

National College of Art and Design,
Fine Art, Print Making
&
HadCom , Joint Course.

Media Closure:

An investigation of our
contradictory hopes and fears about technology

by
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Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and
Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of
Bachelor of Fine Art

1995

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Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank Mr. Gerry Walker for his help and encouragement, as well as Mr Tony Fitzmaurice for inspiration.

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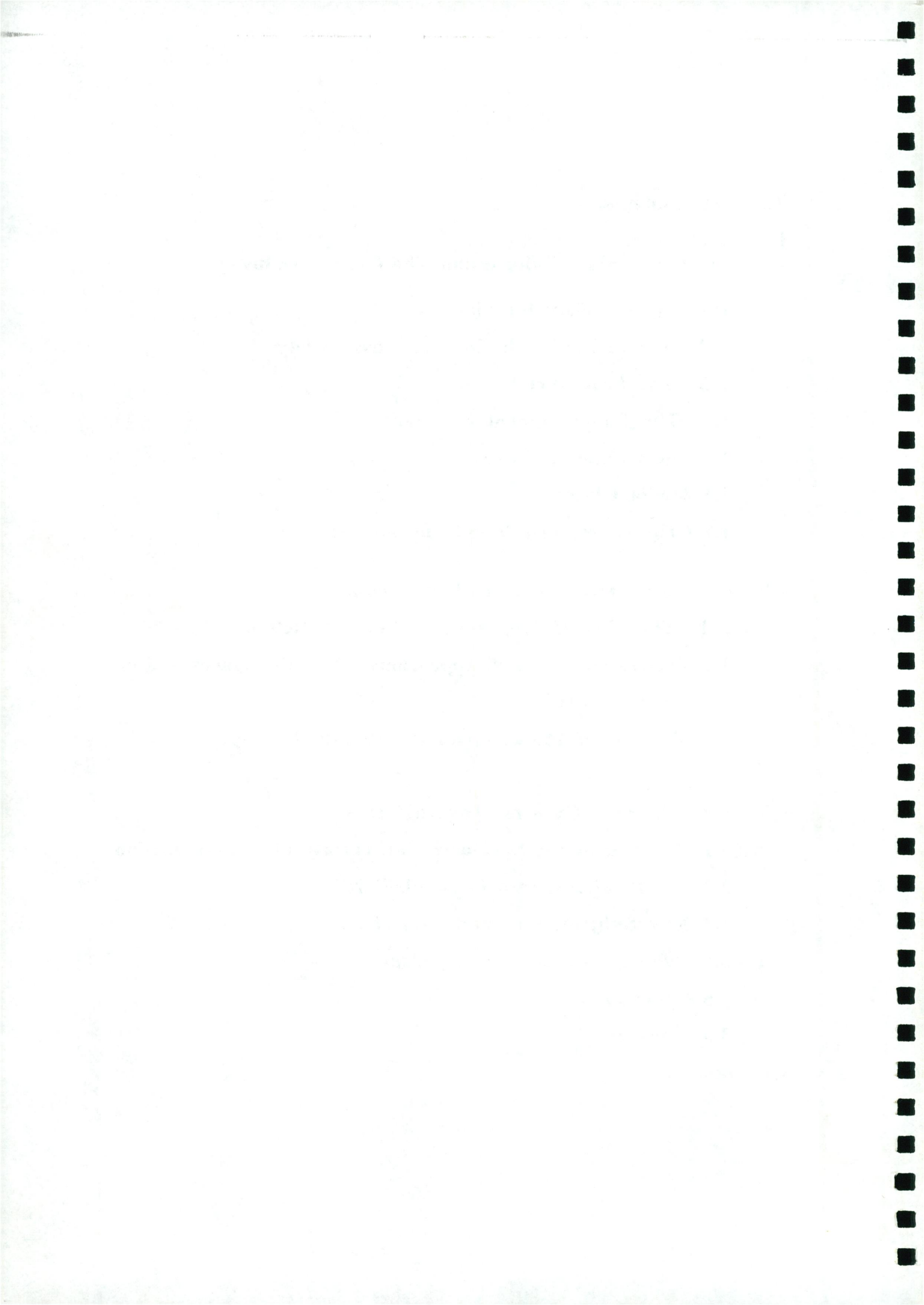
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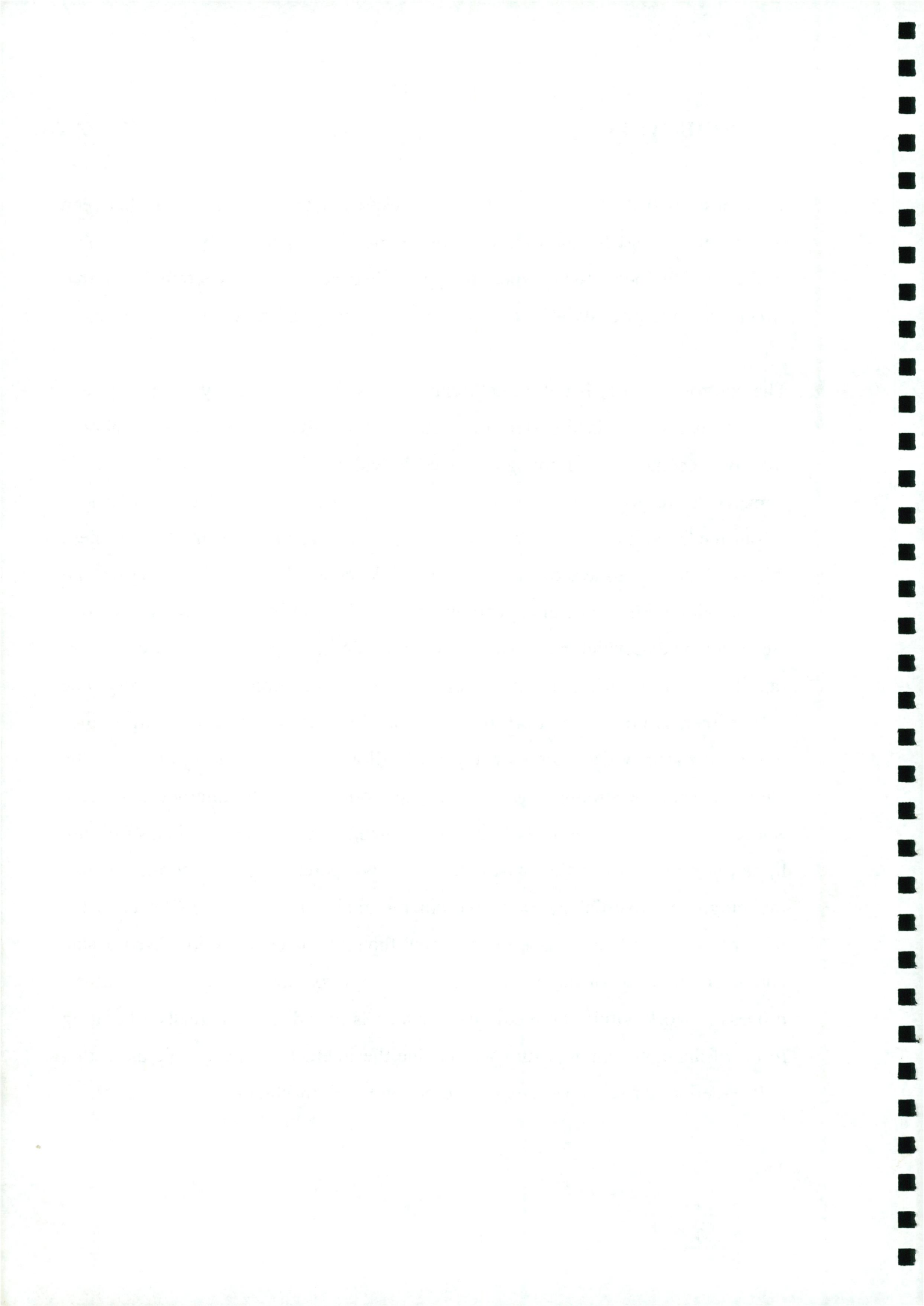
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INTRODUCTION

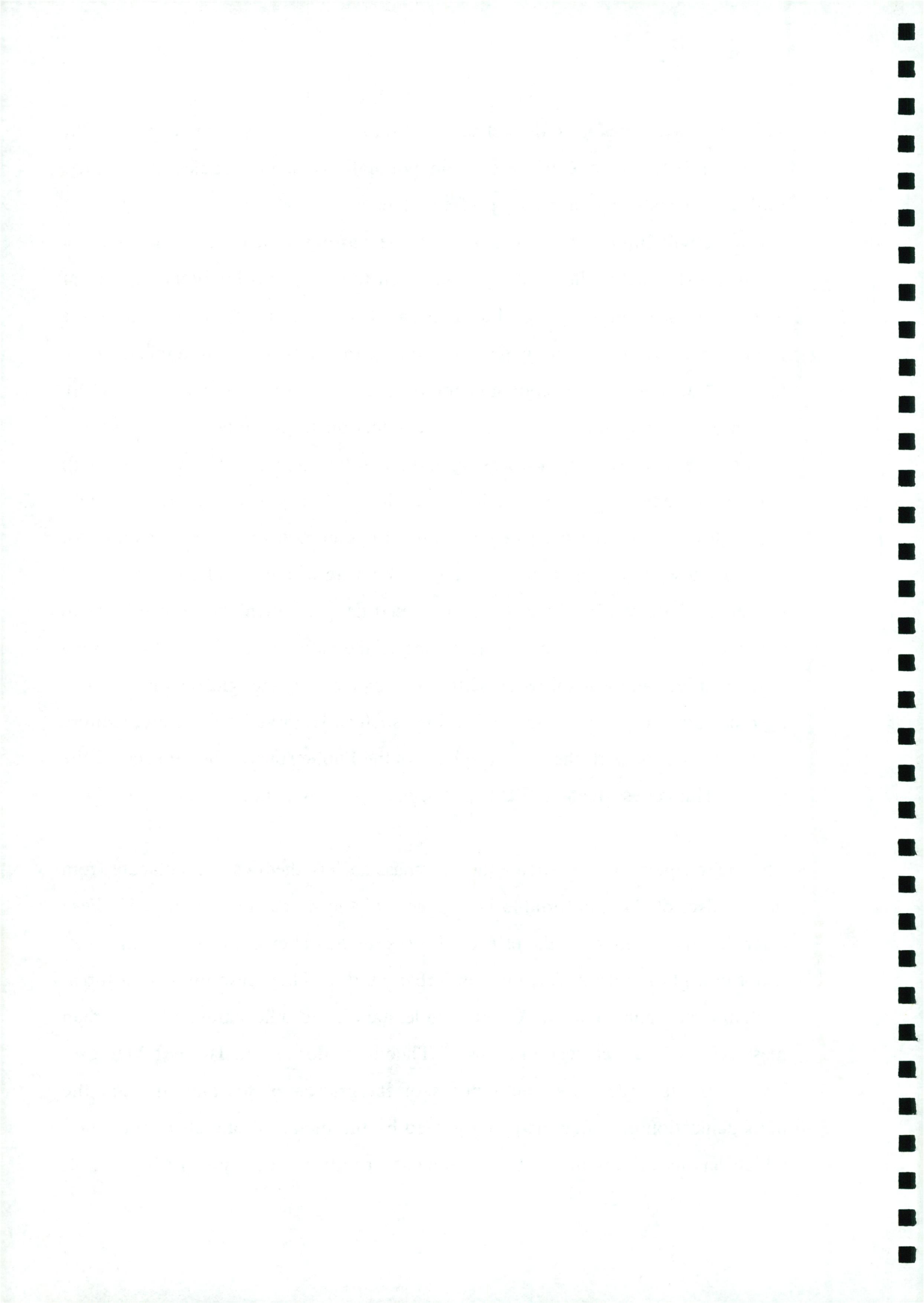
This thesis will deal with the theoretical responses to the relationship between social control and technologies of communication, specifically the electronic media. It will focus on the specific types of stories our culture tells itself that either reinforce or destabilise hierarchical and authoritarian systems of control.

The control I refer to is not a totalitarian grip over a multitude by a media power elite but is a generalised system of control within advanced capitalism whereby we have become our own thought police. We voluntarily enslave ourselves, divest ourselves of responsibility and invest it in a centralised system that feeds back to us our mediated image, like a warped mirror, carrying inducements to buy these things which we enslave ourselves to make. A feedback loop of production and consumption with no beginning and no end and with no blame. However, today's electronic media, which have played a crucial role in supporting such a cycle, are rapidly becoming beholders of strategies for the realisation of our dreams. The T.V. screen is now commonly perceived as interactive: as a drawing board, word processor, video editor or a virtual killing zone. More significantly the media screen is becoming a gateway to the world itself. The Internet is a media 'space' where collectives gather daily to exchange real and crucial ideas that are light-years away from the master fantasies we perceive in the non-negotiable monologue of advertising, television, cinema, radio and the press. Power is the power to think and act. I hope to show that thought has been monopolised by the combined workings of the media. But I also hope to show that there is a natural process at work within the media itself which is introducing radically liberating forms of dialogue which in turn will enable the interaction and co-operation that will re-define our relations with each other and with machines.



This thesis will investigate theoretical and fictional responses to the effects of the media since the advent of mass urban populations in the nineteenth century. Rather than analysing the material effects themselves or their origins or primary causes, I will limit my investigation to the various nineteenth and twentieth century texts, since this is the period when the truly revolutionary aspects of technological change occur; the creation of the mass urban centres; mass production and consumption patterns; the elimination of geographical space through transport and telecommunications; the arrival of a 'global' mass culture of radio, cinema, television and their connection to commodity consumption through the techniques of advertising and marketing and so on. This thesis will attempt to focus on the theoretical and fictional responses to mass culture, although flow between the categories above is common in the texts examined. Most of these responses, that are in any way aware of the social control exerted by the global, media are pessimistic, but that pessimism has recently been tempered with hope. Greater understanding of the nature of such a system is seen to depend less and less on recourse to older patterns of thought which involved rigid categorisation and binary oppositions such as High vs Low culture; Culture vs Nature; Life vs Art; the Private sphere vs the Public sphere; the Subject vs. the Object ; Human vs Machine; Reality / Original vs Appearance / Simulation.

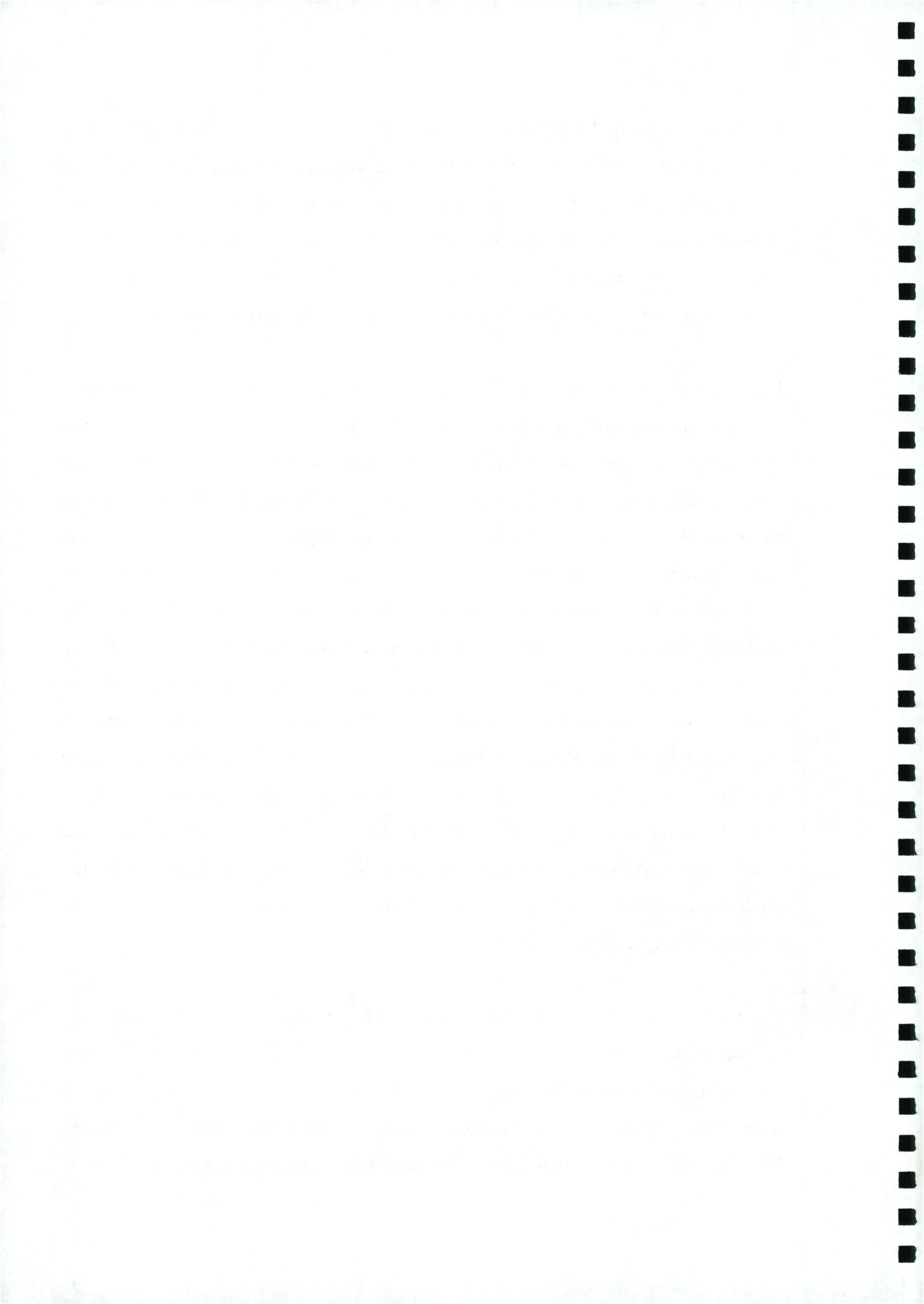
The first chapter will investigate the first mass society theories that emanate from the mindset of the comfortable bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century, as these offer the first response to the effects of mass media. They express a wariness of, if not outright repulsion for, the new urban culture. They describe it as a threat to democracy and literacy. A better understanding of the nature of the urban mass comes in the critical analyses of Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. These writers understood the process of integration of art and life and the homogenization of culture as being guided by the dictat of capitalist production which has its origins in the Enlightenment. It will be seen, hopefully, that all



these views are crippled by defining dualisms inherited from the Enlightenment, a time before global communications; the distinction between High and Low culture and the power of Art over Life. 'High' cultural values i.e. modernist art, classical music, literature and so on are seen as being in some way superior or exemplary in relation to those of mass or popular values i.e. cinema, radio, television which are seen to be fodder for an atomised or exploited urban mass.

The second chapter will look at the implications of Adorno and Marcuse analyses of the Enlightenment conception of Progress and the collective operations of the media as it abstracts the everyday world of social relations into representation under the "the Spectacle"(Debord,1967,thesis#3). The Spectacle is the translation of life, as something we actively engage in, into representation (image) which we can only contemplate. Life becomes a simulation. We participate with it only as consumers of commodities and 'lifestyles' via the regulated channels of the media. These concepts occur in the writings of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard. The collapse of the divide between high and low culture enables the inclusion of Science Fiction as the ultimate barometer of technologically mediated change. The pulp sketches of Philip K. Dick, the manic demolitions of William Burroughs and the literary cross over meditations of J. G. Ballard provide a clearer insight into the sense of vertigo and reality loss that signify the breakdown of binary oppositions. Science fiction's disregard for the academic conventions of philosophy, sociology or psychology enables it to speculate wildly and further afield.

The final chapter will deal with the many new modes of thought that do not depend on binarisms or polar oppositions. Writers and theorists in this new cybernetic world do not believe in the existence of a self-determining, rational, autonomous, subject who is isolated and beyond economic and social affairs. They believe only in a new kind of subject who has contact with the flow of



forces that surround and define each and everyone of us. They believe that through realisation of the existence this 'network' of forces real possibilities to change it in the interests of freedom and equality become available. They look to the mechanisms within our collective global culture as a possible way out of the control mentioned above. A conception of ourselves and society as a machine, richly dynamic, contradictory and ultimately elusive is a possible 'strategy' to evade the crushing cynicism of 'hard domination' theory. A strategy that far from ruling out the possibility of liberation through the lack of a coherent (Universal) platform would be one which could make all other platforms possible i.e. the right to expression of every individual. The concept of interrelatedness is the essence of the media. It is within the media that new metaphors for freedom, harmony of interests and equality within difference comes into being.

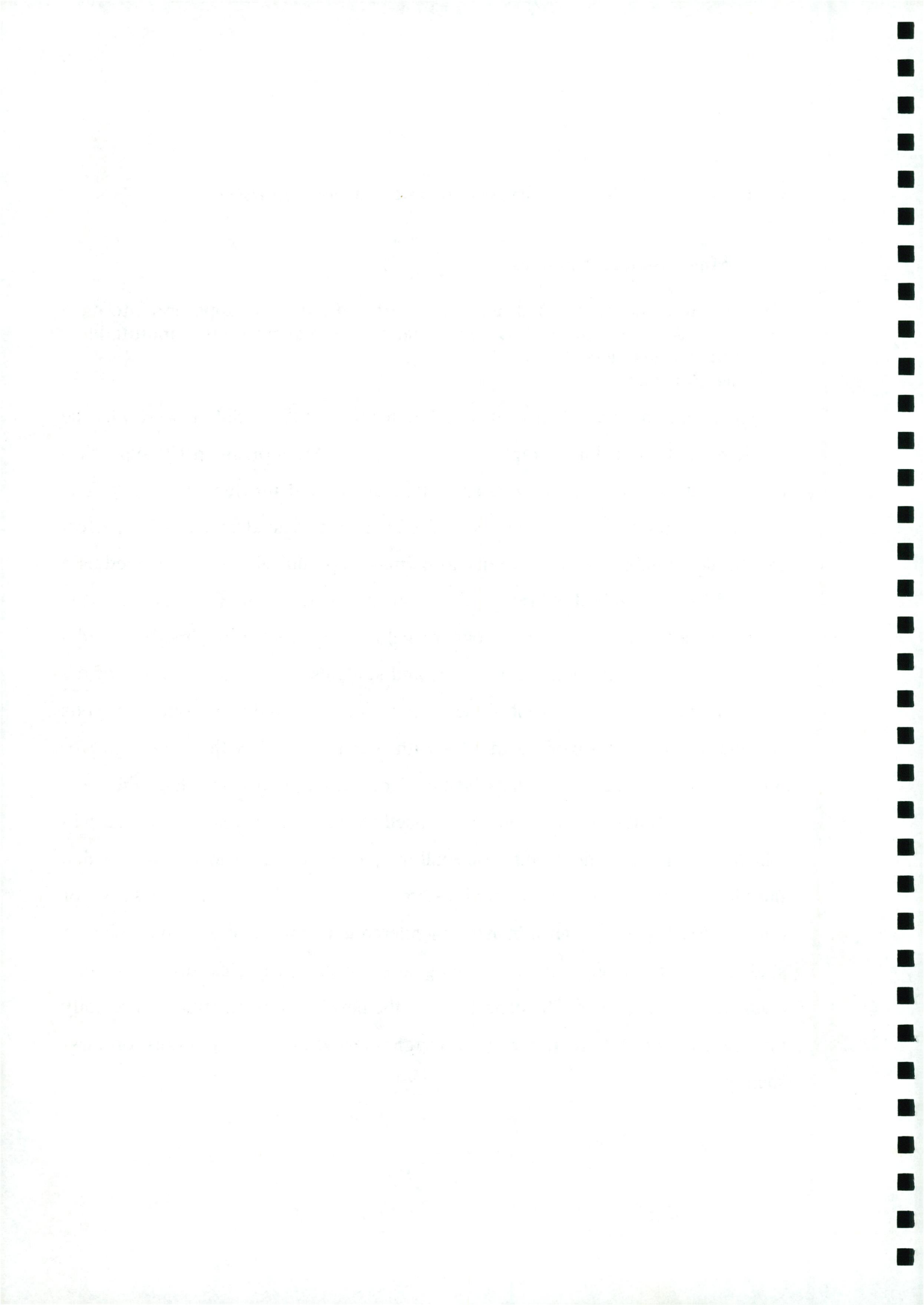
Chapter One Mass Culture and The Culture Industry

1.1 Mass society theories

The idolatrous mob demanded an ideal worthy of itself and appropriate to its name A vengeful God has given ear to the prayers of this multitude. Daguerre was his messiah.

(Charles Baudelaire)

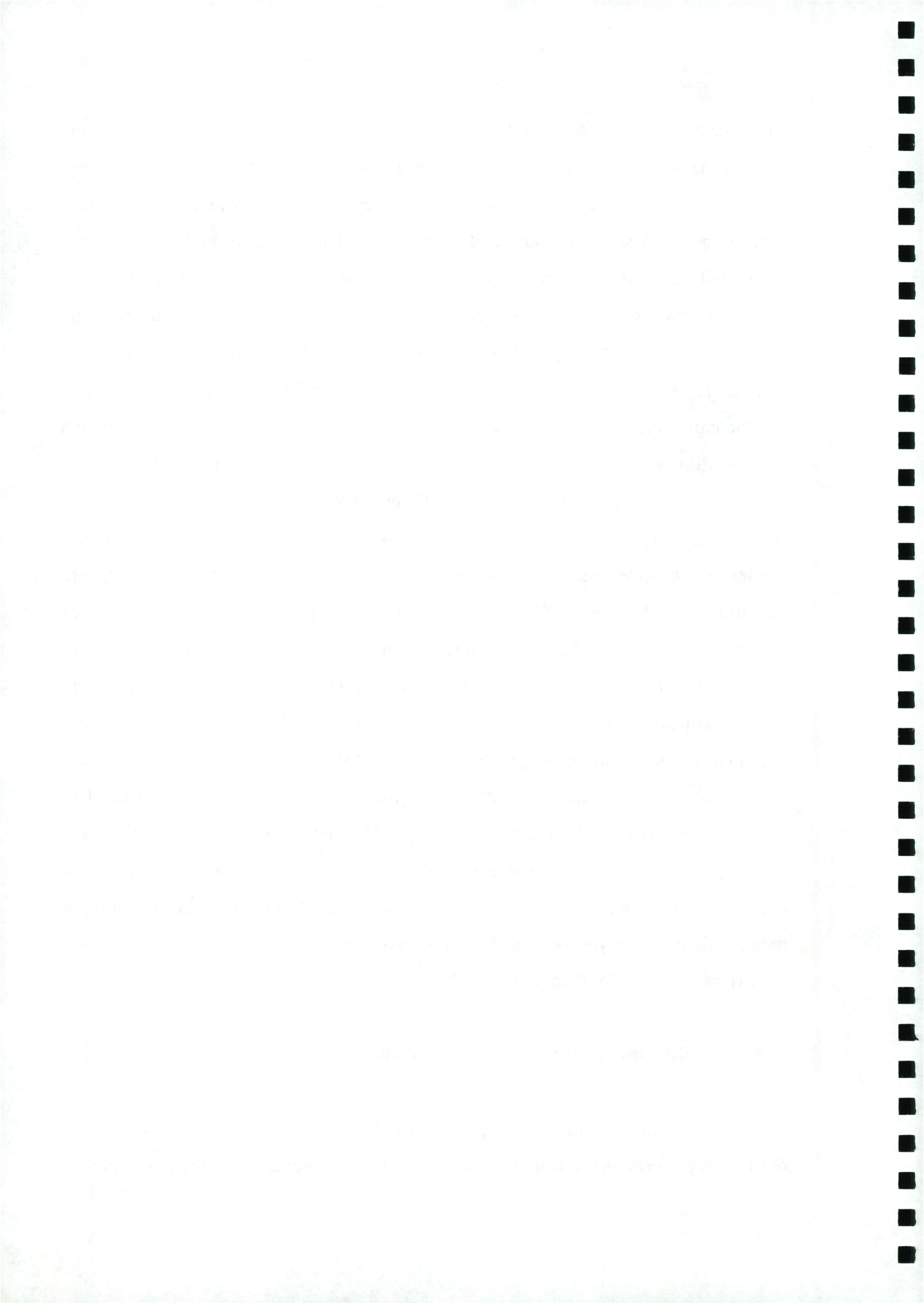
The statement above, taken from Baudelaire's essay: "The Salon of 1859: The Modern Public and Photography" (Modern Art & Modernism, p.19) typifies a certain attitude towards the popular culture of the mid nineteenth century. The invention of photography - as a method of capturing visual reality with perfect exactitude combined with its ability to be mass reproduced - was perceived as a debased form of art and a threat to the "French artistic genius" (Baudelaire). This attitude is at the heart of the first sociological investigations of our modern media culture. Philosophers, political theorists and students of mass psychology of the 19th century viewed the advent of the mass society - the industrialised metropolis and the millions who worked there - with a fear tainted with a nostalgia for previous social structures. A mass society, they argue, is one in which the most important institutions are large, centralised, bureaucratic, and impersonal; in which most human relationships are shallow, partial, and transitory; and in which individuals tend to be lonely, anxious, rootless, and in search of a sense of community. Use of the term 'mass' engendered early on a view of the object of study as socially undifferentiated, homogenised, lacking any clear divisions along class, sex or racial lines. The conception of the new urban population as a socially undifferentiated rabble ran right through these first investigations of mass society.



The 'mass society tradition' (Bennett, 1982, p.32) held a pessimistic view of the development of media as it was seen to be a challenge to stable bourgeois society. To the educated and cultured bourgeoisie every new method of communication served only to destroy the purity of Culture (i.e. Culture as something produced by a small and exclusive class of artists and writers for the contemplation of a similarly exclusive class.) Specific developments in media threatened the exclusiveness and integrity of High culture. Cultural democratisation in the form of mass reproduction of art in both popular photography, news photography and broadcasting etc. dissolved High cultural values. The mass media enabled a proliferation of revolutionary ideas which, coupled with universal suffrage, threatened political institutions and parliamentary democracy. The national and international organs of communications (post, press, telephony), linked to faster modes of transport and rising literacy, dissolved the cohesion of the 'organic community' (Bennett, 1982, p.32) with its traditionally oral system of communication. All these new phenomena in mass communications were connected to the determinants of industrial change, the rise of democracy and popular education. Many believed that due to the rootless nature of the mass, irrational forces would emerge and destabilise the state. English cultural theory was never fully at home with democracy and was characterised by the need to invest in the state as the central authority. Matthew Arnold believed that the anarchy implied in the breakdown of that older traditional order and the consequent war between the classes should be countered by directly coercive means when necessary to subordinate all society's interests to an agreed upon 'centre of authority' (Bennet, 1982, p.33).

1.2 A criticism of the idea of mass society

It becomes apparent when looking at all of this that the 'masses' are only ever defined negatively as the opposite of 'elite' and vice versa. Neither is defined in

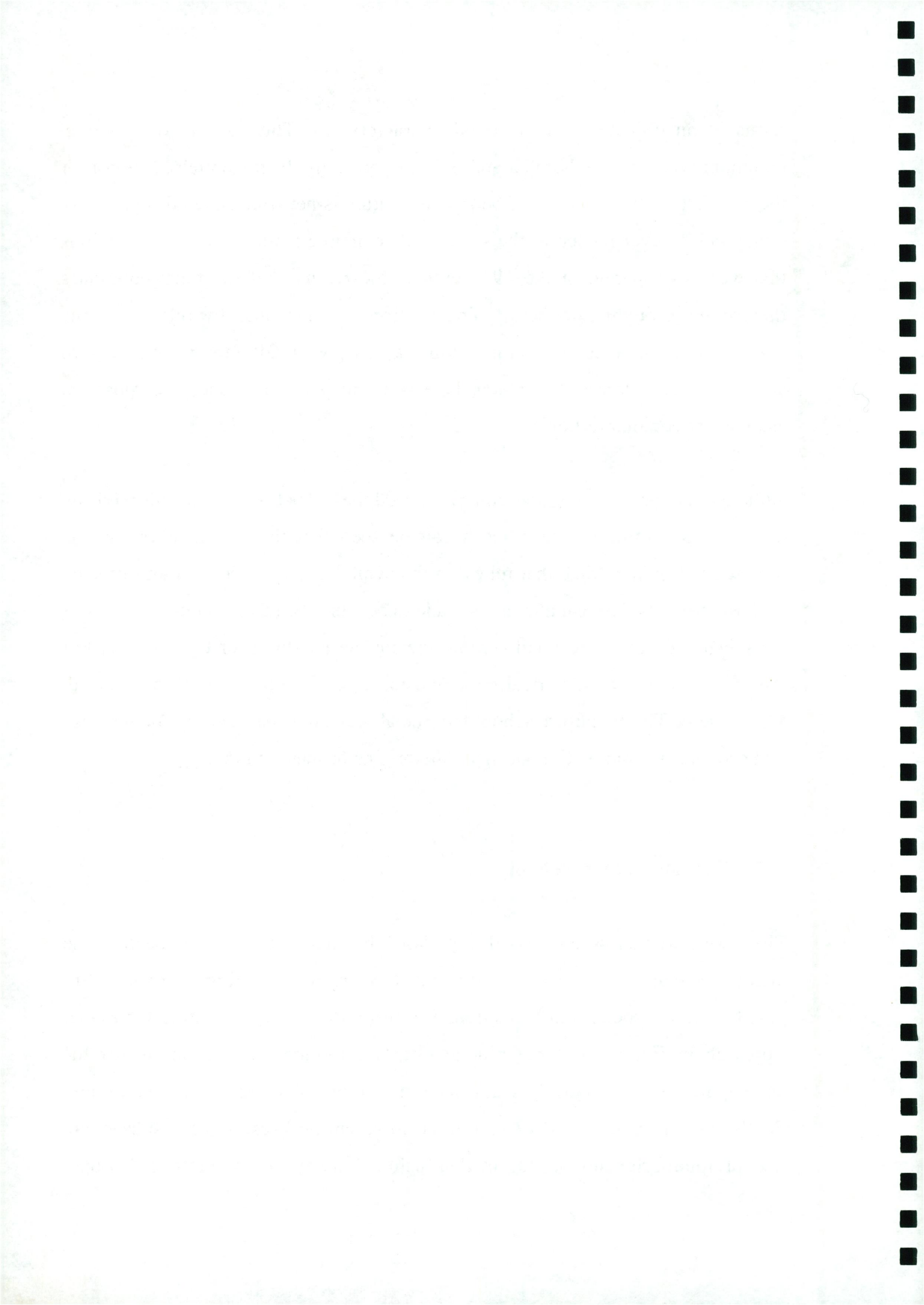


terms of an objective set of social characteristics. The concept of 'organic' community is never elaborated and is based on a highly romanticised notion of the past. The value or purity of bourgeois Culture is never considered objectively either and is never related to the social and economic reality of class distinctions that were so apparent in the 19th century, the reality that the bourgeois class themselves brought into being. The irrationality and anarchy related to the culture of the nineteenth century mob was surely an attempt by workers to articulate their interests for which there were no previous, hence recognisable, channels of communication.

Although the mass society tradition recognised the alienation and isolation felt by many in the culture of the cities it can be seen that their train of thought is inflicted with a prejudice that relies on the availability of education and literacy to those theorists. No real attempt is made to account for mass society in terms of the social and economic relations that dictate the condition of that culture. For this to be known the historical development of mass culture must be analysed. The value of The Frankfurt School for Social Research, particularly the writings of Theodore Adorno, is to investigate the origins of mass culture.

1.3 The Frankfurt School

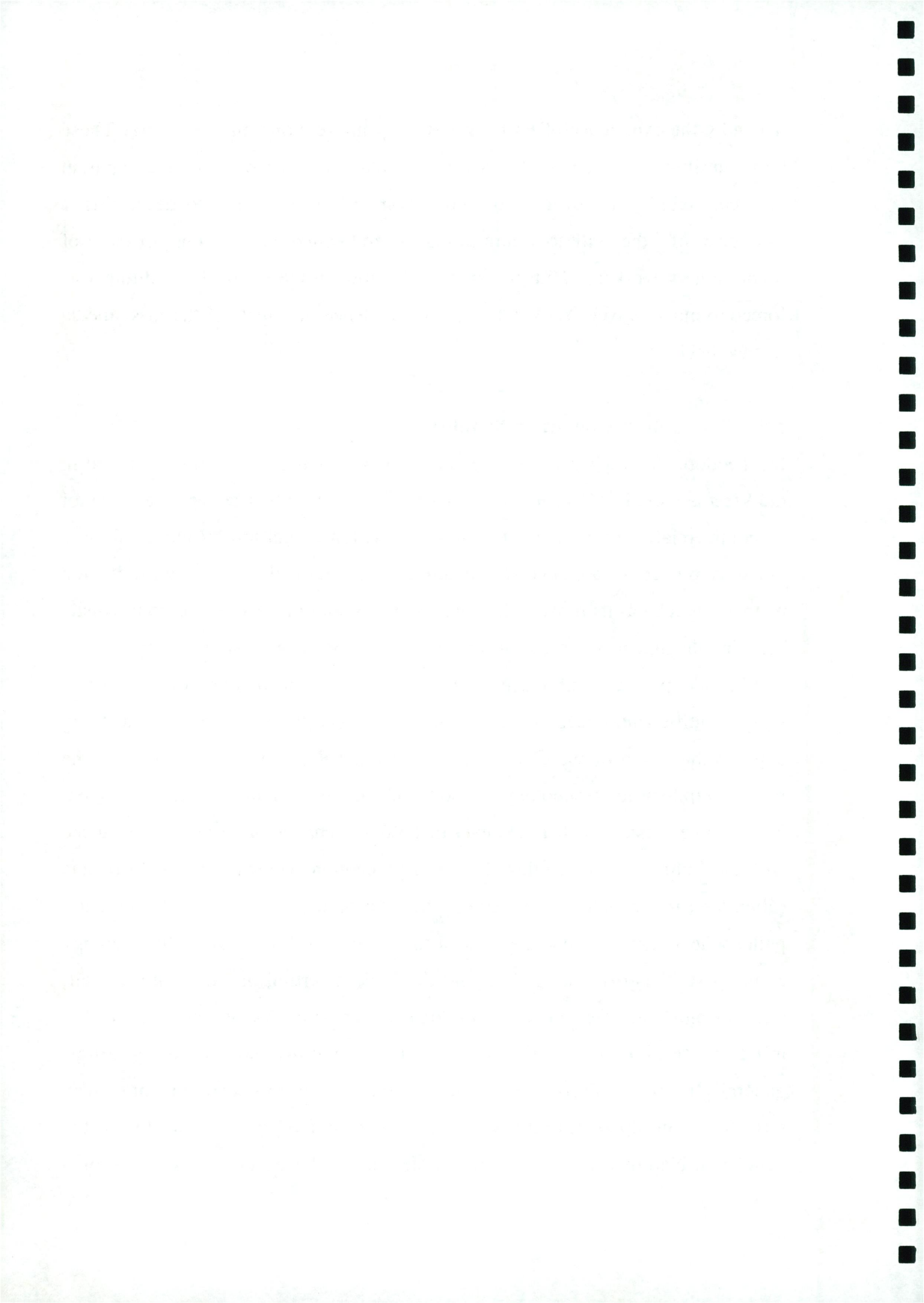
The Frankfurt School analysis differs from the 'mass society' approach to the media and mass communications in that they are investigating its relations to possibilities for social transformation. Set up in 1923 as the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, three crucial events provided starting points for the development of a previously scant marxist critique of culture and technology. Firstly the failure of the 1917 revolution to reach the West and the subsequent rise of totalitarianism in Russia disillusioned many communists in Europe.



Secondly the experience of Fascism left deep impressions on their work. These two contributed to their third concern. The attempt to account for the apparent political stability achieved in the post-war West led them to describing a lobotomy of the will to liberation once embedded in the consciousness of revolutionary workers. With the arrival of Hitler in Germany the Institute was forced to move to New York where ample evidence of effects of the mass media was available.

1.4 The Enlightenment rationality

In Theodore Adorno's analysis, the explanation of why revolution is stemmed in the West is inextricable from the methods of production that govern the shape of its commercial mass culture. The mass production of culture by the media is a late development of a capitalist structure and is a reflection of mass production methods which has its roots in the Enlightenment and the rise of the bourgeoisie. The Enlightenment was a period of cultural upheaval in western belief systems that has had profound influence on the formation of the modern world. Armed with scientific truths recently acquired, a new class (the bourgeoisie) essentially deposed the power of the Church and the Divine Right of the aristocracy. The relationship between technology and social change is difficult in that it is unclear which comes first. It is clear however that a major change of perception occurred with the Enlightenment. In this change of perception scientists and philosophers (often the same people i.e. Descartes was a cartographer, a mathematician and a philosopher) defined a separate view of the world that differed from the theology of the past. This often hinged around the basic assertion that the Subject (self, mind or ego), and the Object, (traditionally that which exists externally to the mind observable and verifiable: the body, nature, society and 'things' generally)(both definitions from the Oxford Dictionary) were in some way reflections, but opposites, of each other. For example, we can see this in the belief that Nature has some internal order that is based on the same rational



principles that dictate human affairs. Conversely we can also see that the subject was a rational, self-determining individual according to the rational natural laws discovered through the application of scientific method.

This split is the foundation of the bourgeois mind. Liberty to the bourgeois subject is to be free from the constraints of feudal monopolies, it is to be a free individual (the 'free merchant') who is 'naturally' free to dominate the world of things. His relation to the object world; to commodities, to cash, and to capital and human resources, becomes possessive.

The Enlightenment project of reworking the world on rational grounds in an attempt to make accountable the mythical forces of arbitrary aristocratic power, or of God or of the Church, is shown to be crucially flawed because of this impulse to dominate and control. It is in reality an attempt to define a new social order for an ascendant class that is radically different from the past. The idea of 'Progress' is based on the identification of "instrumental rationality" with "subsumptive rationality" (Bernstein,1991,p.4). The interrelationship of these two forms of rationality is the key to understanding how the Enlightenment ceases to be a progressive force and becomes the basis of a new form of repression.

Instrumental rationality is the kind of thinking that has as its goal the technical mastery of the environment (the object world) for the preservation and betterment of mankind. This was the logic of the Enlightenment. For example the application of instrumental rationality drove scientists to the invention of steam-power. This paved the way for the centralisation of work practice in cities, in the manufacturing workshop, the division of labour and the harnessing of a workforce to the production line. The owners of manufacturing, the bourgeoisie were the class whose interest was served by instrumental rationality.

1911
The first of the year was a very
cold one, and the weather was
very disagreeable. The snow
was very deep, and the
frost was very severe. The
ice was very thick, and the
floods were very high. The
wind was very strong, and the
rain was very heavy. The
sun was very bright, and the
moon was very full. The
stars were very clear, and the
planets were very visible.

The second of the year was a
very warm one, and the weather
was very pleasant. The snow
was very thin, and the frost
was very light. The ice was
very thin, and the floods were
very low. The wind was very
light, and the rain was very
light. The sun was very
bright, and the moon was very
full. The stars were very
clear, and the planets were
very visible.

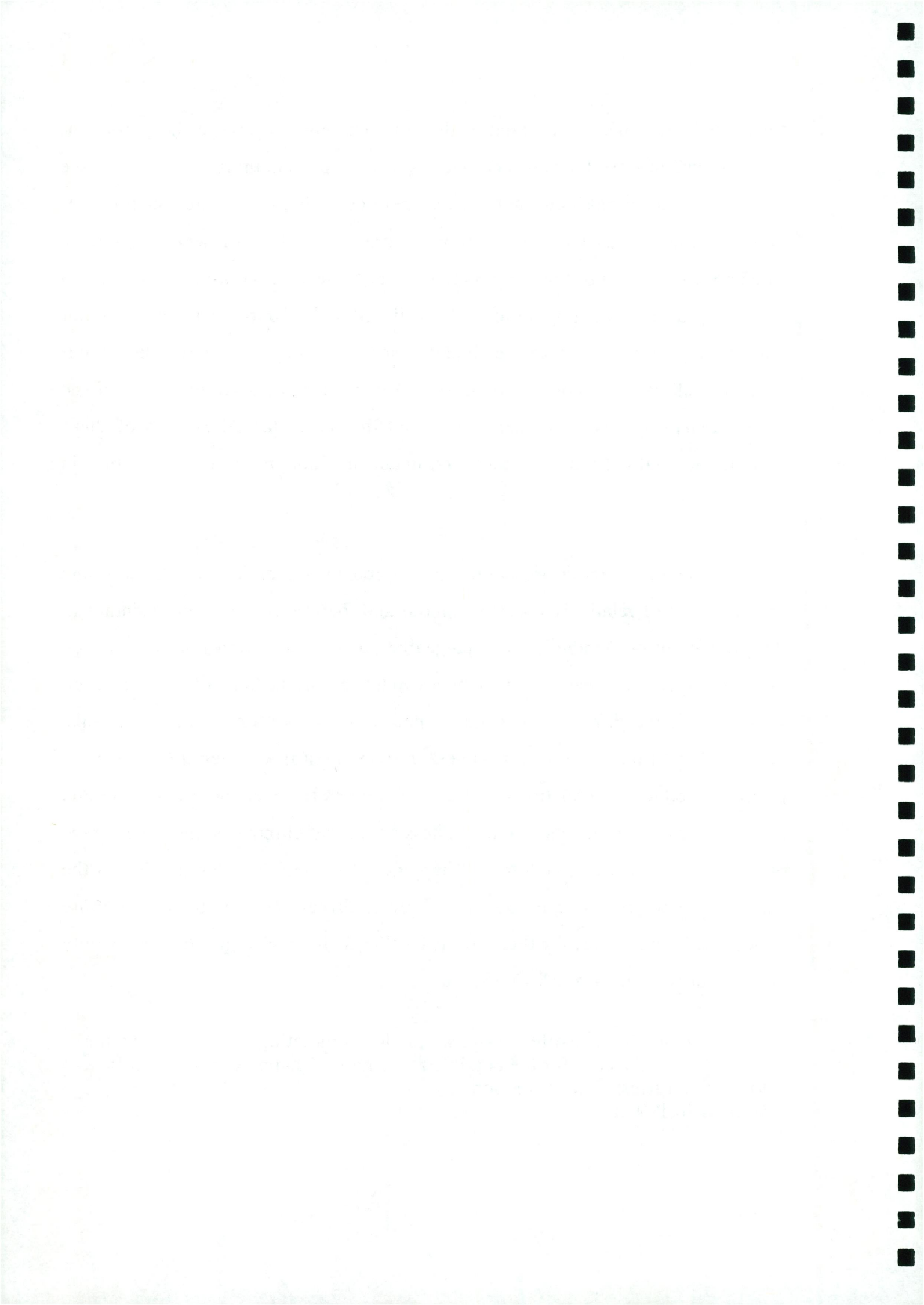
The third of the year was a
very cold one, and the weather
was very disagreeable. The
snow was very deep, and the
frost was very severe. The
ice was very thick, and the
floods were very high. The
wind was very strong, and the
rain was very heavy. The
sun was very bright, and the
moon was very full. The
stars were very clear, and the
planets were very visible.

Subsumptive rationality is a kind of thinking whereby we ignore the particular, sensuous character of both subjects and objects, people and things, in order to see general or universal characteristics between them for the purpose of understanding, categorising and controlling greater numbers of people or things. The application of subsumptive rationality can be seen in the process whereby a largely agrarian rural population whose livelihood is derived from particular craft skills are brought into the modern manufacturing workshop where their particular skills are ignored and subsumed under technical requirements of the production line. It is in the same way that the particular differences of these regional or rural cultures are subsumed under the anonymity of mass culture in the metropolis.

Mass production methods are based on two general principles: the division and specialisation of relatively unskilled labour and the use of tools and machines in the production of standard, interchangeable parts. Its function is to attain high rates of output at decreasing cost. Under capitalism, production is for the market; goods are produced, not to meet human needs, but solely for profit, for the sake of acquiring further capital to re-invest in manufacturing, generating still more profit. The ethic of production generates conditions for ever more elaborate and complex forms of production in an endless spiral that eliminates the achievement of the rational ends of freedom and happiness to come that was implied in the Enlightenment project. This pursuit of profit drives the production of more goods and commodities for their surplus value to be exchanged for profit only and not for their 'use-value'. Hence the

Enlightenment's irresistible progress in the domination of nature and the securing of the means for the possible realization of happiness come, in fact, to entail an irresistible regression.

(Bernstein, 1991, p.5)



1.5 The Culture Industry

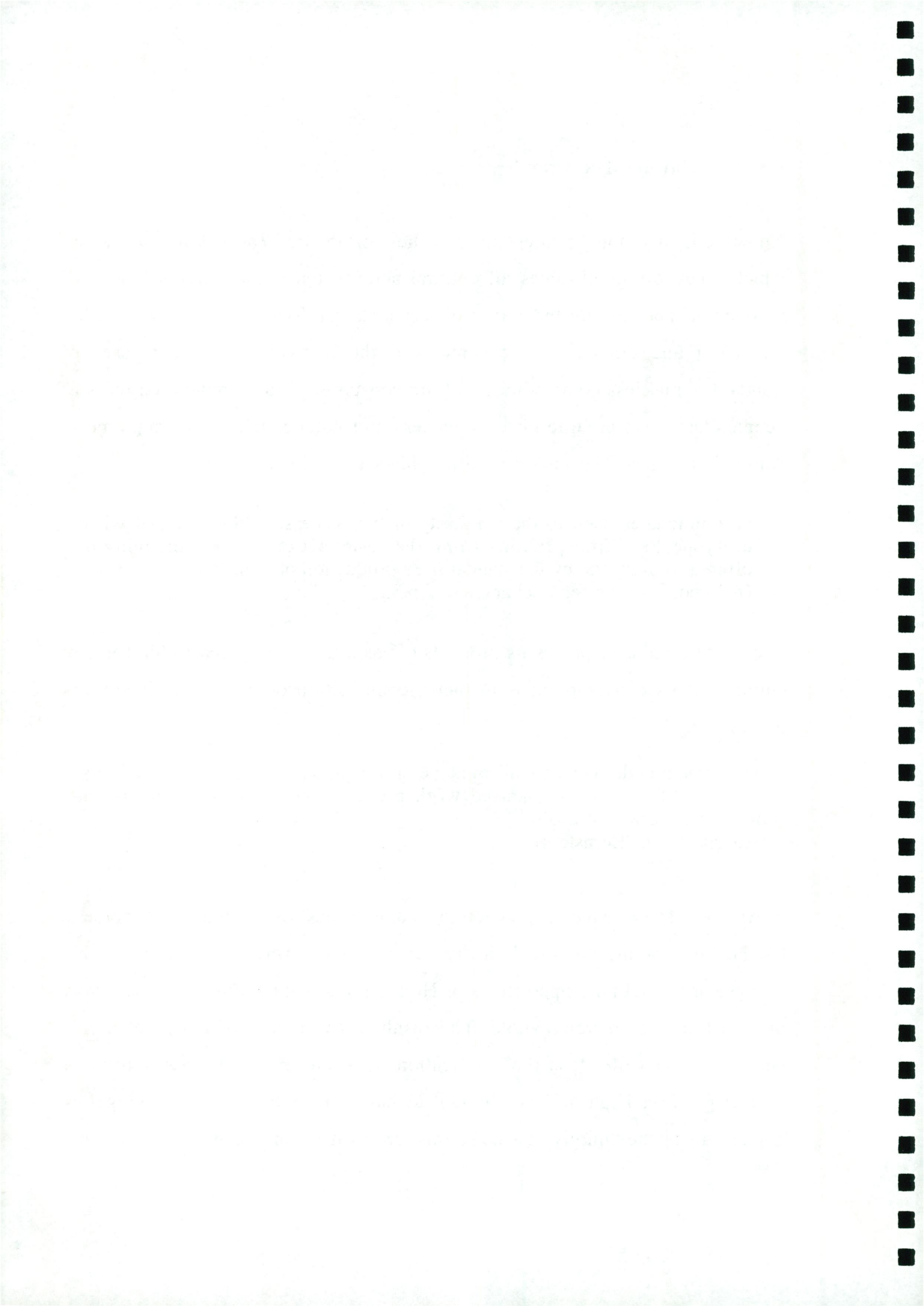
Nowhere is this more apparent than in the workings of *The Culture Industry*, which, to Adorno, subsumes all cultural activity under the universal logic of production. The Culture Industry produces a standardised mass culture of radio, television and cinema in the same way the factories produce masses of standardised useless commodities. All are consumed by a homogenised mass of people. The descriptive terms of sameness and homogeneity reign supreme in Adorno's writings. The subject sacrifices his/her individuality and

accommodates itself to the regularity of the successful, the doing of what everyone does, ..[this] follows from the basic fact that ...the same thing is offered to everyone by the standardised production of consumption goods. (Adorno, "On the fetish character..."p.35)

The Culture Industry passes its products off as a universally accessible form of culture but its consumption is in fact a continuation of the mechanised work process;

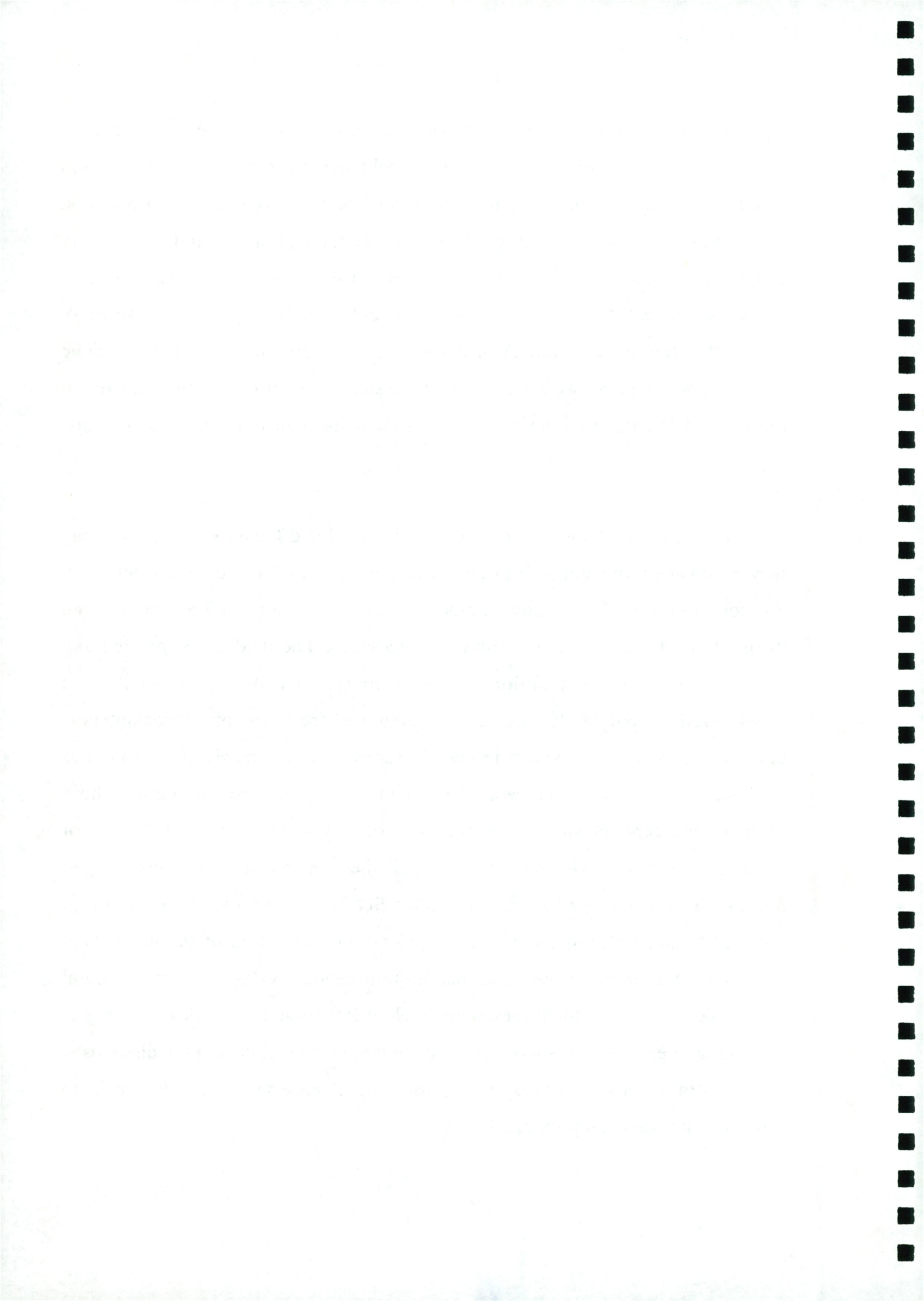
Amusement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work. It is sought as an escape from the mechanised work process, and to recruit strength in order to cope with it again
(Adorno,p.6 of Bernstein)

In Adorno's analysis the suppression of 'rational ends' of freedom and happiness, by the logic of the Culture Industry has paved the way for the irreversible collapse of the defining oppositions of High art and mass culture into one totally mediated and commercial whole. The result is an erosion of the great divide between art and life. It is the pacification of whatever seriousness, purity, or critical position High art was thought to have had, while also depriving low popular art of the "unruly resistance inherent in it when social control was not



yet total”(Adorno,p.17 Bernstein). In defence of modernist art, Adorno held the existence of an autonomous art-work to hold out a promise of freedom and happiness because it remained purposeless and separated from society in rejection of the utility and instrumentality which enslaves the rest of humanity. The truly autonomous work of art is held to imply a promise of freedom precisely because it has been spared the infection of exchange and commodification. In Adorno's essay “On the fetish character in music and the regression of listening” (The Culture Industry,p.26), we see a litany of the same fears of declining standards in the face of the mass media that characterised the cultural critics of the last century.

The 'aura' of the high classics has been assimilated and fetishised. That is to say they have been torn from their original function - to stand as a transcendent ideal, a vision of virtue - and are now churned out for an ‘ignorant’ mass who demand them but are totally estranged from their message. The media has invaded and subverted the world of traditional high or bourgeois culture, making it more widely available only at the price of depriving it of the ‘aura’ of its’ separateness upon which its critical function depended. Adorno cites the music of Toscanini as just such a bourgeois emblem assimilated in the mass production of culture whose original transcendent values are deprived of any contact with the mass of degraded consumers who only comprehend the fact that they have exchanged money for it. Their relation to this commodity is a relation to its reduction to status of ‘image’. The image is a fetish object; an abstraction of the thing itself into a depthless representation that has no transcendent value, emotional, moral or psychic charge on which, for example, High Romantic or Classical art, music, or literature depended. It is a relation “to the completely alien, and the alien, as if cut off from the consciousness of the masses by a dense screen, is what seeks to speak for the silent”(Adorno,p.33).

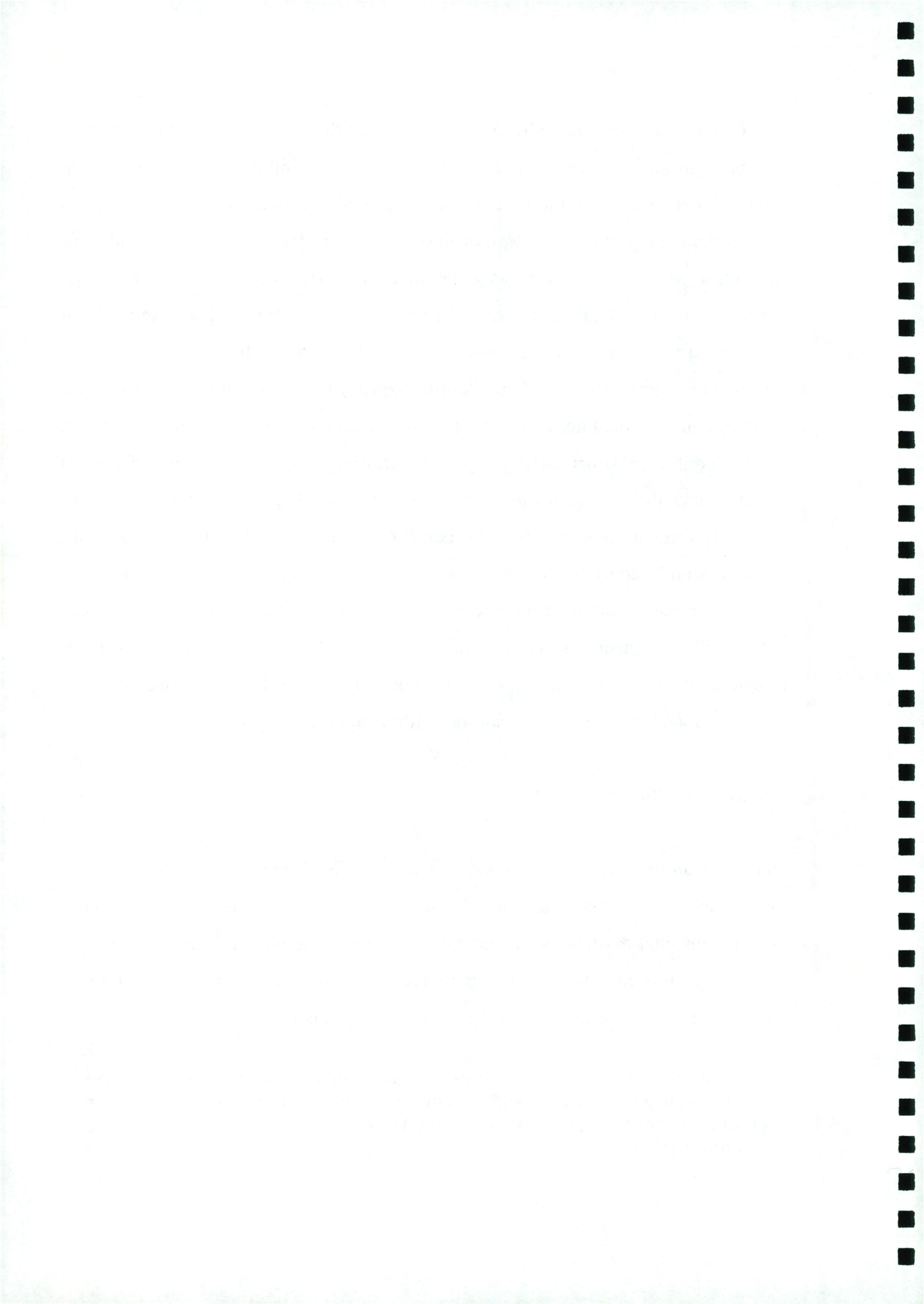


The Culture Industry, the collective operations of the media, has enclosed culture and brought all its force to bear in removing the possibility of any transcendent alternative to the principle of exchange. Adorno's retreatism and negation is based on an unequivocal rejection of praxis or action. He denies the possibility of revolution as this only serves as a theatrical melodrama subsumed within mass culture. He denies that he is even offering a cultural criticism. The stance of the cultural critic implies that he possesses the culture that culture lacks, which is impossible, as the structure of the Culture Industry leaves no-one untouched. Not only that but a critical approach to mass culture on the level of aesthetics (or lack of it) "confers a spurious dignity and autonomy on it"(Bernstein,1991,p.14) which masks the reality of the situation. Culture for Adorno is "true only when implicitly critical"(Adorno,1967, "Prisms" p.32) meaning that it is only culture when it stands apart from social and economic reality in contrast to it, as a reflective contemplation of the present in terms of a future Utopia. This is the essence of art, music and poetry and so on Mass Culture, however, is a fully integrated component of the capitalist economy and its function disguises the true nature of social and economic relations within capitalist society.

1.6 Media Closure

Herbert Marcuse addressed himself directly to "The Closing of the Universe of Discourse"(One Dimensional Man,1964,p.84) and the imminence of degraded 'one dimensional thought' with specific reference to the media. Marcuse believed that the apparent rationality of capitalist economics renders the social structure of consumption immune to criticism because the products purchased

carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole.
(Marcuse,1968,p.26)



Marcuse is referring here to the fact that we gain entry to culture via the producers of culture. In this way the producers of culture become immune to criticism as they dictate the cultural terms upon which criticism depends. Participation in the process is reduced to passive consumption only. Consumption therefore promotes 'false consciousness' which in turn generates a pattern of 'one dimensional thought and behaviour' in which all aspirations of transcendence are reduced to the terms of this universe. There is no 'outside' from which to take a stand.

The possibility of envisaging an alternative, autonomous position has been eradicated in the mind of the consumer because he/she is unable to read between the lines of what Marcuse calls the "overwhelming concreteness" (Marcuse, 1968, p.94) of the newspaper copy. The endless rapid succession of text, images and sound bytes we witness in the media militate against the development of concepts other than that which is programmed. We are induced to live, mentally, in a

world of hypnotic definitions and automatic ideological equations which rule out any effective cognitive meditation on our part
(Bennett, 1982, p.44)

The media present us with a range of pre-formed opinions between which we can only passively choose. The language of the media is a functional and manipulated communication which fuses aspects and qualities normally in contradiction with each other. For example Marcuse quotes a newspaper headline which reads:

'Georgia's high-handed, low-browed governor.... had the stage set for one of his wild political rallies last week.' The governor, his function, his physical features, and his political practices are fused together into one indivisible immutable structure which, in its natural innocence and

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific work done during the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the work done in the field, the second section deals with the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the work done in the office.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work done in the field, the second section deals with the results of the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the results of the work done in the office.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done during the year. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the field, the second section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the conclusions drawn from the work done in the office.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the recommendations made for the future work. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the recommendations made for the work done in the field, the second section deals with the recommendations made for the work done in the laboratory, and the third section deals with the recommendations made for the work done in the office.

immediacy, overwhelms the reader's mind. The structure leaves no space for distinction, development, differentiation of meaning: it moves and lives as a whole.

(Marcuse, 1968, p.92)

Through the use of abridgement to conjoin two terms in a firm and familiar structure falsity can be passed off as natural. The language used to describe the military is a case in point; the use of the term "clean bomb" (Marcuse, 1968, p.89) referring to the development of the neutron bomb designed to cause maximum human death but little infrastructural damage, attributes destruction a moral and physical integrity. We have witnessed many such violations of language in the coverage of the Gulf War recently. Media coverage took on whole-heartedly the pre-formed manipulated language of the military in its use of the terms "collateral damage" and "friendly fire" (CNN 1990-91) and so on. The dictionary defines "collateral" as "accompanying as secondary or subordinate". "Collateral damage" was used to denote the massacre of innocent Iraqi civilians. "Once considered the principle offence against logic, the contradiction now appears as a principle of the logic of manipulation..." (Marcuse, 1968, p. 89).

1.7 Critical response to Adorno and Marcuse

It would seem in Adorno's and Marcuse's similar analyses that we have reached a total impasse. The Enlightenment belief in progress as a dream of a better world for all through the application of science is now seen to represent a profound delusion which has enabled the domination of humanity by a system infinitely more cynical and pervasive than those of feudal or secular powers. The progressive domination of nature has become the domination of an obliterated human nature under the banner of "Progress". For Adorno the human has become a secret writing, a hieroglyph beneath the masks culture offers:

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. This section also outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of the proposed changes. It details the steps involved in the transition process, from the initial planning phase to the final execution. This section highlights the challenges faced during the implementation and the strategies used to overcome them. It also provides a timeline for the completion of the project, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of the progress and can provide input as needed.

3. The third part of the document discusses the future of the organization. It outlines the long-term goals and the strategies to achieve them. This section also addresses the potential risks and opportunities that may arise in the future. It emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and innovation to stay competitive in the market. The document concludes with a call to action, urging all employees to work together to achieve the organization's vision.

In every peal of laughter we hear the menacing voice of extortion and the comic types are legible signs which represent the contorted bodies of revolutionaries. Participation in mass culture stands under the sign of terror.

(Adorno, from Bernstein 1991, p. 8)

The eternal dialectic struggle between the subject and the object has frozen for Adorno in a state that is little short of hell. The striving for the rational ends of liberty and equality under the Enlightenment serves as a grand delusion under which the individual is subsumed under an eternity of consumption. Instrumental rationality, that 'tool' with which we were to recreate the object world in the image of man in the interests of mankind, is the motive force of production from which there is no respite. Transcendence and Utopia have become the reflexive dreams of the bourgeois class, an unconscious attempt to ignore the degradation of everyday reality that surrounds it. To imagine the future in terms of a progression towards certain rational ends is impossible when the philosophical framework upon which these attempts are based are complicit with the manipulation described above.

The Enlightenment has left us with a system of binarisms that are out of touch with the contemporary world. The relationship between the object and subject is meaningless for the majority of people who are powerless to change their material conditions. The dualism between the mind and body that is implied in the subjective/objective split is also a total negation of reality; the 'subject' and the 'mind' are entities perceived to be the active originators and the material object world as the passive receptacle of the subjects ambitions. If Descartes' famous maxim "I think therefore I am" (A.R. Lacey, p.55) can be taken as the essence of Humanist individualism that believes in the primacy of the mind, then this is the motive that drives the bourgeois culture of rejection of mass culture. The dualism exists in both the mass society theories and in Adorno's and Marcuse's analyses.

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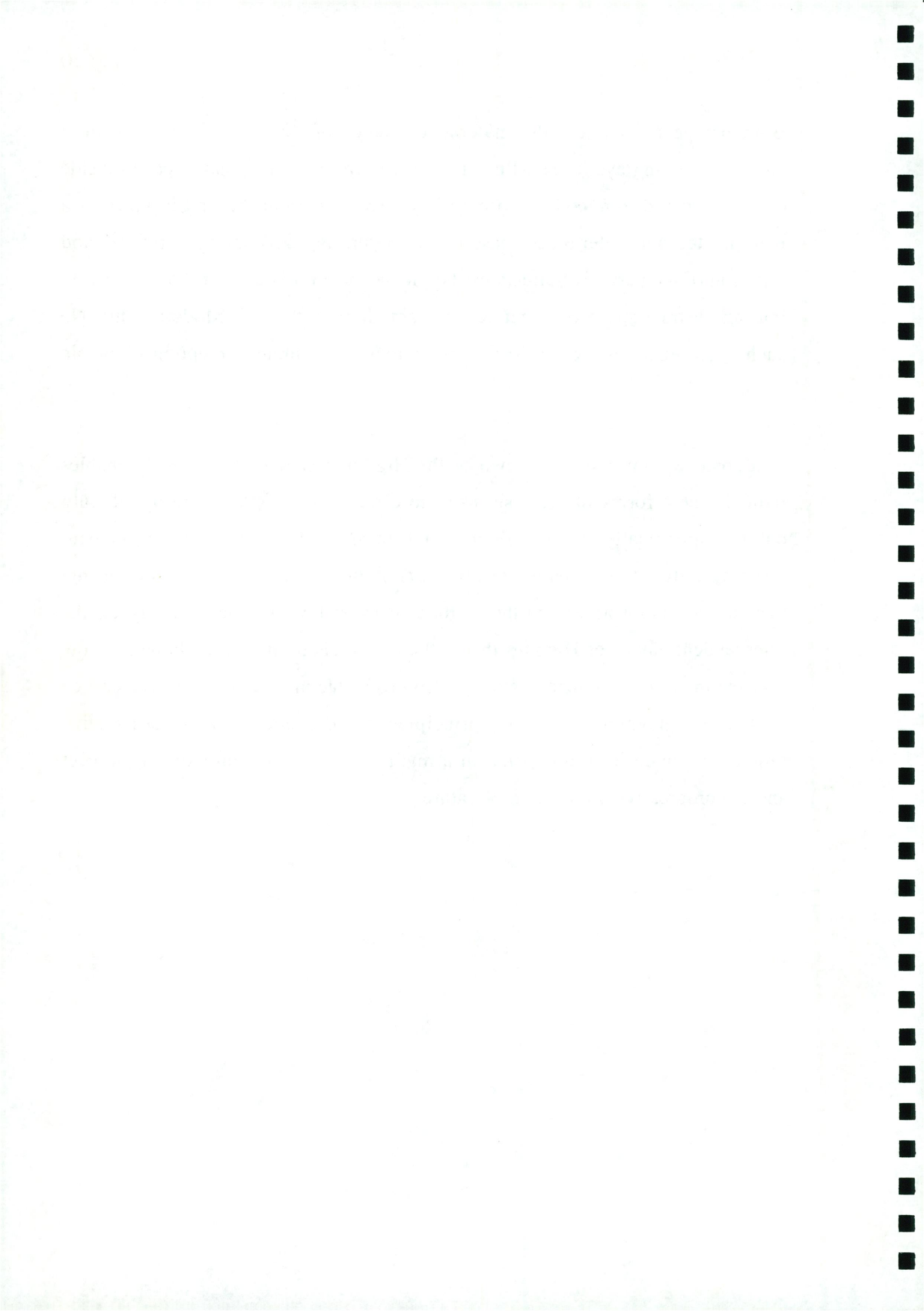
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Both perspectives reject the material existence of the Body in favour of a panoptic viewing eye in the Mind. They speak from an imaginary space outside culture divorced from contact with a filthy infected mob in the first instance or a manipulated and determined mass in the latter. By advocating a refusal and rejection of the pervasive effects of the media, Adorno is climbing out of reality into an abstract space of negative criticism along with High Modernist art. No such space exists if we are to accept Marcuse's accurate perception of media closure.

In a positive light, the breakdown of the High and Low cultural divide enables radically new forms of criticism to arise directly out of the impurity of pulp culture, specifically 'science-fiction' (the term itself an illogical abridgement referring to the illusory nature of science?). A theoretical response to the media that sources its inspiration in the culture of everyday life does not rely on the transcendent values of High art that is the bourgeois foundation. I hope to show how the inclusion of science fiction is also invaluable in deconstructing the edifice of the Enlightenment and the principles of instrumental and subsumptive rationality which in turn depend on a myth of the rational autonomous subject and the progressive domination of nature.



Chapter two : Time, space and the media

2.1 The Idea of Progress as a Science ‘fiction’

This impossibility of conceiving of a future Utopia, as we have seen, is the result of the “systematic cultural, and ideological closure of which we are all in one way or another prisoners”(Jameson, *Progress Versus Utopia...*). I will attempt to show, through the texts of Fredric Jameson J. G. Ballard and Philip K. Dick, how we are prisoners in the present moment. We are prisoners in the hopeless pursuit of an idealised future, the image of which originates in the Enlightenment. Although these ideals hold out the promise of a better world to come, they entail the distasteful consequences discussed in chapter 1. The perspectives of these three writers imply that what we are asked to hold in our minds as an ideal Utopia, is in fact something else entirely; a reality behind the image that is far from utopian.

The particular problem of narrative closure in literature is Fredric Jameson believes, comparable to the problem of ‘rational ends’ within the ‘grand narrative’ of the Enlightenment. For a narrative to attempt to represent the totality of experience in space and time it must surely know an end of some form, yet that end is the point beyond which thought cannot go. This rules out the possibility of an accurate representation of the real. A book must have an end. But a ‘book’ that has as its subject the fate of humanity, as did the Enlightenment vision of ‘Progress’, can ever only fall short of reality as the flow of time erases the specificity of its subject matter- the social conditions of the time. A Universal stories such as the Enlightenment can never be truly representative of the collective desires of all of society due to the sheer quantity of objects and

London, 18th June 1864

My dear Mr. Stowe

I have just received your letter of the 14th inst.

and am very glad to hear from you.

I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same.

I have not time to write you more at present.

I am, dear Mr. Stowe, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant

Wm. Lloyd Garrison

P.S. I have just received your letter of the 14th inst.

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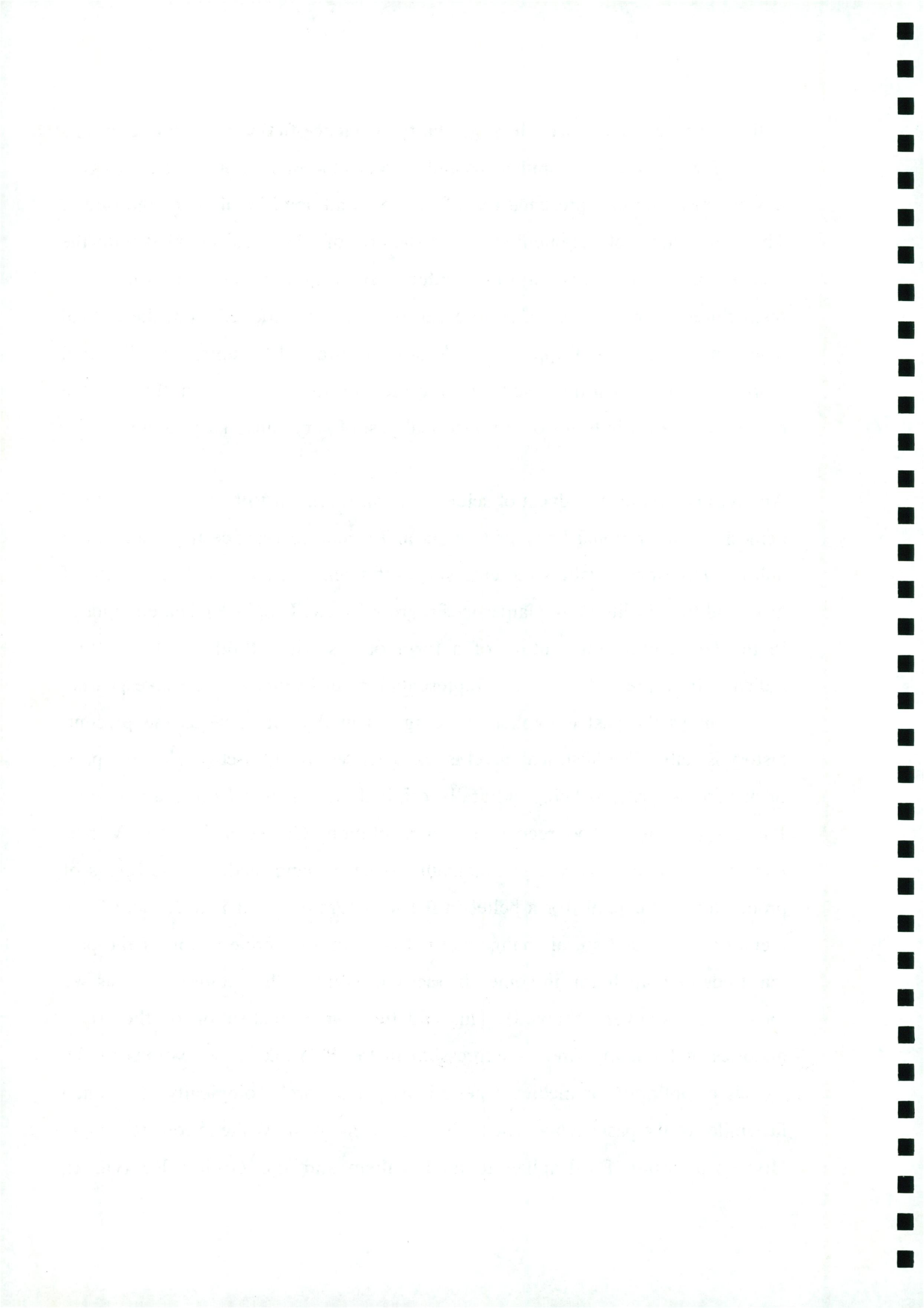
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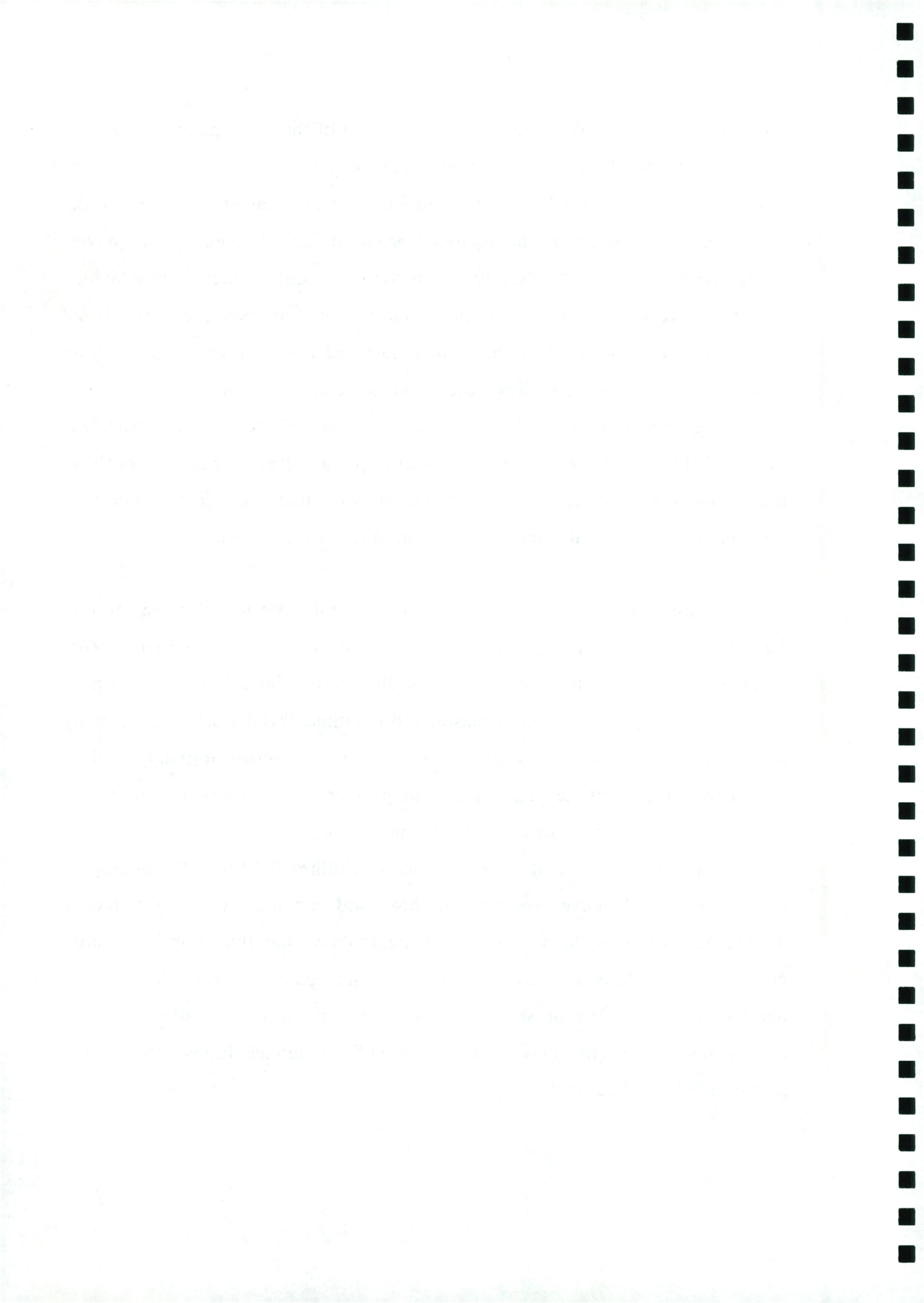
individual lives it comprises. It is the ability of science-fiction to elaborate on this problem. Science-fiction dramatises and parodies the impossibility of envisaging in story meaningful representations of the here and now, let alone of the future. Through a constant heightening of the rhetoric of 'Progress' coupled with the multiplication of mock futures rendered in a graphic realism, the genre restructures our experience of the present in a way far removed from the critical negation of the present apparent in Adorno. Distracted by unfamiliar fictional worlds, we are unwittingly seduced into viewing the present as if through the corner of the eye, in terms of the historical past of some imaginary future.

An investigation of the advent of science-fiction reveals it to be the mass-cultural nemesis of that rational body of thought and scientific practice that shaped our culture. Jameson parallels the emergence of science-fiction with the death of historical time in literature (Jameson, *Progress Versus Utopia...*) The emergence in the late eighteenth century of a form of historical thinking that differs radically from pre-Enlightenment representations of history i.e. in Shakespearian history plays the past is evoked as being essentially the same as the present; history is static. The historical novel is characterised by a 'discovery' of the past, or of various pasts, as being culturally original and distinct from our present - Jameson calls it the "bourgeois cultural revolution" (Jameson, *Progress Versus Utopia...*). This discovery is symptomatic of the demand made by the forces of production and capital for a belief in the idea 'Progress'. It is a demand for a memory of constant social change that is based on a concrete vision of the past that finds its completion in some abstract end point in the future (which as we have seen, is never achieved). This construction or realisation of the 'real' histories of humanity find its expression in the painstaking recreations of the worlds of antiquity or medieval periods as perfect archaeologically researched facsimiles of the past such as; the Arthurian novels of Sir Walter Scott, Romantic History painting, Pre-Raphaelite medievalism and the Gothic Revival in



architecture. Through this process of fleshing out of the past, making it 'real' as it were, its mythical force, its ability to situate people expires, and it becomes the "museum of dead forms"(Jameson) utilised for the master fantasies of the bourgeoisie. The particular moral, social or psychological content of the novels are as irrelevant as the "culturally or temporally distinct contexts" from which they are brought. An exercise in technical mastery and virtuosity, 'History' is not what is recreated at all but rather a manufactured nostalgia combined with an anticipation of imperialism. The emergence of science fiction, is significant in that it registers a sense of the future in the place where once the past was inscribed. The novels of Jules Verne for example are characterised as much by the virtues of new modes of transport, international trade, and colonisation than the fantastic, the terrifying and the wondrous alien worlds of which he writes.

The contemporary era however is not so outwardly confident in the future. Science-fiction writer J.G. Ballard in the introduction to "Crash"(1974) proclaims that the past became the first casualty of Hiroshima (Ballard,1974,p.7). The nuclear age, a "marriage of reason and nightmare"(Ballard,1974,p.5), is by definition a period where we are all forced to think proscriptively. Ballard primarily wanted to write fiction about the present day but living in the context of the late 1950's where "the call-sign of Sputnik 1 could be heard on one's radio like the advance beacon of a new universe"(Ballard,1974,p.7) the attempted projection of a subjective experience in this world in which we find ourselves is almost impossible without recourse to the fantasy that this world is static, crystalised or in stasis. He writes a literature in an elegiac style that anticipates the death of literature. His prose parodies a bourgeois culture in retreat with its obsession with subjective experience, its sense of isolation and introspection in the face of accelerated cultural change.



This is possibly the most crucial element of Ballard's work; the obsession of a dying bourgeois class with what it sees as a "cancelled future of a vanished colonial and imperial destiny" (Ballard, 1960, p. 38) an end of culture and history and of time itself. Set in a 'near future', "The Voices of Time" (1960)^{ref} is a case study of self-obsession, of sluggish metabolism, of the winding out of time, of the erosion and mutation of our genetic codes, and of the deadpan castration of the space race with our first contact with alien civilizations who tell us that we're too late, the universe is practically finished.

"The Overloaded Man" (1963), is similarly a parody of the ideals of technological automation and ergonomic slipstream existence. Set again in the near future, in a static middle class American suburban paradise, the main character, Faulkner, spends his periods of "creative reflection" (a sabbatical) deconstructing or "de-identifying" the object world around him, stripping household electronics and consumer goods of "their accretions of sales slogans and status imperatives...". He continues to dismantle the object world until he has reduced everything to floating abstractions in an "endless panorama of brilliantly coloured images". In the end, the same process is internalised and he frees himself of the "oppressive puttylike mass" of his own body; 'Cogito ergo sum' brought to its full conclusion. This is surely the pursuit of that pure abstract space of negation that Adorno sought once he had similarly deconstructed the object world of the Culture Industry. Faulkner's ability to see through the functional and manipulated language that exudes from the object world around him is based on his recently acquired ability to eliminate the "vector of time". It is by actively forgetting the function of household commodities that allows him to repress the "photo-associative centres that normally identify visual objects". Through 'freeze framing' the commodities around him Faulkner forgets the history of their function and their meaning because he is unable to associate the image of the object with previous visions of it. He is "stepping out of time" (Ballard).

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Jameson describes a current "crisis in historicity"(Jameson PM,p.25) as our present incapacity to comprehend the world around us. History is not the existence in the present of "culturally or temporally distinct context"(Jameson,Progress...) but the only appearance or interpretation of that context. Thus we cannot know the real 'History', but only our contemporary culture's interpretation of the past. We no longer know the present in terms of a mythic past, a history of the race which could comfort us as to our origins, but only through our own popular recreations of the past; nostalgic reworkings, in contemporary styles, of film noir of the 40's: "Chinatown" or "Body Heat"* ; recreations of the days of innocence of 50's America in "American Graffiti". Nor do we know the present in terms of a redeemed future Utopia as in mainstream sci-fi movies; the "Star Wars" trilogy as a recreation of the 'Western' or "Jurassic Park", that most futuristic and technological of Sci-Fi films, as a history painting of Pre-history. Considered along with the countless other examples of 'retakes' of past styles in the forms of the 'come-back'- the 60's come back and so on for every decade of this century-, it seems that our present culture is inflicted with a fractured experience of the present. Like Faulkner's talent to separate the image of the object from its meaning and function, the realisation that the 'History' as represented is not necessarily the true history that actually occurred, but a culturally imprinted Idea of History. The same can be said for the Idea of Progress.

The suburban paradise in which the "Overloaded Man" is set, is five hundred years into our future but the feeling that time has stood still for that period is palpable. It is a symptom of our time that is similar to schizophrenia. The

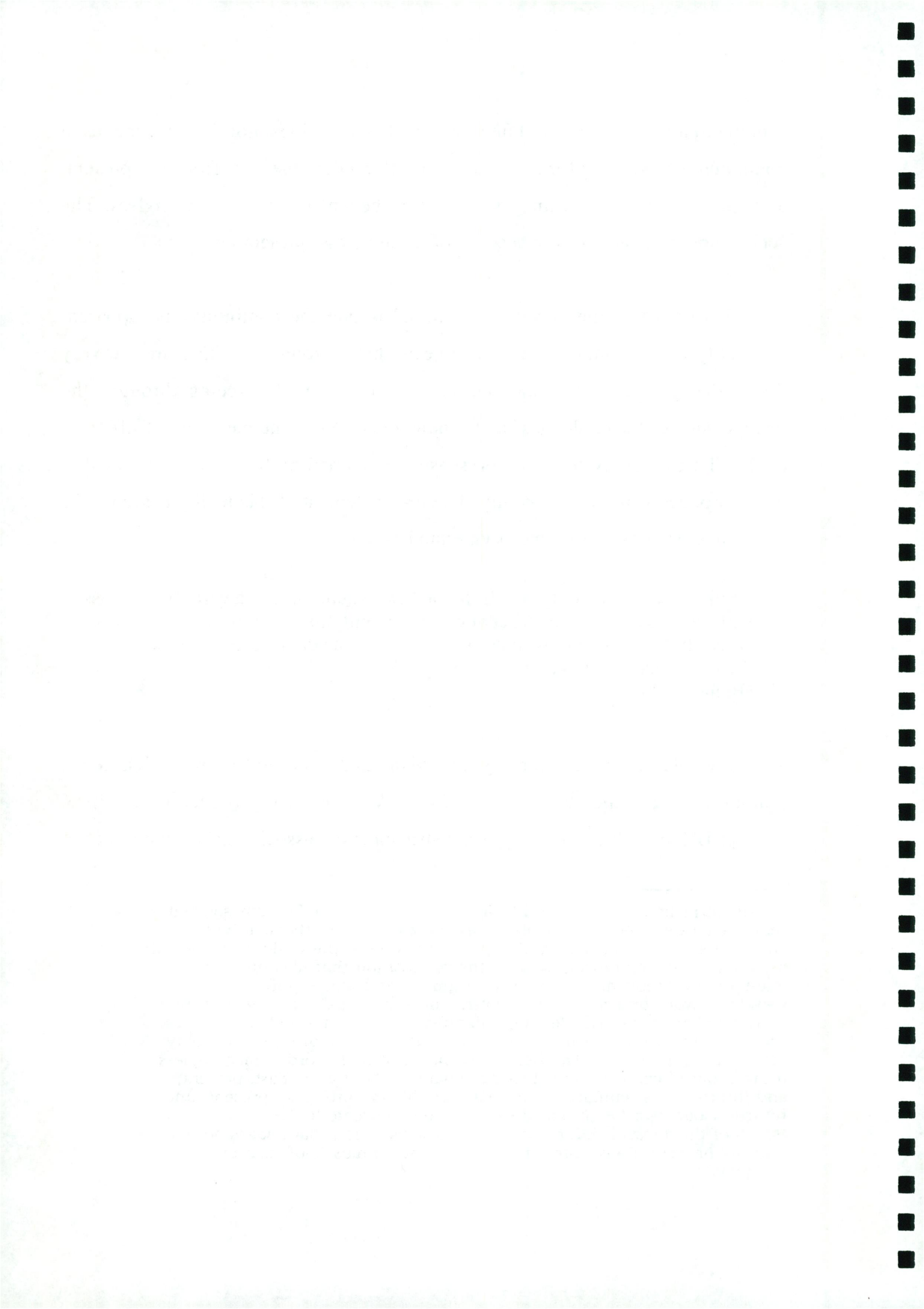
schizophrenic according to Jameson (via Lacan)* does not know time as a continuum of evolving forms. Unable to differentiate the past from the present, as both are perceived as images, the future becomes equally meaningless. The schizophrenic is entranced by a series of meaningless 'present moments'.

What is implied in the "Overloaded Man" is that the continuity and apparent rationality of the commodities and objects that surround Faulkner are the very things that give his life meaning. They situate him. In 'seeing through' the manipulation of "sales slogans" and "status imperatives" he cuts himself off from reality. That is reality or 'common sense', as defined by the apparent rationality of the producers of the commodity. The re-instatement of this reality is seen to be impossible once its illusion has been established -

Faulkner sat] re-identifying all the objects around himaware that a glass wall had been inserted between them and his own psyche. However carefully he focussed his mind on the world outside, a screen still separated them, its opacity thickening imperceptibly
(Ballard 1963)

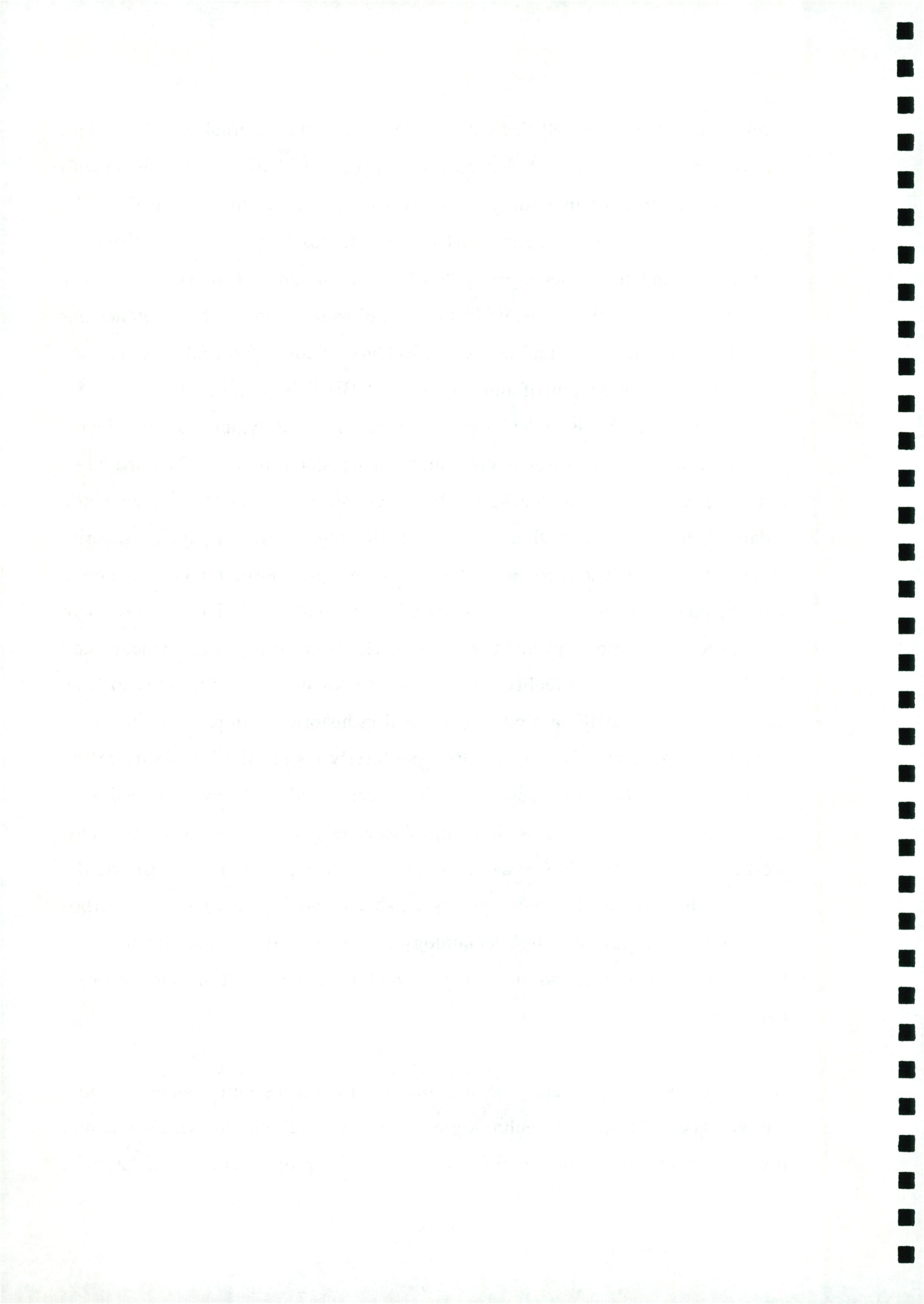
The interrelation of commodity fetishism and temporal flow which lends familiarity to commodities in Ballard's work is also the province of Philip K Dick. If Ballard's disassembling of the structures of association has the effect of

* Postmodernism or, The cultural logic of late capitalism. p.26. Jameson states that Lacan describes schizophrenia as a breakdown in the signifying chain. The concept of the signifying chain is one of the basic principles of "Saussurean structuralism, namely, the proposition that meaning is not a one-to-one relationship between the signifier and signified,.... between a word or a name, and its referent or concept" but a relationship between signifiers only. Meaning (significance) is generated by the successive connection of the words in a sentence, or that each word only makes sense in context. The signified concept of each word is meaningless if taken out of context. Thus if we are unable to "unify the past, present, and future of the sentence, then we are unable to unify past, present and future of our own biographical experience or psychic life". (Much of this thesis is informed by the basic assertion that images do not refer to, or reflect a concept or idea, but only a mosaic of surrounding imagery.)



freeing the subject from all ties with the “nausea of the external world”(Ballard 1963) then Dick's equivalent disconnection of time in “UBIK”(1969) deals with the opposite effect of imploding reality to such a degree that escape from the absolute pervasiveness of the material world is impossible. The material world, however, is not what it used to be; in “UBIK” it is the present moment and every other previous to it, simultaneously : i.e. ‘Time’ as the element that stretches our past lives away from us in a linear chain has broken down. Now all those periods come crashing in on top of one another. “UBIK” is a novel dominated by telepaths and Joe Chip is in the business of industrial security, and monitors levels of psychic activity in companies suspicious of telepathic espionage. The arrival of a new 'talent', a girl who specialises in pre-cognition, completely ruptures the balanced duality of telepathic spies and their counterparts in psychic security systems neither of whom could see the future. As she choses random futures at will she thereby obliterates the certainty of the present in the lives of those with whom she comes into contact. Temporality itself seems to reverse its valence and Joe Chip is subjected to reality erosion as time for him literally seems to flow backwards. Only UBIK, a product packaged in historically appropriate forms - an aerosol, ointment, elixir, liver balm , can briefly restore the familiarity of the present day. As time reverses the static object world melts away revealing a continuity of devolving forms. Joe Chip desperately attempts to reach the mid-western town of Des Moines while negotiating the regression of transport; the air-jet of his previously contemporary existence rapidly devolves into turbo-props and small biplanes. High technology dissolves as if in a dream and space takes on a vastness that had previously been eliminated as the transport becomes ever more primitive.

It is our worst nightmare; we are faced with the essential sameness and equivalence of forms of technologies and commodities, to which we had previously attributed such notions as ‘modern’, ‘progressive’ even ‘stylish’.



Without the memory of a past of more 'primitive' forms, our ability to define ourselves as nearer, closer to some utopian end evaporates and we stop dead in our tracks. UBIK is the ubiquitous commodity (hence the name) which re-instates the forward motion of time and the illusory transcendent value of the ideal form for which humanity strives. "UBIK" is Dick's masterfully crafted challenge to instrumental reason and the pursuit of the Idea of Progress, which was never the pursuit of Utopia.

2.2 The Spectacle:the disappearance of public spaces and/or private lives.

In his 1967 manifesto "La societe du spectacle", Guy Debord states, that in "societies where modern conditions of production prevail, life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles"(Debord.1967 thesis #1). In an analysis similar to Adorno's the consuming subject is atomised and estranged from production, and isolated in the home consuming culture tele-'visually', his/her capacity to function with others as an aggregate force eliminated.

It may seem complete nonsense to claim that we have exchanged interpersonal relations between people for its simulation contemplated on screen in the form of soap operas and the lives of the movie stars. But it must be remembered that separation and isolation are the guiding principles of both individualism and the capitalist economics. The 'division of labour' is the separation of the worker from what s/he produces as well as isolating each worker in his/her specific (specialised) task. The 'Spectacle' is an economic system that is founded on a circular production of isolation;

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The technology is based on isolation, and the technical process isolates in turn. From the automobile to television, all the goods selected by the spectacular system are also its weapons for a constant reinforcement of the conditions of isolation of "lonely crowds".
(Debord, 1967 thesis #28)

We watch life unfold on the screen, participating in the social and cultural sphere through the regulated channels of manufactured desire, the same way we are spectators and consumers when driving a car.

"The Spectacle is the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue. It is the self portrait of power in the epoch of its totalitarian management of the conditions of existence. The fetishistic, purely objective appearance of spectacular relations conceals the fact that they are relations among men and classes."
(Debord, 1967 thesis #24)

Under advanced capitalism the need to consume material goods is manufactured through the awareness of the principles of the natural symbolic interaction and exchange we call language. Marcuse understood this. People communicate and exchange meaning through signs. Once the rules of this exchange are known the apparatus can be put in place to attach the signs to the multitude of material goods and commodities.

This apparatus not only includes the visual symbolism (semiotics) of advertising and the spectacular 'noise' of promotional culture of television and cinema, but also uses the sciences of marketing surveillance, the machinery of gathering information on tastes and preferences and the location of target markets; the interpretation of that information and the connection of that information to a vast library of popular mythologies; the production, the packaging of that information, and its re-emergence into the market as 'lifestyles' to be consumed.

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In this sense the media not only induces us to purchase commodities, but it defines our identities also. We consume identities as well as products.

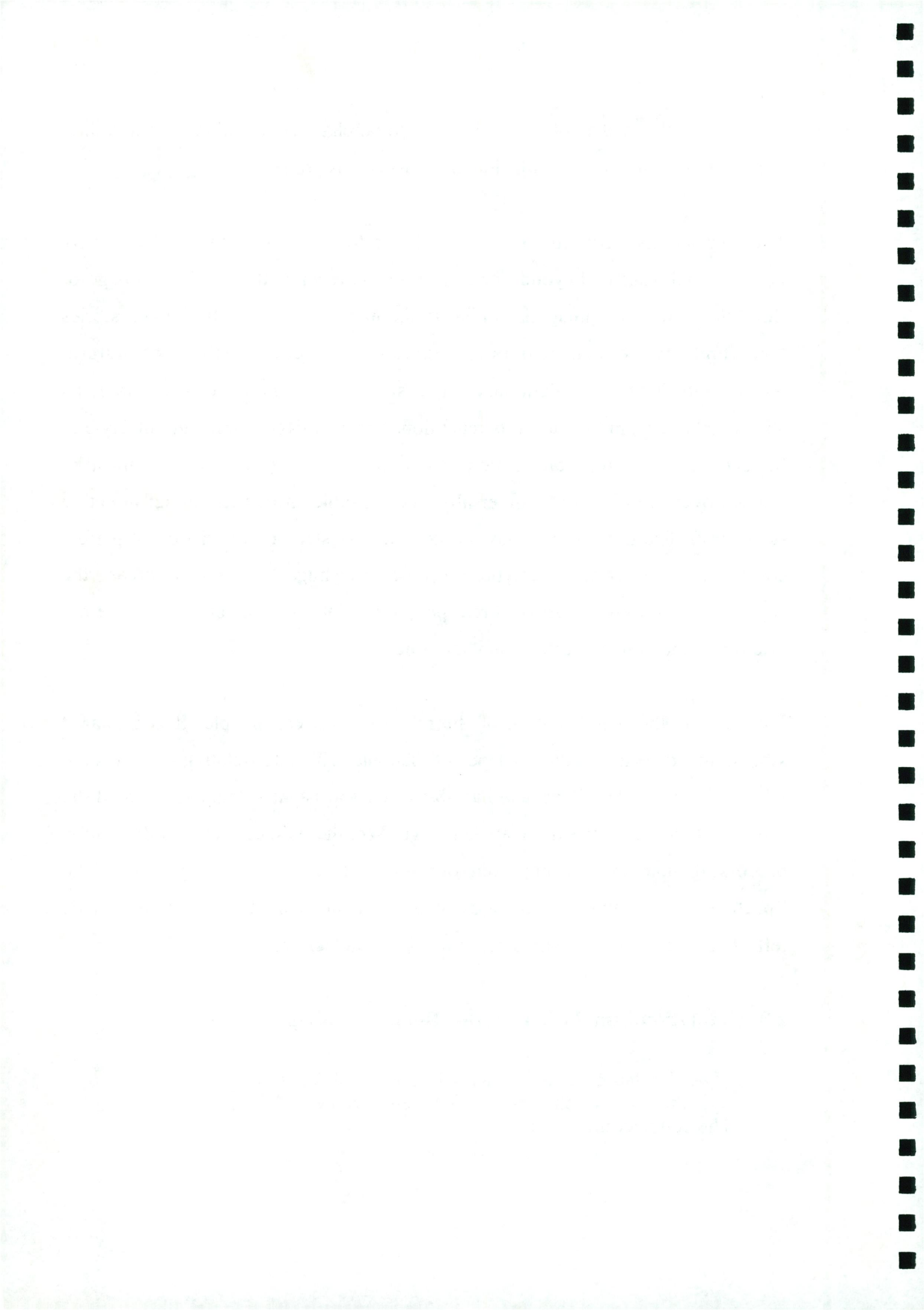
The spectacle has seduced, or abducted the particular idiosyncrasies of everyday language and placed it beyond our control in the form of the fetishised image or 'lifestyle'. The media image is similar to the myth, defined as traditional stories "that embody popular beliefs or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon" (Oxford Dictionary). The success of a myth depends upon its ability to be recognised and in its repetition. For the image/commodity/lifestyle to be recognised and repeatable, the particularities of everyday existence must be glossed over in favour of 'universally' recognisable forms (again subsumptive rationality). These forms we know in the media as stereotypes, visions of perfect consumers. The list of stereotypes we receive is huge but finite whereas the categories of difference between real people are infinite. Therefore they are not true representations of reality; they are unreal.

Language is the manifestation of the relations between people. It is a shared system, that depends on the existence of dialogue. This inter-relating system is the fabric of society. The Spectacle has abstracted and isolated language behind the screen so that it becomes a private language. We, the public, become information processing machines seeking out our own reflection in the Spectacle. The Spectacle is a simulation of society that we are asked to take as a true reflection. The product of any simulation is a Simulacrum.

2.3 Simulation: Implosion of the Reality Principle

"The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth-
it is the truth which conceals that there is none.
The simulacrum is true.

Ecclesiastes"



So begins Jean Baudrillard's book "Simulations"(1983). If the image of society operating on screen is a simulated Spectacle masking the real society dominated by capitalist economics, then we have no choice but to accept it as true, because we can only perceive the real society around us in terms of the Spectacle. We cannot know the real society from the simulated one because our only 'overview' comes to us via the media. This of course raises the obvious question, why should we believe that the Spectacle is a simulation and not in fact a true representation? The answer is that we do not. It is impossible to tell the difference. All we have is the image, the appearance of reality for which we cannot know the original reality.

Baudrillard's theories hover around the juncture between science-fiction and questions of social and political theory, and involves a move beyond Debord from a traditional marxist position, believing that the traditional theory of alienation can no longer be tested or observed. 'If the workers appear to be happy then how do we know that they are not?'. Debord's thesis puts its faith in the existence of a cover-up occurring within the media. For him the media 'dissimulate' the scandal of capitalist economics by celebrating the virtues and 'common sense' of such a system. "To dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign what one hasn't. One implies a presence, the other an absence"(Baudrillard 1983,p8). Baudrillard believes that the the Spectacle is a Simulacrum that masks the non existence of any such reality whatever. Baudrillard explains the power of simulation over dissimulation by way of a medical analogy.

'Someone who feigns an illness can simply go to bed and make believe he is ill. Someone who simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms,'(Littre)^{ref} Thus, feigning or dissimulating leaves the reality principle intact: the difference is always clear, it is only masked [implying

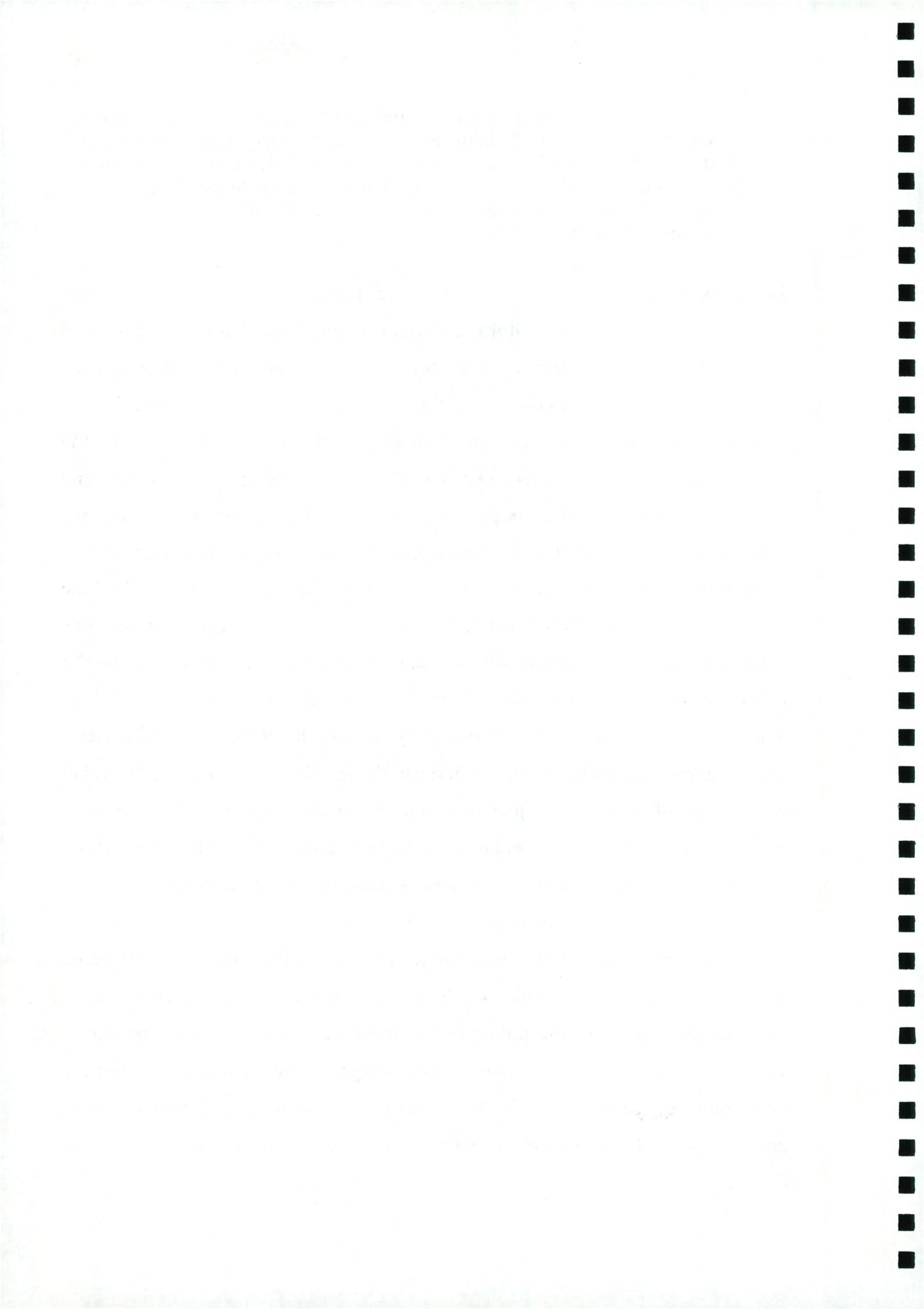
^{ref} French medical historian and language scholar



that it can be un-masked]; whereas simulation threatens the difference between “true” and “false”, between “real” and “imaginary”. Since the simulator produces “true” symptoms, is he ill or not? He cannot be treated objectively either as ill, or not ill. Psychology and medicine stop at this point, before a thereafter undiscoverable truth of the illness.
(Baudrillard 1983,p8)

In relation to the truth or otherwise of the Spectacle, politics and sociology stop at this point also, just as cultural criticism stopped for Adorno before. The success of the Spectacle does not lie in its masking the reality of capitalism. Were this the case it still revolutionary action to unmask its illusion would be the conclusion of this thesis. But the ‘seizing of the reality studio’ that the Situationists or Marcuse advocated would only produce more spectacular and emotive imagery - if the image could mean anything to us then surely the televised revolution in Romania would have driven us out of our homes? The success of the Spectacle lies in its ability to enclose both the ‘imaginary’ and the ‘real’, both “true” and “false” within the image, behind the screen - untouchable. Like the dense screen inserted between Ballard’s Faulkner and his world, the flat two dimensional space has imposed itself between the real (material conditions that are observable and verifiable: the body, nature, the object world of society) and imaginary (the realm of superstition and the imaginary capture of minds; but equally the idealism of subjective imagination), destroying that relationship between them that gives each their significance. With this destabilised relationship, both collapse into a irreducible nucleus of representation.

It becomes impossible to tell ‘real’ subjective desires from those manufactured within the media; for example, we ‘fear’ that violence is on the rise, and so advocate the arming of the police force, or advocate video censorship, but is violence on the rise at all, as some reports suggest? The answer lies within the only source - within the media. It is equally impossible to differentiate ‘real’ crises in the world from those simulations witnessed on screen; ‘the homeless’ we



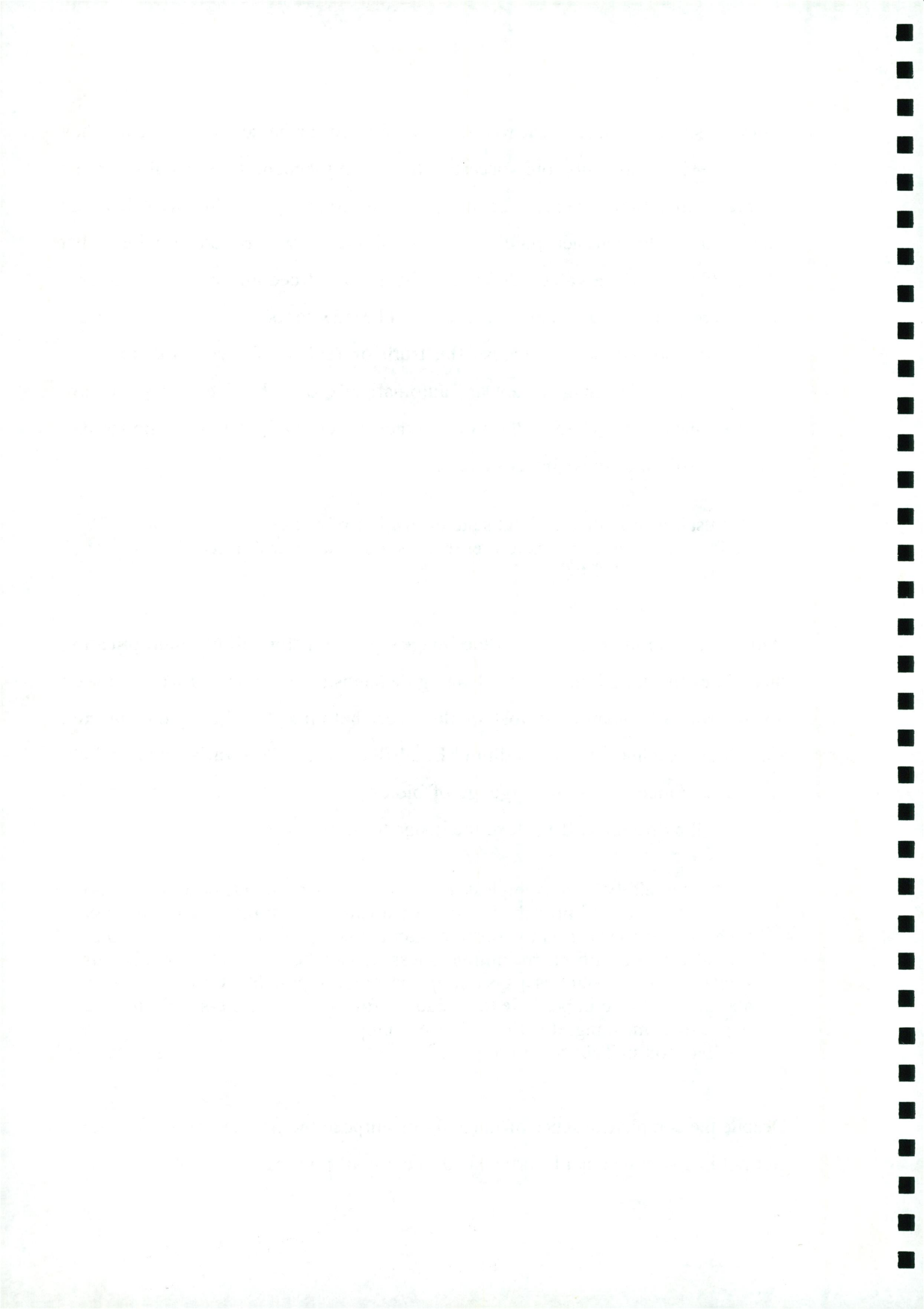
know exist on the streets that we walk, but limited media coverage indicate they may not exist continually, only occasionally - it only becomes a scandal when the coverage specifically centers on the problem, converging a hundred thousand view points into 'enraged public opinion'; similarly, we are led to believe that 'the Gulf War' was a valiant defence of liberty and freedom; or was it rather a self-interested expeditionary massacre? The media is the source for both patriotism and paranoia. Because the truth or reality of these situations are presented to us as images they are automatically only half the story and are therefore meaningless - regardless of whether direct manipulation of the format, content, air time of those images occurs or not.

it is useless to fantasise about state projection of police control through TV
TV, by virtue of its mere presence, is a social control in itself.
 (Baudrillard 1983,p27)

Baudrillard claims that it is also the image's potential for infinite multiplication that makes meaning impossible. Meaning demands an end point as we have seen above. But all meaning is lost in the overwhelming "viral,endemic,chronic, alarming presence of the medium"(Baudrillard, thus it unfurls exponentially around us. Once again the language of biology is the only way to describe the power of the Spectacle. If we take the image to be a virus then;

Nothing could be as meaningless as a virus. It has no point, no purpose, no plan ; It is part of no scheme, carries no inherent significance. And yet nothing is harder for us to confront than the complete absence of meaning. By its very definition, meaninglessness cannot be articulated within our social language, which is a system *of* meaning: impossible to include, as an absence, it is also impossible to exclude - for meaninglessness isn't just the opposite of meaning, it is the end of meaning.
 (Williamson in Technoculture p. 110)

Despite the complete absence of meaning or purpose the Spectacle still functions. But not in a way that can be articulated in cultural, political or sociological terms



as they involve the language of the Spectacle. "The denunciation of scandal always pays homage to the law"(Baudrillard, 1983, p.27). For example the Watergate fiasco was a spectacle that served as a "large dose of political morality on a global scale" that regenerated a simulated structure of accountability we call the judicial system, to which capital is essentially indifferent, but on which democracy, which can itself be seen as a simulation of justice and freedom, depends.

The Spectacle can only be approached on the level of a demolished meaning, through the hyperbolic language of addiction as a viral infection. This is the fate of the individual within this "spiralling of the reality principle". The novels of William Burroughs come closer to the reality of media consumption as addiction, than any purely political response could offer. In the introduction to the "The Naked Lunch" he indicates similarities between the structures of 'Drug Traffik' and the structures of the Spectacle;

Junk is the ideal product....the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy.... the junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client
(Burroughs, intro to Naked Lunch,1986 p.8)

Surely this is the process by which we gain access to the social, transformed as it is into the 'junk' of the Spectacle. This is the process whereby we seek out and beg to buy our objectified, simplified and degraded image back. "The addict needs more and more junk to maintain human form.....buy of the Monkey"(Burroughs,1986 p.8). Burrough's 'Junk', like Dick's 'Ubik,' is the commodity that invests the Spectacle with an aura of reality and normality. In his other novels, especially the Nova Express, 'junk' comes explicitly in the form of viral images and information controlled by invading alien intelligences. Burroughs characters are money addicts, control addicts, orgasm addicts and

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part of the document outlines the procedures for handling customer inquiries. It states that all inquiries should be handled promptly and professionally, and that the company should strive to provide excellent customer service at all times.

3. The third part of the document discusses the company's commitment to environmental sustainability. It states that the company will continue to invest in sustainable practices and technologies to reduce its carbon footprint and to protect the environment.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to social responsibility. It states that the company will continue to support various social and environmental causes and will strive to be a good corporate citizen.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to employee development. It states that the company will continue to invest in employee training and development programs to ensure that its employees are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their roles.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to transparency. It states that the company will continue to provide timely and accurate information to its stakeholders and will strive to be open and honest in all of its communications.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the company's commitment to innovation. It states that the company will continue to invest in research and development to develop new products and services that meet the needs of its customers.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to risk management. It states that the company will continue to identify and assess its risks and will implement effective risk management strategies to protect its assets and ensure its long-term success.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to compliance. It states that the company will continue to ensure that it complies with all applicable laws and regulations and will strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to community engagement. It states that the company will continue to engage with its local community and will strive to make a positive impact on the lives of its neighbors.

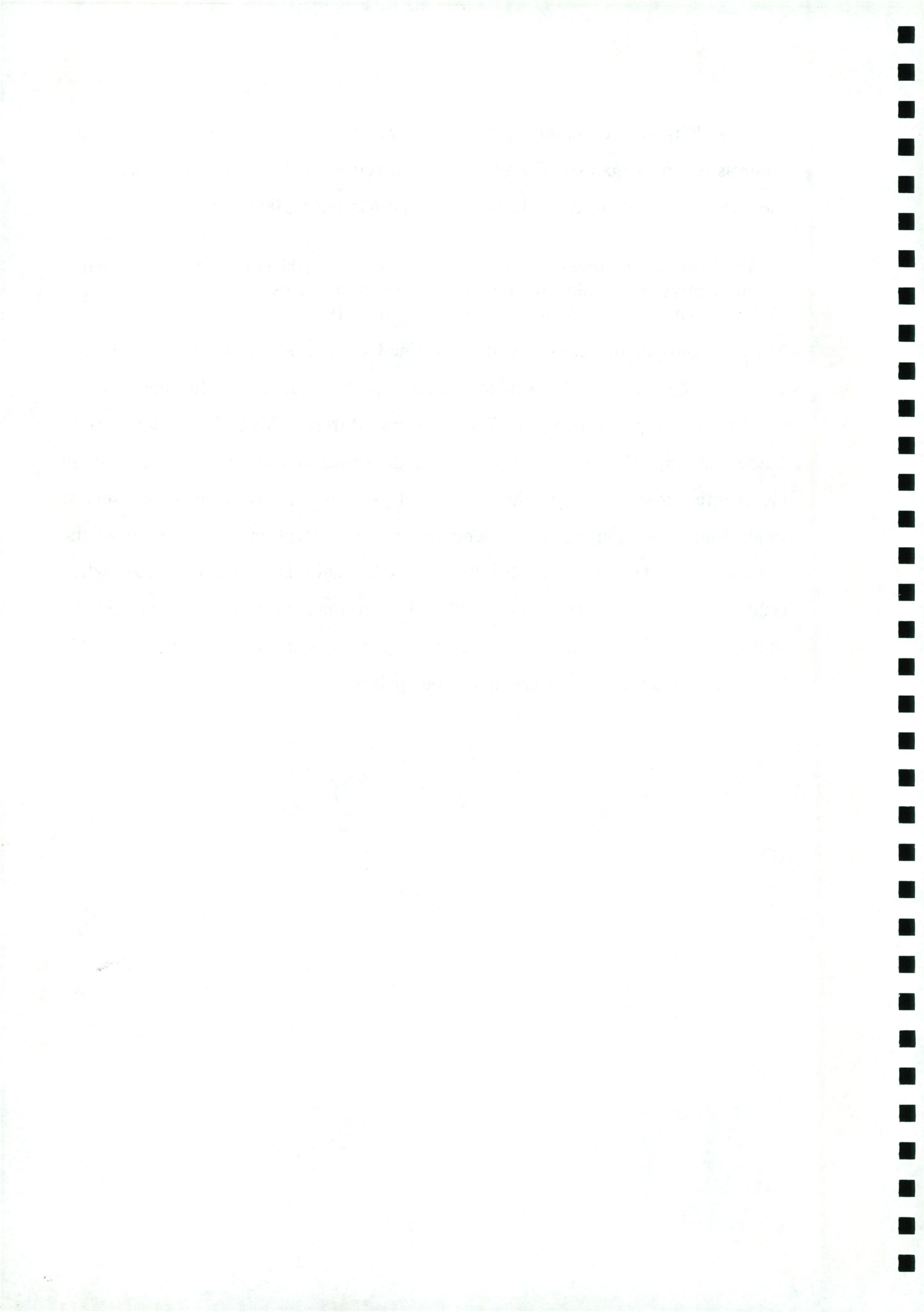
11. The eleventh part of the document discusses the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion. It states that the company will continue to promote a diverse and inclusive workplace and will strive to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and with respect.

12. The twelfth part of the document discusses the company's commitment to corporate governance. It states that the company will continue to implement strong corporate governance practices and will strive to ensure that its operations are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner.

image addicts, where the junk is the alien force, the injected virus taken over and controls its host organism, the addict. The injection of the genetic information of the viral form leads to control, mutation, and passive replication:

the host cell believes that it is following its own biologically determined imperative; it mistakes the new genetic material for its own.
(Scott Bukattmann, *Who programmes you?* p.196)

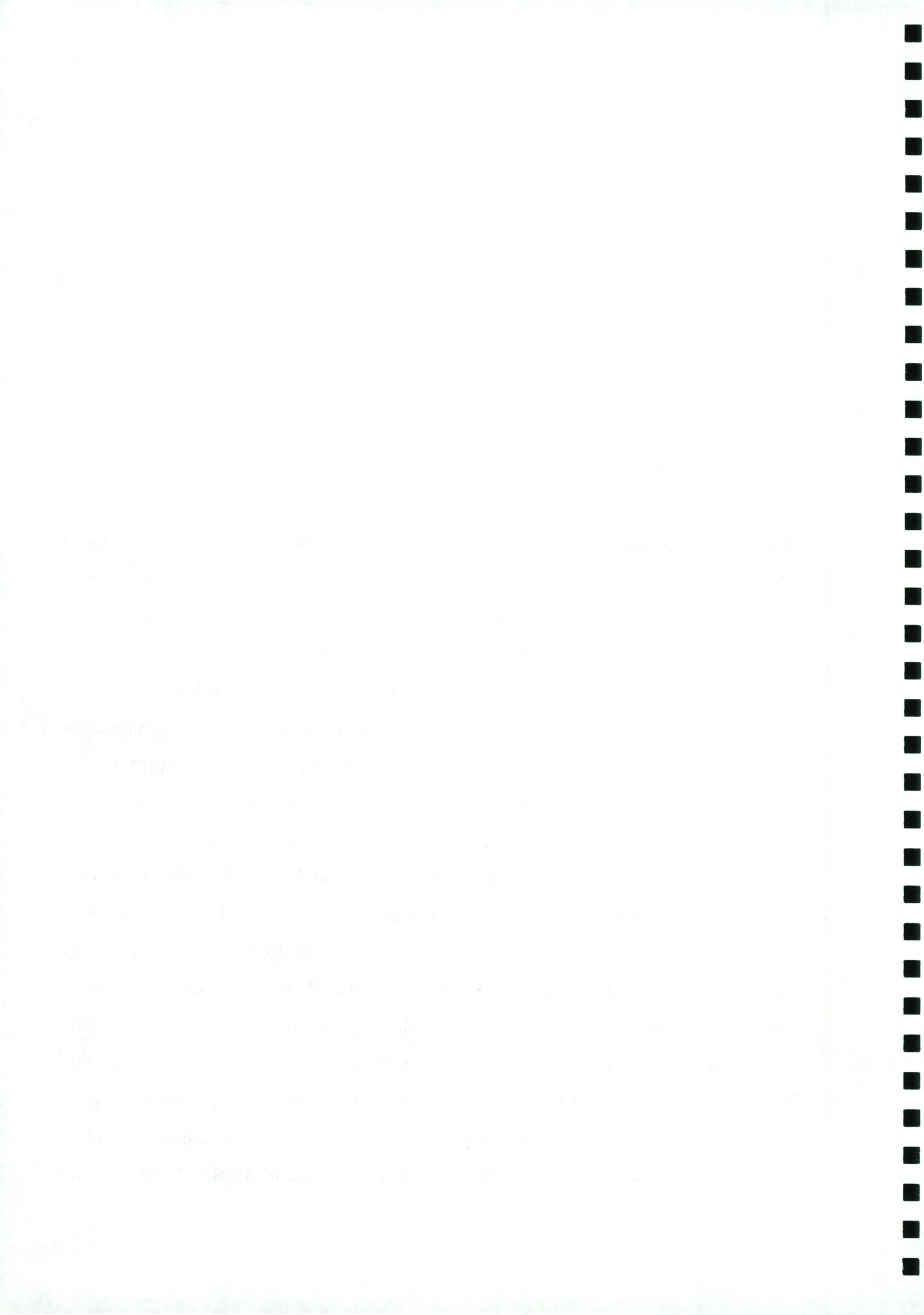
The autonomy of the rational self-determined subject is illusory, he is no longer in control of his own body or mind. He becomes the 'carrier' of the Spectacle, of the image, of pseudo-reality. The process Marshall McLuhan described in *Understanding Media* whereby we would project our nervous system in an electronic global embrace has been eclipsed by the reverse processes of implosion; of the miniaturisation, encryption and absorption into the body of the imperatives of the Spectacle. McLuhan concedes that this might be the case when reading Burroughs and states that: "The human nervous system can be reprogrammed biologically as readily as any radio station can alter its fare"(In Scott Bukattmann, *Who programmes you?* p.196)



Chapter Three : Cyborg Possibilities .

3.1 The End of the Spectacle : an ecstasy of communications.

Baudrillard has plotted a process of implosion occurring in all the binarisms of the Subject and Object; interior and exterior; private and public. The loss of reality entailed is the sign of the disappearance of the autonomous Subject and the Object as the mirror of the Subject's ambitions. Western philosophy since the Enlightenment has tended to divide the world in two. The distillation of Good from Evil is the carving out of the Object world in the image of Man, where the Good is signified by Man and Evil signified by the chaos of Nature or the foreignness of cultures outside the European Enlightenment frame of reference. The conception of everything external to the Subject as essentially Evil, is based on fear of difference, the need to control, to maintain racial purity, to remain faithful to the 'essence' of that culture, to defend the Us in the face of Them. We tell ourselves the myth of 'Us' and 'Them' in terms of dualisms in every faculty of our collective endeavours; in sociology; myths of the homogenised mass; in politics; myths "that the other is evil(the Fascist! the Communist! the Capitalist!)"(Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, p.xvi); in psychology; myths of the ego and family vs the hostile world; in philosophy; myths of the subjective vs objective worlds; in architecture; myths of the enclosure or the walled citadel vs the barbarian; and in science; myths of "nature as resistant"(Penley,1989,p.6) and



immune ; in evolution; the myth of survival of the fittest. The myth of 'Us and Them' has driven us to build empires across the world and drive it to the brink of destruction. In the place of older Empires an infrastructure of electronic communication that

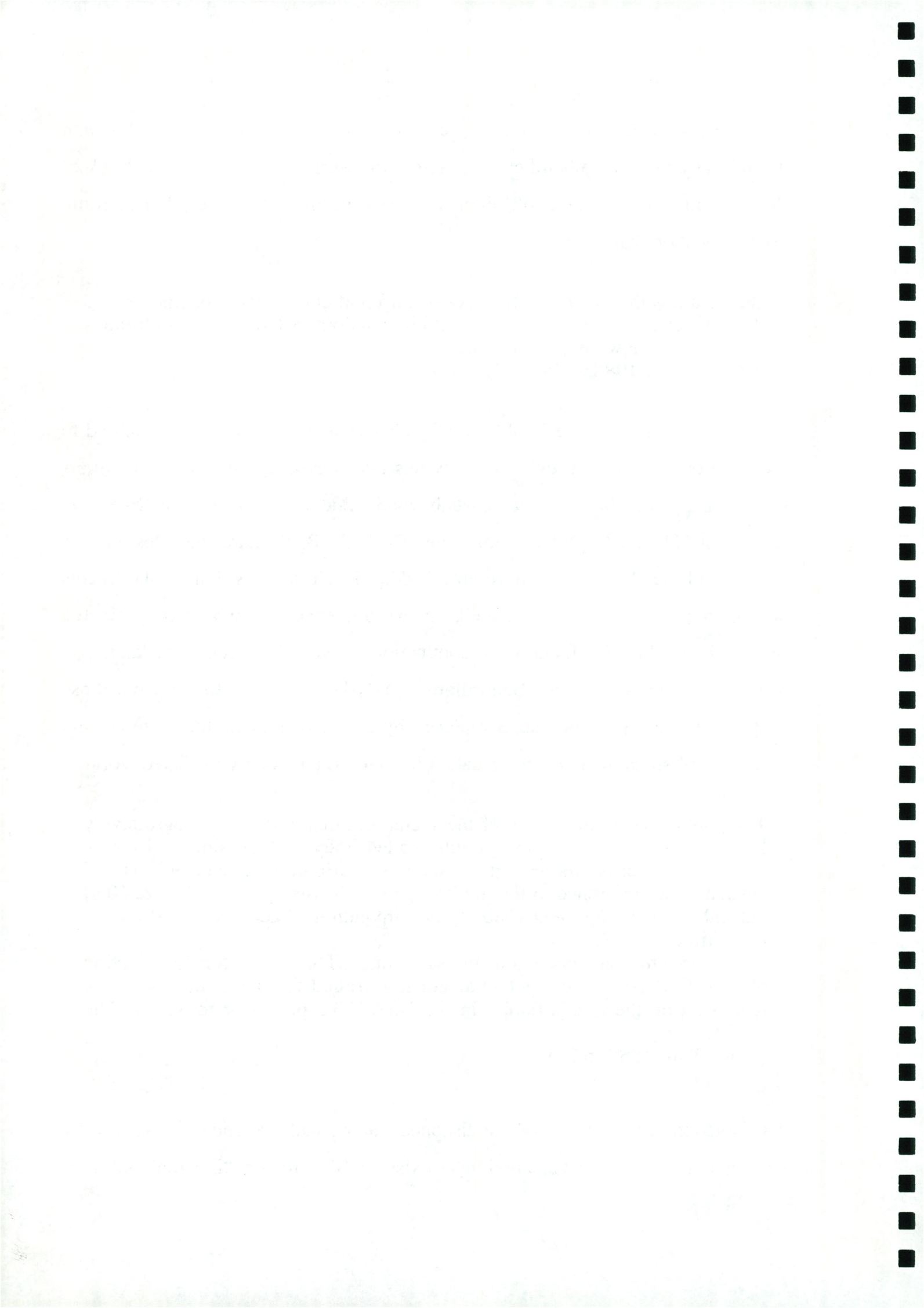
shuffles together the everyday lives of different continents, weaving around the planet a network of electronic information that offers a continuous world-wide show hooked up to life itself
(Baudrillard, 1988,p47)

However, the arrival of technologies of global communications signals an end to the logic of reflection, a logic that only lets two sets of figures dictate the limits of what happens. The Spectacle exists beyond Good and Evil, beyond 'true' and 'false'. In "The Ecstasy of Communication"(1988), Baudrillard indicates that we are beyond the "mirror"(Baudrillard, 1988,p12) phase in which the bourgeois subject required a stage, a "scene", an exterior space on which to project his/her (invariably His) fantasies of domination - "the body as stage, the landscape as stage and time as a stage"(Baudrillard, 1988,p19) -in which to carry out those fantasies has disappeared and is replaced by the proximity of the 'screen' and 'network' of streamlined communication in a closed and totally mediated world.

The public space: the theatre of the social and of politics are progressively being reduced to a shapeless, multi-headed body. Advertising in its new version is no longer the baroque, utopian scenario ecstatic over objects and consumption [reference to the golden age of advertising in the 50's & 60's] but rather the omnipresent visibility of corporations, trade marks, PR men,
(Baudrillard. 1988, p.19)

....The private space undergoes the same fate....The most intimate operation of your life becomes the potential grazing ground for the media (non-stop television on the Louns family in the USA)[70's precursor to Mtv's 'The Real World']
(Baudrillard 1988, p.21)

The isolation of the private sphere disappears along with the alienation caused by that separation. The spectacle no longer exists as 'theatre' or "illusion"(p.21), as



there is no distance between the spectator and spectacle. As TV invades life, the minimal separation between the private and the public is penetrated by the “incessant solicitation” (Baudrillard 1988, p.21) of information and communication. The most intimate areas of the private domestic scene become the fodder for the media as with soap-opera as inversely the entire exterior universe comes to unfold in microscopic detail as useless information on the screen, - Horizon, Panorama, Cutting Edge, Without Walls, 48-Hours and so on. Communication for the Subject is the obscene impurity of

“circuits and networks, a pornography of all functions and objects in their readability, their fluidity, their availability, their regulation, in their polyvalence, in their free expression.....”.

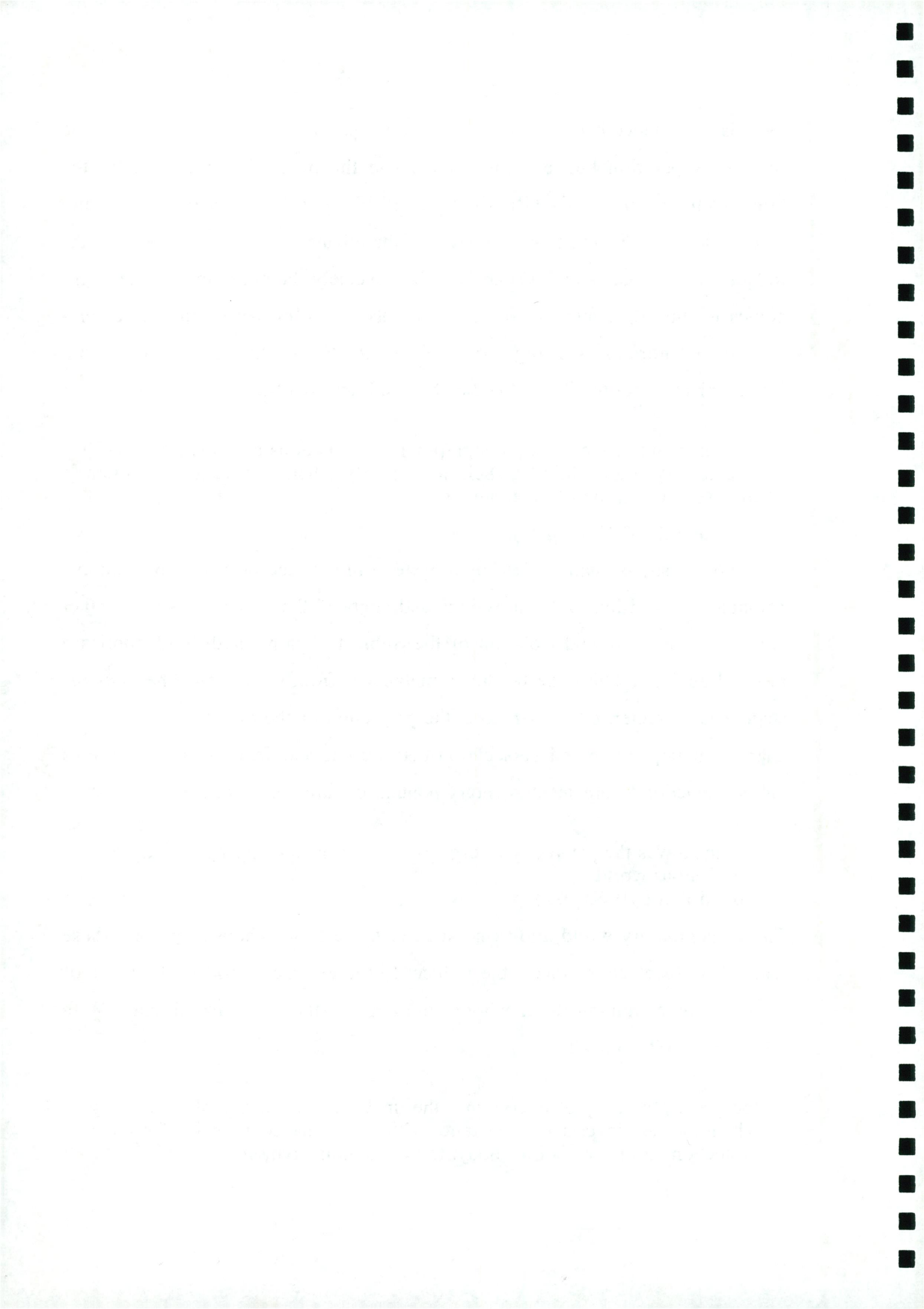
(Baudrillard 1988, p.21)

The entire essay is characterised by a hysteria in the face of infection, a phobic paranoid/schizoid fear of “connections and contact” that would serve to further erase the autonomy and isolation of the Subject. Again Baudrillard applies a medical analogy. This time he draws metaphors from pathology. The ‘mirror’ stage was characterised by paranoia; the projection of the Subject’s fantasies of anarchy, manipulation and persecution that are characteristic of both bourgeois cultural reaction to nineteenth century popular culture and Adorno's retreatism;

paranoia was the pathology of organisation- of the structuring of a rigid and jealous world-
(Baudrillard 1988, p.22)

The contemporary world allows no such distance from which to project these fears. The Spectacle connects the Subject to the external world in the form of networks of communication, whose pathology is that of schizophrenia. With schizophrenia it is the all

too great proximity of everything, the unclean promiscuity of everything which touches, invests and penetrates without resistance, no halo of private protection, not even his own body, to protect him anymore.



(Baudrillard 1988, p.22)

What terrifies the subject about the media is no longer the alienation or isolation implied in the paranoid fantasy of a total panoptic surveillance mechanism but the connectedness and impurity implied in the seamless global communications network that the contemporary media has become.

3.2 A critical response to Baudrillard

It is impossible that Baudrillard actually feels the terror of proximity he speaks of here. It is more likely that he is performing a final exorcism of the 'Subject of History' from history or operating a science-fictional ploy of imploding the real to such a degree that the subject can no longer ground him/herself in the real or cling to the assumed dualisms of the 'reality principle'. Although the language of Baudrillard is dense, he plays a crucial role in demolishing the walls of the 'Academy' from the inside. He drives theory into the light of day where it faces the reality of its own application. Like Adorno, Baudrillard denies a critical position but unlike Adorno there his writings suggest a sense of motion, of events occurring, of stable realities cracking up replaced by new formations that speak from the material world, where real changes occur. Baudrillard's theories demolish the comfortable dualisms and assumed certainties that enable a purely critical and abstract response to a world that is rapidly re-defining itself.

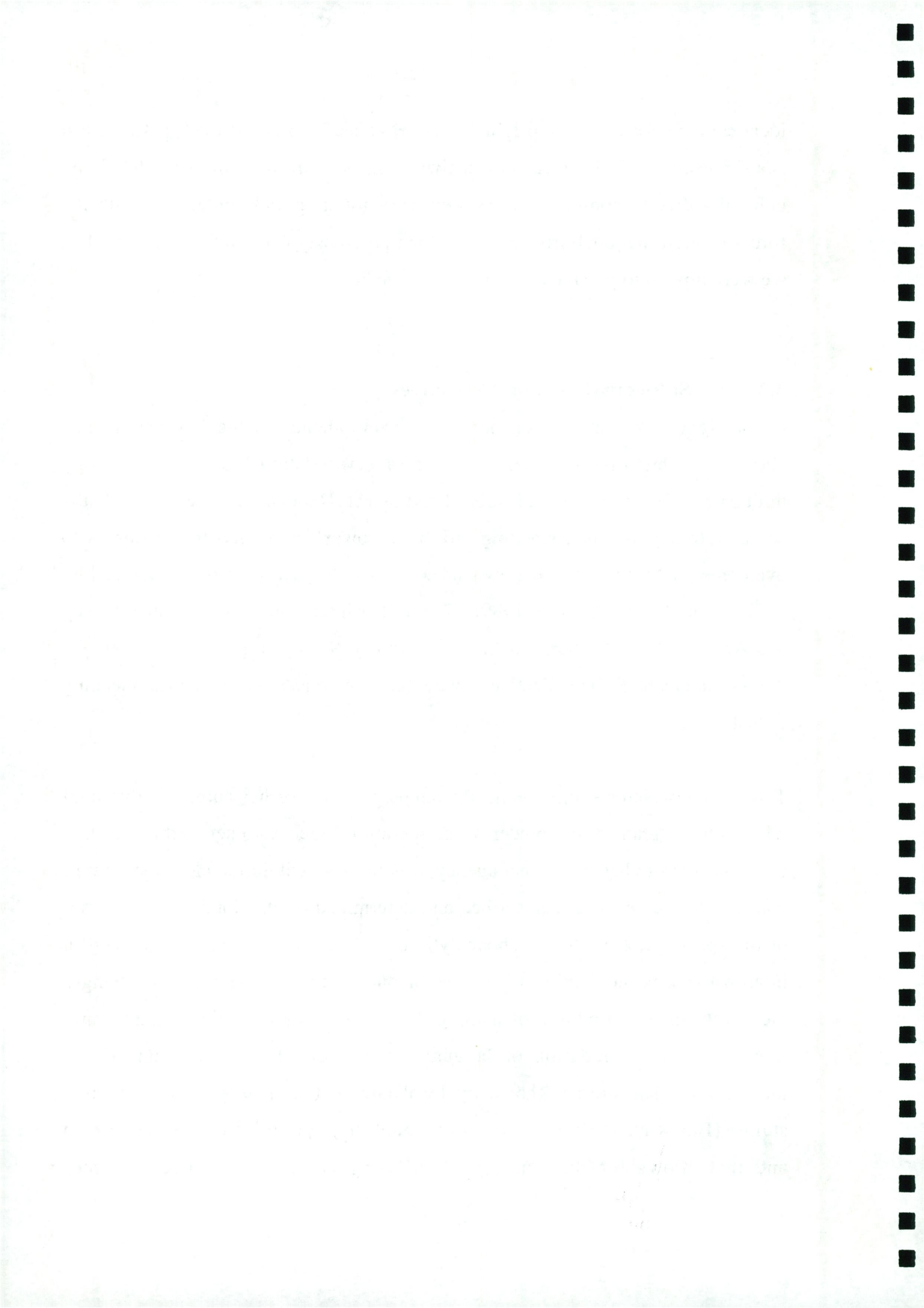
What is anticipated in Baudrillard theories, I believe, is a reconception of the notion of subjectivity as a union with objects, a union that does not set up an active / passive split, where we as subjects are not passively isolated from either the technologies used to control our desires or the technologies that isolate us from one another. In fact these objects of communications are becoming devices that can be re-appropriated in the interests of the collective process. The Internet, a recent development of the media, is surely a simulacrum of society, "the

identical copy for which no original has ever existed”(Jameson 1991, p.18). But it is a simulacrum which we can now actively engage with, forming new global and culturally diverse communities, as well as negotiating and contending with the forces of multi-national production that had previously been invisible to us when we were limited to passive consumption of media.

3.3 New Subjectivities and Collectives

In the light of recent, as yet marginal, developments on the Internet, Donna Haraway, a historian of science, seeks a new relationship with technology through redefining the ideas of Subject and object. Haraway believes that, what is essential to any idea of contesting ‘arbitrary power’, is to find the resources to overcome the “narrative of the invaded self, the defended, walled city invaded by the infecting Other”(Haraway1989, p.21). In her interview with Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, “Cyborgs at Large”(Haraway1985), she gives indications for the reinstatement of the collective process through conceiving afresh the meaning of ‘subject’.

The point at which a subject learns the language of his or her culture is the point where s/he is ‘granted’ the power of expression or agency to act in the world. If the subject has today lost his/her agency, it is because within the closed system of language the subject is circumscribed and determined by the dominant discourses of the spectacle. It is the psychoanalytic belief that we are pre-programmed in infancy to speak the dominant language of our culture. But Haraway challenges the psychoanalytic tradition of naming the Oedipal phase, as the one and only moment in the acquisition of language. She looks for an account of the unconscious that stresses the “very local and partial quality of the Oedipal stories”(Haraway, 1989, p.9). It is an account that can produce the unexpected and that allows for the learning of differing languages at different times



throughout life. Evidence, that mindless pre-programmed consumption of the spectacle does not always take place can be found in the many unexpected examples of the re-appropriation of the technologies the spectacle. Information technologies have been subverted since their arrival: the ham radio enthusiasts of the 40's and 50's that Adorno scorned¹;

who helped pioneer public wireless networks by thwarting military attempts to control communications; the hackers whose libertarian ethics and design skills helped to build the personal computer; the video artists and activists who used portapak, initially developed for airborne reconnaissance in Vietnam, as effective instruments of counter-surveillance; the pioneers of cable television who simply pirated signals, or the alternative media collectives that rent satellite transponders; independent radical desktop publishers; audio and video scratchers, mixers, samplers, and appropriators; fanzine producers; community radio stations; CB culture; bulletin board systems operators....

(Ross & Penley 1989, intro)

An exhaustive list of activities that also occur in this country (granted with little resources) Add to that all those who use technologies of instant printing, photocopying, cassette taping, radio transmission and video production in the creation of a de-centralised, local, ad-hoc media infrastructure, whose political subversion of a non-negotiable spectacle, inaugurates a new conception of the media as working both ways.

3.4 Cyborg : cybernetic organism

Cybernetics, defined by Norbert Wiener in 1948 as the science of "control and communication in the animal and the machine"(Jonathan Benthall,1972 p.43) is

¹ In his essay "On the Fetish Character..." (1972) Adorno condemned the radio ham outright:

"Of all fetishistic listeners, the radio ham is perhaps the most complete. It is irrelevant to him what he hears or how he hears; he is only interested in the fact that he hears and succeeds in inserting himself, with his private equipment, into the public mechanism..." It is ironic that this would be the exact activities of contemporary Internet dwellers and the motto of information hackers.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation and the position of the various groups.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation and the position of the various groups.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation and the position of the various groups.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation and the position of the various groups.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the religious situation and the position of the various groups.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the legal situation and the position of the various groups.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the administrative situation and the position of the various groups.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the judicial situation and the position of the various groups.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the military situation and the position of the various groups.

11. The eleventh part of the report deals with the foreign relations situation and the position of the various groups.

12. The twelfth part of the report deals with the internal security situation and the position of the various groups.

13. The thirteenth part of the report deals with the public health situation and the position of the various groups.

14. The fourteenth part of the report deals with the education situation and the position of the various groups.

15. The fifteenth part of the report deals with the labor situation and the position of the various groups.

celebrated by those artists and theorists involved in the emerging electronic collective, who are not so convinced of our total passing into history of human agency. According to Haraway, it is time to reassess 'agency' in terms of the world of objects, in which not all objects have language but still have agency to act - they are actors (Haraway, 1989, p.3). This includes all that the discourse of the Enlightenment excludes. The idea that objects have an agency is a contradiction in terms as agency - power - has been connected to notions of , "action and subjectivity" (Haraway, 1989, p.3), which are all about language. But this contradiction is the method of bringing back those 'objects', as in a sort of second coming of the collective. The task of finding metaphors that "allow you to imagine a knowledge situation that does not set up an "active/passive split"(Haraway, 1989, p.3) is facilitated by the adoption of the trickster figure or the "coyote". The coyote is a common emblem in the mythologies of the Native American. Haraway asks us to consider it as a constructed fictional position - as opposed to a fully animist or pantheist belief - from which a new understanding of human and nature in a social relationship rather than in a culture Vs nature split. According to Andrew Ross the *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) had the effect of announcing the bankruptcy of the idea that nature was essentially pure, immune and resistant to the onslaught of the rational dominance of capitalism that Euro-American radical feminists had believed and the instigation of a belief in technology as also "nature conceived as everyday social relations"(Haraway, 1989, p.4). What is needed to counteract the fencing off of technology is a "technorealism to replace phobic naturalism". There is a need to acknowledge the reconstruction of social relations within the "belly of a heavily militarized, communications-system-based technoscience in its late capitalist and imperialist forms" in order to contest for those social formations .

The cyborg is a "contested location".

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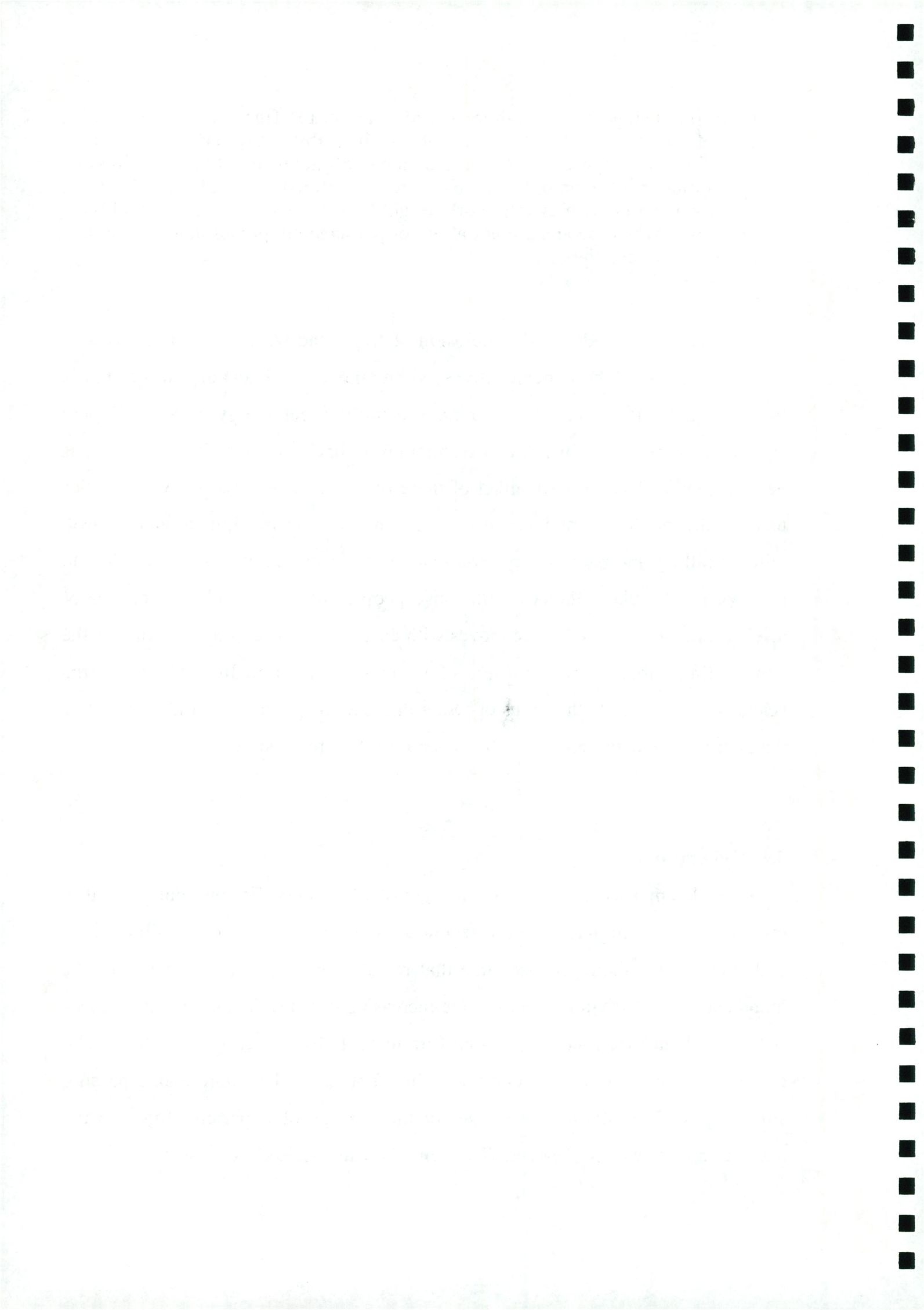
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From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, about the final abstraction embodied in a Star War apocalypse waged in the name of defence, about the final appropriation of women's bodies in a masculinist orgy of war. From another perspective, a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints
(Haraway, 1985,p.72)

In a reflection of Baudrillard's implosion of 'right and wrong', Haraway asks us to be conscious of both perspectives, simultaneously. The purpose of this is twofold: firstly it enables us to continue using the technology without slipping into the comfortable delusion that technology in itself is good, for technology is neither good or bad but only either of these two when used; secondly it enables us to challenge the instrumental uses of technologies to manipulate and control, without falling into paranoid hysteria that would further reduce peoples power to act. We must make alliances with those people working within the realms of science and "not play reductive moves with each other" or deploy versions of the "one - dimensional - man critique of technological rationality, which returns scientific discourses to the status of Other and enemy"(Haraway,1989, p.23). The temptation to remain pure is a delusion and must be resisted as such.

3.5 Cyberpunk

Cyberpunk emerged as a recent sub-genre of science-fiction that is totally immersed in the impurity of the technoscape of Eighties counterculture. It is emblematic of a mode of discourse that rejects the idea of the integrity of the human subject. Partly a rejection of the increasing commercial success of science-fiction's reliance on tried and trusted formulas, it also represents a reflex to the complexities of the modes of control in the eighties and has more than a passing similarity to Baudrillard's discourses of the passage of experientiality into the matrices and networks of power. The genre is characterised by a fascination with



marginal characters; petty criminals and hustlers suddenly caught up in some larger intrigue. William Gibson's novel "Neuromancer" (1984) is characterised by a reworking and deconstruction of the original themes of science-fiction as it breaks with the traditional dichotomy between positive and negative attitudes towards the future. His fictions never situate the reader in panoptical totalising positions observing, economic and/or ecological collapse, totalitarian repression or alien invasion but always from the partial and fragmentary realities of small players trying to make sense or more to the point, make fast cash while staying well out of reach of the panopticon.

Gibson's future is strikingly similar to our present. 1984, when he was writing 'Neuromancer', was time when the processes of "conservative modernisation"(Communist Party of G.B,p.2) of the Reagan and Thatcher years were first making their presence felt. Monetarism was and still is the ideology of their respective governments. Mass industrial production was being phased out along with the workforce, replaced by the "sunrise corridors"(Communist Party of G.B, 1985,p.3) of the micro-electronic light industries as information trading on the stock market became the site of production and investment. The "privatisation of social aspiration, obligation and responsibility"(Communist Party of G.B, 1985,p.3), was instilled in a generation, as the integration of national economies on a global scale was on the negotiating table at the GATT talks (now completed).

Gibson's future consists of a globalised free-market where the blurring of Western and Eastern cultures and commodities focuses on the high-tech economies of Japan and the Pacific Rim . Absolute wealth, fortified in glass arenas coexist in sharp contrast to an 'inhouse' Third World underclass, most of whom are the mass consumers of the endless range of technologies of surgical rejuvenation and enhancement, specialised designer drugs for work and play,

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's message to Congress for the first time since the beginning of the Civil War. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's ability to communicate with the Congress and the people. The letter is a very important document, as it contains the President's message to Congress for the first time since the beginning of the Civil War.

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implanted micro-computers for 'simulated stimulation'(Gibson,1984,p.12). The overriding humanist concerns of earlier science-fiction are ignored, where the inhuman machine - as represented by androids and robots - embodied our contradictory hopes and fears about an increasingly mechanised world. Films like *Blade Runner* and *Alien* raised the questions as to what constitutes the meaning of human. Yet in Gibson's highly technological future no overt reference is made to reflections or replicants of the human that could set up that mirror. There are no androids while robots are functional insects - "servomechanisms". It is the humans themselves that are the embodiment of that alien existence that destabilises the humanist dualism of Man/Machine. A stance on questions of the integrity of the human, either positive or negative, is largely ignored as Gibson's subjects are contradicted and constructed from the start. They are artificially constructed identities, through the use of implants and cosmetic enhancements. The 'id' in 'identities' is dropped in favour of 'entities'; Gibson describes multi-nationals as well as subjects as entities or organisms that seek to live and reproduce.

3.6 Infoscape

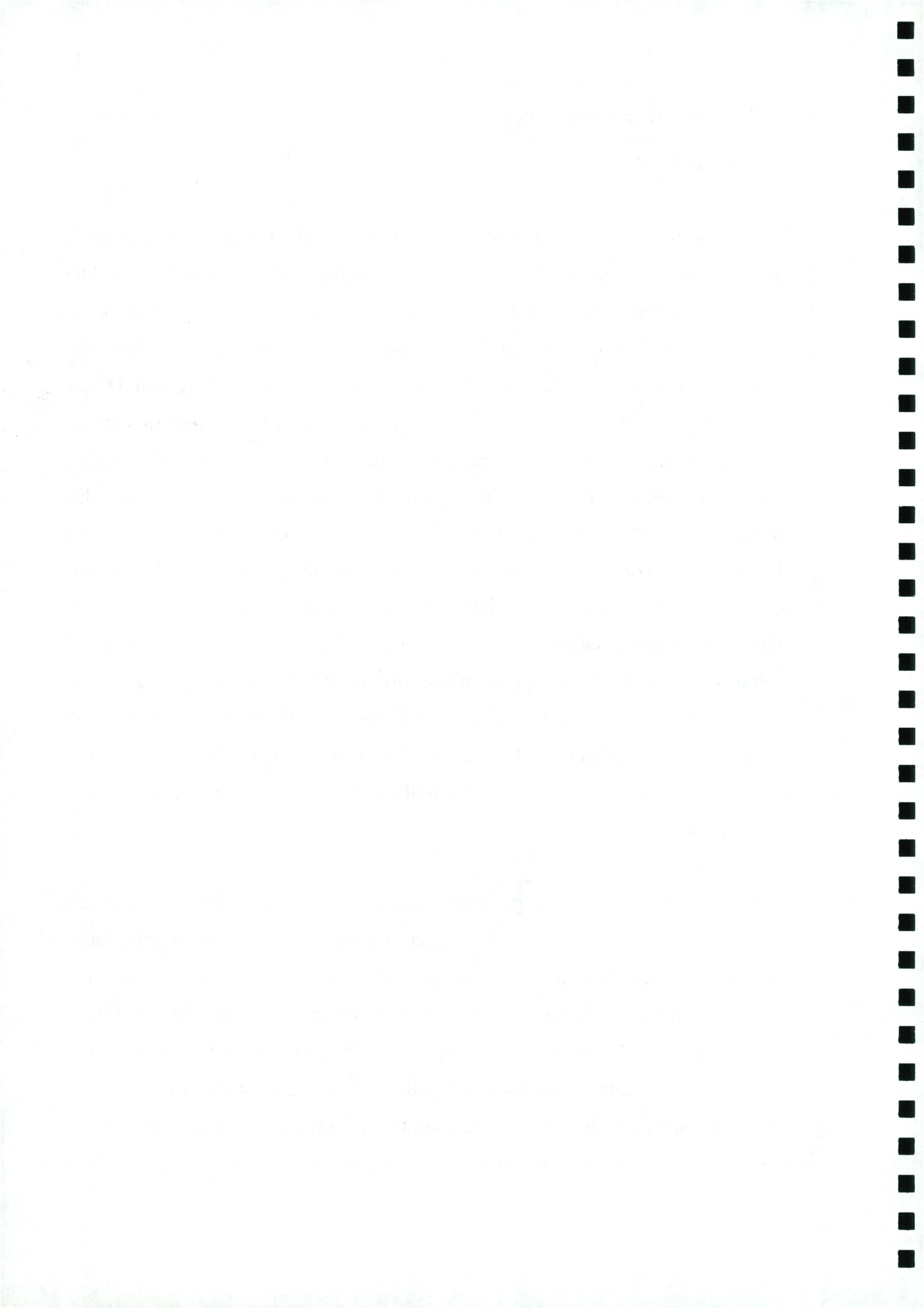
Gibson's other important contribution to the imagining of new social formations within technoculture is his "consensual hallucination of cyberspace" or the matrix where active visual participation in the flow of information exchange is enabled by the personal computer and a VR headset. Bruce Stirling, another contemporary writer in the genre, described the matrix in terms of a fusion of media;

Computers did it. Computers melted other machines, fusing them together. Television-telephone-telex. Tape recorder-VCR-laser disk. Broadcast tower linked to microwave dish linked to satellite. Phone line, cable TV, fiber optic cords hissing out words and pictures in a torrent of pure light.

All netted together in a web over the world, a global nervous system, an octopus of data.
(Stirling, 1989, p 17)

This is the essence of media closure. The Internet and its connected 'entities' is the realisation in the media of a science-fictional emblem. The net enables radically new forms of social communication to exist. It is as Baudrillard claims above, "a shapeless, multi-headed body". The combined workings of the Internet, Prodigy, CompuServe, America Online, Ireland Online, GENIE and Delphi Internet Service all amount to a network of communications variously funded and inaugurated by the public information sector, the military/industrial complex, university research and development, national intelligence agencies and other commercial 'family' organisations. Hypertext (Woolley, 1992, p. 152) is the language a derivation of the re-appropriation of the image in collage deployed in Dadaism but more akin to William Burrough's tactics of the 'cut up' for the demolition of communication and the linearity of narrative structure. Hypertext is essentially a text transfer system within the Net which, while largely sustained by the defence establishment is an uncensored medium of exchange of information through bulletin boards and discussion groups. The Network has a combined membership of some twenty million subscribers, increasing at a rate of ten percent a month.

Hypertext enables the exchange of stories and images in terms of free ideas and books that are there for appropriation and incorporation into whatever narrative the user chooses. Free material, 'Freeware' floating around on the net in a flagrant challenge to the hegemony of the publishing houses and copyright laws, but also the free exchange of the experiences of all peoples on the globe. There are implications in this for a localised politics of resistance without the need for central guidance which is impossible considering both the history of homogenised mass political movements but also considering the disappearance of old political



ideologies. Andrew Ross in his 'Hacking away at the Counterculture', has asked whether the 'hacker' can be held up as a sign of resistance. In fact many are co-opted into the companies directly after their typically adolescent "american (rebel) dream " is over. The hacker however has never been identified with a unified programme of political engagement, the only thing that has characterised them is the assertion of the basic right to free access to all information. Its connection in the media with the romantic notion of a youth counter culture in the eighties- "War Games" generated an infantilisation of the hacker ethic as a way of trivialising the acute issue of freedom of information the hacker draws to in an era where information is the currency of power.

Conclusion

To conclude, I will summarise briefly the main points of each chapter.

In chapter one I showed that the initial responses to the advent of mass media were based on the inability of bourgeois culture to comprehend the nature of the system that their power essentially rested on. I then showed how, in Adorno's vaguely marxist analysis, an understanding of the media is based on an awareness of the ideologies of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment facilitated and drove the Industrial Revolution which in turn created the mass urban culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, Adorno's negative stance in relation to the alienation and isolation caused by the mass media ruled out for him the possibilities of social transformation. I believe the reasons for this lay in his belief in the power of 'art' to stand as a critique of society which relied too heavily on a nineteenth century romantic conception of art.

In chapter two, I started by an investigation of how the Enlightenment engenders the notion of Progress in society through the construction of a false image of History. Progress breaks down once we realise this fact. This breakdown in the myth of a linear universal history from savagery to enlightenment, is revealed in the writings of Ballard, Dick and Jameson and can be seen in the present mass cultural fascination for the past recreated on screen.

I then looked at the writings of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard in their similar analyses of the spectacle, where we have ceased to function as a coherent interactive community and merely watch its simulation in the media.

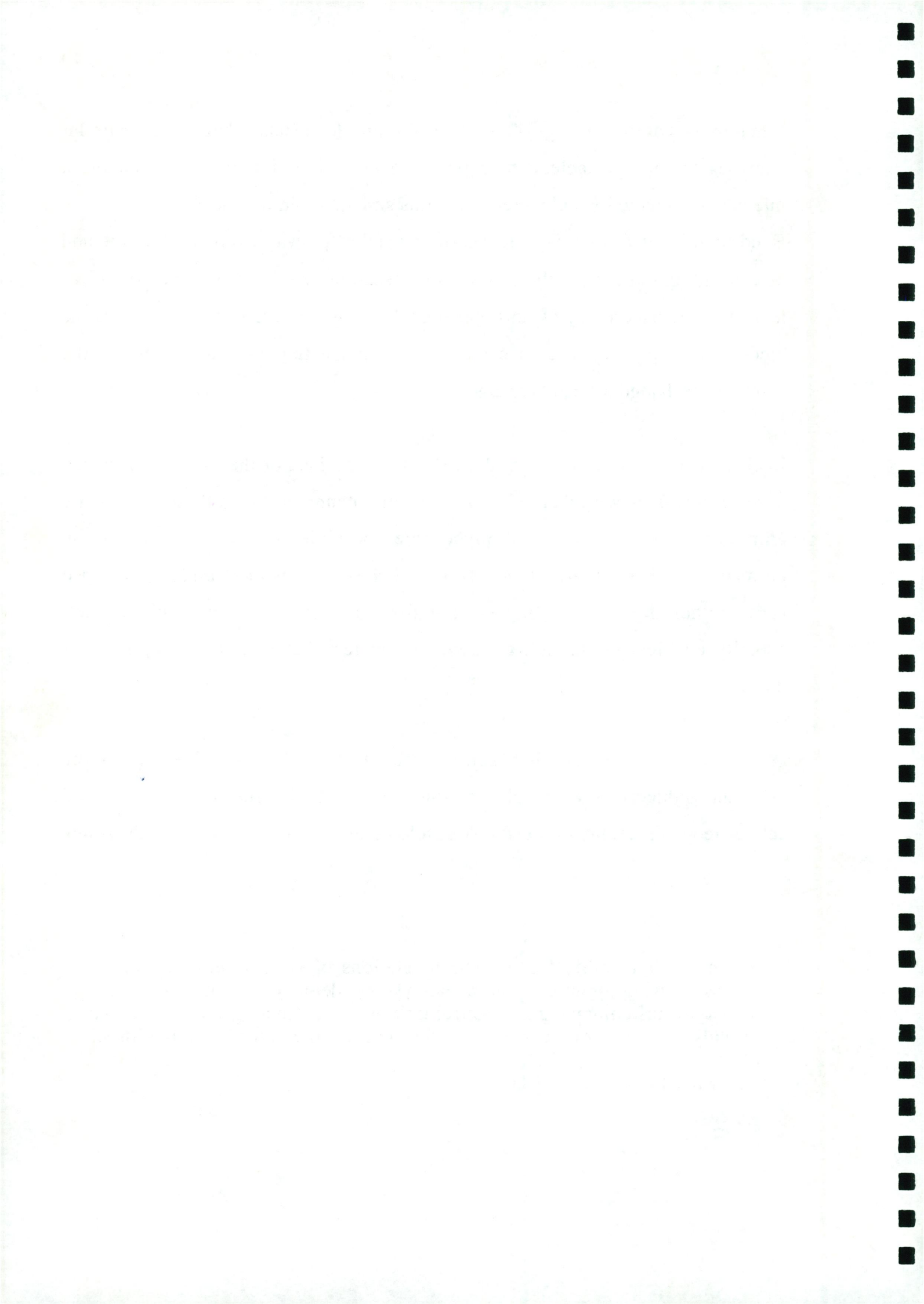
Baudrillard's later analysis provides the crucial step away from an older method of conceiving culture purely in terms of alienation, manipulation and control as he shows the bankruptcy of an oppositional politics of dualisms to confront the media. We are hooked, to a system of exchange that uses as its model the symbolic exchange we call language.

In chapter three I have elaborated on Baudrillard's idea of the uselessness of the maze of dualisms we inherited from the Enlightenment. Once these factors are eliminated, social transformation becomes possible once again. There is an ultimate irony here, namely that with media closure in its most highly developed form, rather than segregating each individual further as we would expect, actually enables the breaking down of barriers between all categories of difference.

We must move beyond the familiar use of the "Natural"(object) and the "Human"(subject) as yardsticks for the measuring the future we want, and acknowledge the reality of a technologically mediated future. To end with Donna Haraway.

Taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an antiscience metaphysics a demonology of technology, and so means embracing the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all of our parts.

(Haraway, 1985 pp.100-101)



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