions as the analogue of the genetically programmed regulatory criterion of well being/ill-being of organic life.⁴⁵ The ordering discourse of these ontological schemas should function, at a rhetorico-linguistic level, so as to parallel the functioning of the neurophysiological/electro-chemical reward-punishment apparatus of the brain, and therefore to define *good* as that which is good for the overall survival/realization of the discursively constituted model of being, and *evil* as its antithesis. They therefore institute themselves as *amoral* systems of inference (abduction schemas)⁴⁶ based on specific conceptions of life/death, conceptions which then function both as the specification for being and as the specifications for the shared mode of “mind” (Ellison’s “inner eyes”) by which each individual member is made conspecific with each other and able to function in an “integrated composite human population” or human system. This system then functions as a higher level unit with its own autopoietic intentionality transcending that of the individual subject.

However, the problem here, as Varela has posed it, is that whilst the “autonomy of the higher level of the systemic level gives a vantage point from which the individuality of components in the next lower level is seen in perspective,” the obstacle that confronts us is that “we do not have access to the domain of interaction of the unit to which *we* belong.”⁴⁷ And the answer to the *what* would call for such access to the domain of “the cognitive processes of the autonomous unit of which we are participants and components.” Yet if, as we counter-propose, the modes of desire/aversion (R.M.S.) specific to each descriptive statement of human being (that is the R.M.S. which gives living expression to that statement) are everywhere constituted by rhetorical devices/

45. See Robert Boyd and Peter J. Richardson, *Culture and the Evolutionary Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 14.

46. Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature*, 142-144.

47. Varela, 274.

strategies, which are then inculcated by our order of discourse, and most “deep-structurally” of all by the fictional narrative/poetry whose function is to induce stably shared system-maintaining “regulatory sentiments” at the psycho-affective (aesthetic) level of being, then analysis of such rhetorical devices/strategies should provide us with precisely such access, and, by extension, access to the answer to the *what* controls reality. Here Girard’s proposal for a total rupture with our present approaches to literary scholarship would then prefigure the kind of rupture that “minority” literary criticism must make both with our present discipline and more far-reaching with the episteme of which it is an expression in order to take these rhetorical devices as the object of a diagnostic, rather than merely exegetical, analysis.

*Literary Criticism From a Craft to a Science:
The Role of Minority Discourse.*

- “We follow the laws of reality so we make sacrifices . . .”
- “So the weak must sacrifice for the strong . . . ?”
- “No, a part of the whole is sacrificed—until a new society is formed . . .”
- “But who is to judge? Jack, the committee?”
- “We judge through cultivating scientific objectivity . . .”
- “Don’t kid yourself . . . The only scientific objectivity is a machine.”

—Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“But what can be *our* place in the symbolic contract? If the social contract, far from being that of equal men (humans), is based on an essentially sacrificial relationship of . . . *articulation of differences which in this way* produces communicable meaning, what is our place in this order of sacrifice and/or language.”

—Kristeva, 1979

“The woman is accused of poisoning her husband with her menstrual blood. The myth then leads from menstrual blood which flows downwards—as a *natural* privilege of women, but a privileged *marked negatively*, to the tobacco smoke which rises upwards as the *cultural* privilege of the men, *which is marked positively*, that is to say, from the signifier of procreation to the signifier of religion.

—Lucien Scubla, 1982

The constant of the human governing codes is always a “deferent” relation between the menstrual signifier of procreation, that is, of “mere” biological life, to the tobacco smoke signifier of “true symbolic life,” with the latter being the only life that humans live. And in the analogic of our present governing code/totemic set of the onto-theoretical distinctions which articulate the mode of symbolic life, the term *minority* necessarily bears an ontological relation to the term *majority*. As such it must function axiomatically as mere biological life to the true symbolic life generated by the mainstream discourses of literary criticism, as the signifier *menstrual blood*, then, to the signifier *tobacco smoke*; or, as the signifier of the *negroid* peoples to the opiate-inducing *Caucasian/Asian* signifier complex, or, in terms of our economic variant, as the owners of capital-as-moveable wealth to the non-owners. As such, the category *minority* is always already a subordinated category within the organizing principle of difference/deference of our present “symbolic contract” and of the mode of particular “nature” to which its specific secular ontology “ties us down” metaphysically.⁴⁸ As a result we are just as restricted to our negative signifier function (i.e., functioning to constitute majority discourse as an opiate-inducing signifier so that it can maintain its “narcissistic advantage”⁴⁹) as the category of women is restricted in the traditional myth deciphered by Scubla.

In order to call in question this ontologically subordinated function, “minority discourse” can *not* be merely another voice in the present ongoing conversation or order of discourse generated from our present episteme and its disciplinary triad—biology, economics, philology (linguistics and literary scholarship)—inherited from the nineteenth century’s industrial ordering of words/things and its founding analogic. Rather, it should bring closure to a conversation which is now as conceptually and imaginatively exhausted in our post atomic, post-bio-technological order of reality as was the conversation of philosophical idealism, which, through the outworn genre of chivalric romances, had also continued to disseminate an illusionary and anachronistic chivalresque model of being/behaving/desiring. The rise of the novel form and of the practice of institutionalized literary scholarship, beginning

48. See A.T. de Nicolas, “Notes on the Biology of Religion” in *Journal of Social Biological Structures* 3, no. 2 (April 1980).

49. See Julia Kristeva, “Women’s Time” in *Signs* 7 no. 1 (1981-1982).

with Neo-Aristotelian Poetics, was itself part of what Blumenberg refers to as the “counter-exertion” that brought in the modern age,⁵⁰ and, accordingly, the present closure of the novel form, effected in “counter-novels” such as *The Invisible Man*, points towards the emergence in our day of a parallel movement of “counter-exertion,” one that will entail the transformation both of literary scholarship and of our present organization of knowledge.⁵¹

If the *Quixote* opened the process of self-assertion over against the objectified form of purely theological absolutism of the medieval age, it is this second phase of objectification, based on the hardening of what Foucault calls the constraints of our present orders of “true discourse,” that the closure of the novel form in *The Invisible Man*, together with the rise of new critical praxes such as structuralism, semiotics, and deconstruction, have begun to assault, in another concerted movement of counter-exertion, one capable, in Cornel West’s phrase, of opening onto new cultural forms in the context of a post-Industrial, post-Western and truly global civilization.⁵²

The major proposal here is that it is only as a leading thrust in this new movement of “counter-exertion” that Minority Discourse is imperatively necessary, because linked to the motives of general human self-interest, rather than to the particular interests of specific groups. For if, as the range of articles in the Minority Discourse issues suggests, the category of minority includes the sub-category “women,” then we are here confronted with the anomaly that it is *we* who constitute the *numerical majority*. Yet such is the force of the shared semantic charter through which we interdepend, that we all know what we mean when we use the category *minority* to apply to an empirical *majority*.⁵³ This is because the term is being used here to designate a fact which

50. See Hans Blumenberg, *Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1983), 177-178.

51. See also Stratford Beer’s point in Varela, *Principles of Biological Autonomy*, with respect to the urgent need for the “rewriting of knowledge.”

52. In an essay, “The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual” in *Cultural Critique*, no. 1 (Fall 1985), 122.

53. Bill Strickland was the first scholar to note, in a talk given at Stanford in 1980, the strategic use of the term *minority* to contain and defuse the *Black* challenge of the Sixties to both the founding analogic and to our present epistemic/organizations of knowledge. The term *minority*, however, is an *authentic* term for hitherto repressed Euro-american ethnic groups who, since the sixties, have made a bid to displace Anglo-American cultural dominance with a more inclusive Euroamerican mode of hegemony.

depends for its “truth” on a specific institutional system. And since these terms function to signify a relation of relative power to powerlessness, it is clear here that *Women and Minorities*, taken together as a systemic category, constitute the set of negative Ontological Others by means of which the descriptive statement of man-as-a-natural-organism, encoded in the figure of *man*, is stably brought into systemic being. This is the descriptive statement which our present organization of knowledge, including the discipline of literary criticism, was put in place to replicate. That is to say, the present forms of literary criticism and indeed all the disciplinary practices of our present episteme must accept, as its non-questioned but founding presupposition, our encoding as the systemic set of negative Ontological Others by means of which the specifications of our present model of being, the figure of man (in place of the landed gentry’s ideal Figure of the Yeoman), is maintained in being.

It is from our shared identity as the systemic set of negative Ontological Others and from our complementary systemic role that we can derive potentially innovative contributions to the de-objectification of our present systems of theoretical absolutism and to the urgently needed transformation of our present episteme and its now objectified mode of rationalistic knowledge. That negative identity entails for us a spearheading role in the counter-exerting thrust to regain the now lost motives of the self-interest of the human species. In other words, it is the very liminality (on the threshold, both *in* and *outside*) of our category-structure location within the present “field of play” of the *discursive* symbol-matter information system that gives us the cognitive edge with respect to such a far-reaching transformation.

For the “grounding premise” of our present majority/minority code as generated in its contemporary modality is itself a transmuted post-Sixties form of the same grounding premise which, in the field of the nineteenth-century episteme, virtually partitioned off “the Humanities” as the discourse of the universal Human Self from “anthropology” as the discourse on the particular “native” Other.⁵⁴ In other words,

54. Wole Soyinka, in his Introduction to a book of essays *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), vii, tells of his experiences at Cambridge University. During a one year visiting appointment there the Department of English refused to allow him to teach African literature as a part of the department’s offerings. Classifying non-consciously, according to underlying analogic/archaic

our present incorporation within literary scholarship as “brute” terminologies, (i.e., as *Afro-Americans/Blacks*, *Chicanos*, *Women*, *Native Americans*, *Asian Americans*, etc.) still incorporates us within new forms of the same Universal/Particular, objective/subjective order of value that was once at work in the more directly “Manichean allegory” of the Man/Native relation.⁵⁵

Our constitution as “natives” by the discipline of anthropology, fenced, separated off, from the Humanities, functioned to signify that the “figure of man,” embodied in the Indo-European, incarnated the ideal prototype of the secular human, its own epistemic organization of knowledge being in turn projected as isomorphic with an objective reality out there. Thus the present definition, *majority/minority*, if accepted as a brute fact, empowers mainstream literary scholarship to continue to see itself, and the parochial nature of its investigation into the functioning of human narrative discourse, as so ordered by the given nature of things rather than secured by the institutionalized directive signs of an order of discourse.

Most importantly, were we to accept *minority discourse* as a brute fact domain-in-itself, which would function as a kind of *supra-ism*, incorporating all *minorities* (as Feminism incorporates all women under the category of *gender*, Marxism, all workers under the category of *class*, Black Nationalism, all Blacks under the category of Pan-Africans) we would be unable to escape the fate of these *isms*. We would end up with some *minorities*, those less burdened with zero-degree signifiers, becoming increasingly more equal than the others by the automatic functioning of the directive signs of a new discourse based on the presupposition of minority status both as a brute and as an isolated fact rather than as a component of a negative Ontological Other category set defined by the *liminality* of our location. For it is precisely as such liminal subjects, able to experience to varying degrees the injustices “*inherent in structure*,” that we are able, in the words of the anthropologist Legesse, to “disenchant” our fellow systemic subjects from the “structure’s cate-

of our present episteme, the English Department insisted that his lectures of African literature should be given in the Department of Anthropology.

55. See Abdul JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (Amherst, Ma.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983) and “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 58-87.

gories and prescriptions.”⁵⁶

This point made by Legesse is central to our proposal. For our cognitive edge cannot be defined in *moralistic* terms—that is, we ourselves as intellectuals are not the “victims” of oppression, nor of wicked exploiters, and it is neither our intention to set out to “reclaim the true value” of our “minority” being nor, indeed, to establish a “dictatorship of the Minoriat.” Such a *moralistic* approach is the logical result of taking our *isms* as isolated rather than systemic facts. Rather, we are constituted as a negative ontological category by the systemically functioning directive signs of an order of discourse generated from the descriptive statement of man on the model of a natural organism, an order of discourse which it is our task to *disenchant*.

We cannot, however, effect this disenchantment by establishing a “truer discourse,” i.e., of minority discourse as such. As Foucault suggests and Ellison images, all “true discourses” contain “strategy sets” based on a non-conscious politics of replacing a new group hegemony for old group hegemonies. And, as Derrida further points out, what we might call in our terms the system-enabling Logos of each human order can only speak itself as an order of discourse definable as “rational” by “imprisoning” the differing varieties of “madness” of its discursive others. Thus the loss here for us, in our status as “knowers,” that is, as specific intellectuals⁵⁷ for whom our “job” identity takes precedence over our intermediate *status*, would be cognitively far-reaching. For the role of a minority discourse which sees itself as a utopian discourse, in Ricoeur’s sense,⁵⁸ the kind of new discourse that can only be generated from groups who accept their liminality to the systemically functioning order, would be given up if we accepted our role as that of constituting just another “true” discourse. Indeed the “Beyond” of my title is intended to suggest that we need to begin our praxis by

56. See Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of an African Society* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 271.

57. For the use and definition of this term, see Michel Foucault, “Interview: Truth and Power” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books), 109-133. There he makes the distinction between the intellectual as “bearer of a truth,” just and true for all, “and the intellectual who, in effecting the specific tasks of his job, comes upon truth which is genuinely subversive of the prevailing “regime of truth.”

58. See Paul Ricoeur, “Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination” in *Being Human in a Technological Age*, D.M. Borchert and David Stewart, eds. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980).

casting a critical eye on the systemic-functional role that the permitted incorporation of such a projected *true* discourse is intended to play, and the price at the level of emancipatory knowledge that would have to be paid for our newly licensed functioning within the present organization of rational knowledge.

For the potential role of a minority discourse as the discourse of the category of Ontological Other to the systemic figure of *man* is not only that of transforming the grounding premise on whose basis its existential discourse is made possible. It involves in addition an even more extensive shift which has to do with the liberation of the literary humanities themselves from the secondary role to which they have been logically relegated in our present episteme. The transformation of our present episteme requires the conversion of our present practice of literary criticism from a highly sophisticated yet system-functional craft into a science, making use both of Valesio's proposed disciplinary practice of a *rhetorics*,⁵⁹ of Todorov's proposed *symbolics of language*,⁶⁰ and of the conscious deciphering of figurative practices initiated by deconstruction.

*From Biology and "Life" as a New Object of Knowledge
to Human "Life" and a New Order of Knowledge*

Western culture has constituted under the name of Man, a being who by one and the same interplay of reasons must be a *positive domain* of knowledge, and cannot be an object of science.

—Foucault, 1973

The "sudden appearance" at the turn of the nineteenth century of the arrangement of knowledge that was to constitute our present episteme was generated from a parallel large-scale movement of socio-historical forces active down to our own times, a parallel self-movement of the historical system-ensemble.⁶¹ It was these forces and their challenge to the landed gentry's order of things which caused the crumbling of the

59. See Paolo Valesio, *Nova Antiqua: Rhetorics as a Contemporary Theory* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1980).

60. See T. Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).

61. The term is used by Kurt Hubner in *Critique of Scientific Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Classical ordering of knowledge. Its epistemic frame found itself unable to answer the new questions and solve the new problems which had arisen out of the solutions that it had found and the behaviors it had oriented in response to the questions which it in its own time had arisen to confront. Thus the enormous question of the rationalization of industrial production at the national level, for example, could not be solved within the disciplinary frame of mercantilism's "analysis of wealth." It called instead for a new frame, in whose context the mode of truth of the "analysis of wealth" could be replaced by the new behavior-orienting discipline of *economics* as the master-discipline in place of *politics*.

For this to happen, however, the self-representation of the human that underpinned the system of rational knowledge of the classical episteme had itself to be transformed. The new representation, that of the human on the model of the natural organism, came into being with the shift, at the level of the episteme, from natural history to the study of a new object of knowledge, life, within the new disciplinary frame of *biology*. The third shift was from the analysis of *general grammar* to the new discipline of *philology* as the study of the historical evolution of changes impelled by the interior mechanisms in languages which now came to serve an evolutionary "genetic" function for the projection of human populations as "language families," that is, as groups whose "essence" was defined by their language rather than by their self-representations, including that of being defined in their "primordial" essence by their shared languages.⁶²

In the ideologic of this new epistemic frame, the study of what was specific to human life as distinct from organic life was made secondary. Sociology, psychology, and the new humanities (literary criticism), as the disciplines which had the *potential* to constitute the founding models of being as a new object of knowledge, that is, human life as a hybridly organic and meta-organic third level of existence, were logically marginalized as the realm of the "subjective." In other words, the model of the human as a natural organism logically calls for the active marginalization of those areas of knowledge able to posit human life, its models of being and relative epistemes as new objects of knowledge of an entirely different code of knowledge which would parallel in our time the constitution of the discipline of biology and its new object, life,

62. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 290.

outside of the frame of the then classical episteme.

*From “Parricide” and Western Metaphysics
to Literary Criticism as a Science*

Ultimately it would appear that . . . men and women have never been any one particular thing or have had any particular nature to tie them down metaphysically [Humans] become through their powers of embodiment, a multiplicity of theories that became human because man has the capacity to turn theory into flesh. Insofar as the past conditions the present . . . [the] biological study of religion could liberate humans from codings in the nervous system which if not known as *conditioning*, might be taken as liberation when in every case they are only the shackles on human freedom.

—Antonio T. de Nicolas, 1981

Because of our coding function in the order of discourse of biological idealism and its regulatory metaphysics, and because of our *experiential* knowledge of the empirical effects of this function, human discourse can no longer be seen by us as neutral, unmotivated, or disinterested but, rather, because system-functional, as everywhere potentially *amoral* to those who are outside what Helen Fein defines as the “common universe of obligation.”⁶³ Thus, whilst majority discourse, in its most advanced positions, can aim, in the words of J. Hillis Miller, at committing “parricide” by and through the deconstruction of Western metaphysics, the role of Minority Discourse must go beyond this to call in question the grounding premises from which the metaphysical discourses of *all* population groups, *all* human systems—including that of the West—are generated. It is this calling in question which impels our going beyond the boundaries of our present episteme into a new constitutive domain of knowledge that we have called a science of human systems, a move which impels also our transformation of literary criticism into a science of human discourse, a new science which makes use of the insights of the biological sciences only to go beyond their limits.

Since it is these enculturating discourses, based on the “grounding

63. See Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

premise” of the metaphysical conception of life/death, and their related “codings in the nervous system” or systems of inference that enable what René Girard calls “the dynamic structure of desire” to bring into being differing modes of the *human* (as distinct from the biological hominid), the question becomes that of finding a meta-discourse able to constitute the discourse of its own order as an object of knowledge and thus to allow us “access to our cognitive domain.”

As Girard implies, all literature, indeed all human narrative, functions to encode the dynamics of desire at the deep structural level of the order’s symbolic template. It is, in consequence, precisely through fiction, ritual, and art that we can have access to the higher level units of our system-specific modes of mind and to the “enchanted” order of discourse which must everywhere function, in the last instance, to conserve the grounding premises of its mode of inferential analogic from which its system-maintaining “truths” are stably generated.

Here Girard’s point that fictional works of genius can afford us access to a kind of knowledge superior to our “rational” one, if linked to Grassi’s concept of the rhetorical speech that underlies all our systems of rational knowledges, suggests that the higher level of knowledge afforded by fiction, as indeed by religious ritual, myths of origin, etc., in effect provides access precisely to knowledge of those modes of rhetorical speech on whose basis all human orders are discursively erected. For it is through literature and art that these speeches are both “incarnated,” that is, constructed, and deconstructed, as our readings of the processes of discourse-disenchantment in *Don Quixote* and *The Invisible Man* illustrate.

Like the narrator of *The Invisible Man*, we as “Minority” scholars find ourselves confronting a reality deeply enchanted by the post-atomic functioning of anachronistic true discourses inherited from an industrial order now past and gone. In order to effect a gesture parallel to that by which the ancient Egyptians went from their rule-of-thumb measuring of the post-flood marshes to the theorems of geometry, it is necessary that we now go from our present art and craft of discourse to a new science of that third level of existence, human life, of whose bringing-into-being all orders of discourse, and the behavioral directive signs which they encode, are a function.

This projected transformation of literary criticism from a craft to a science is therefore based on the transgression of the present division

between the humanities and the neurosciences which study the functioning of the neurophysiological machinery and electro-chemical messenger systems of the brain. For orders of discourse and their rhetorical strategies/devices, that is, their semiotic strings, “cannot be understood in their behavior-motivating/regulating power unless the discursive orders are seen as functioning at the physiological level in tandem with the functioning of the electro-chemical systems” (Danielli’s I.R.S.) and overall neurophysiological machinery of the human brain. For it is their concerted praxis that constitutes the specific (verbal) symbol-matter information systems generated from Grassi’s founding rhetorical speech and that thereby enables the configuring both of shared regulatory sentiments (the aesthetic) and of shared modes of “mind” (the cognitive) that are integrative and specific to those human systems that we anthropomorphically call “cultures.” Their praxis that regulates the “codings in our nervous system,” while seeming to us like liberation, can be really only shackles on our human freedom.⁶⁴

*There are no Birds of Yesteryear in this Year’s Nest:
To Disenchant Discourse*

[M]en will turn once more to . . . wonderment; . . . will explore the vast reaches of space within

—Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo-Jumbo*

To disenchant discourse will therefore be to desacralize our “cultures” and their systems of rationality by setting upon our literary and cultural heritages and their orders of discourse rather than by continuing to adapt to their generating premises and non-conscious systems of inference as we do now. The “setting upon” process of disenchantment—parallel to Heidegger’s definition of “technology” as expressive of the human’s new setting upon physical nature rather than adapting to it—will be effected by “bringing into unconcealedness” the non-autonomous function played by all human discourse; by the revealing of the transindividual role of discourse in the functioning of the dynamic structure of desire or of the machinery of desiring-production by means of which our present human system brings itself autopoetically

64. A.T. de Nicolas, “Notes on the Biology of Religion” in *Journal of Social and Biological Structures* 3, no. 2 (April 1980): 225.

into being through the collective behaviors of the systemic subjects which the order of discourse unconsciously orients and regulates.

This proposal redefines the dynamics of desire as a new meta-biological object of knowledge constituted by discourse, as the acquired rhetorical motivation systems which are the uniquely human parallel of the species-specific motivation systems characteristic of all mammalian forms of life up to and including the different species of the prehuman hominid. These systems regulate all facets of species-specific behavior, cognitive and actional, in non-human mammals and linguistically speciated, i.e., group-specific, behaviors in human. It is these acquired/rhetorically coded, rather than innate/genetically coded, motivation systems that constitute the psychic unity of the human species. Like Mendel's new object of knowledge, *hereditary traits*, which functioned as an object irreducible to the species and to the "sex transmitting them,"⁶⁵ rhetorical motivation systems whose function is to bring differing modalities of "human being" into being, by means of enculturating discourses generated from the grounding premise of an environmentally "fit" conception of life/death, must also necessarily decenter the human subjects whose behaviors enable the stable replication of their own autopoiesis as systems. That is to say, their own intentionality and autonomy as autopoietic systems, once put into discursive play, whilst largely compatible with, are not reducible to that of their individual subjects.

The discursive system of each human order functions as the enculturating machinery by and through which the motivational system which dictates the behaviors needed if a specific mode of the human is to be brought into dynamic being and stably replicated (even if and where these behaviors are contradictory to the self-realization of human individuals or groups: cf. *Black Skins/White Masks*, minority skins, majority masks). Thus orders of discourse must function so as to "enchant" their human subjects into desiring in the mode of desiring needed, into acquiescing to the effecting of the intentionality of the R.M.S. in question, even at the cost of not affirming their own. Hence the great moments of Girardian *conversion*, from *Don Quixote* to *The Invisible Man*, arise where the novelistic hero wakes up, rejecting the non-conscious "mimetic" quality of his former inculcated mode of motivation/desire.

It is in the disenchanting of the discourses which brings into being

65. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 224.

an existential reality experienced as if it were objectively outside our human control that Minority Discourse will both find and go beyond its own paradoxical rationale. For if, as Derrida argues, the “very idea of reason as dominant . . . in human nature is also a fiction” since consciousness or reason are “effects, traces, the detritus of will” and “man lacks the capacity—to know without motive,”⁶⁶ it is only through the “disenchanted” of our true discourses that we will come to know the grounding premise that determines this ostensibly autonomous “will” or “motive” and to determine then consciously what now determines us, determining how we know and act upon the world: to disenchant the human, then, enabling her/his Girardian “waking up” to a consciously chosen intentionality. With this emerges the possibility of a science of human behavior, and of what Gellner calls the extra-territoriality, at last, of human cognition.

In doing this of course we would only follow in the wake of the *Pilgrim's Progress* from “enchantment” to “conversion,” into a space that the frontiers of revelatory fiction have already opened out before us.

. . . “(A)nd I no hero, but short and dark with only a certain eloquence and a bottomless capacity for being a fool to mark me from the rest; saw them, recognized them at last as those whom I had failed and of whom I was now, just now, a leader, though leading them, running ahead of them, only in the stripping away of my illusionment.”⁶⁷

Some 350 years before:

“Let us go gently, gentlemen” said Don Quixote, “for there are no birds this year in last year’s nests. I was mad, but I am sane now. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, but today as I have said, I am Alonso Quixano the Good.”⁶⁸

To paraphrase Ellison: “Perhaps in the lower frequencies, they speak for us.”⁶⁹

66. As cited by Berel Lang, *Philosophy and the Art of Writing: Studies in Philosophical and Literary Style* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983), 228.

67. Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 546.

68. Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 938.

69. Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 568.