

Illuminations: The Critical Theory Project

Nietzsche's Critique of Mass Culture

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Along with Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche can be read as a great theorist and critic of modernity who carried out a "ruthless criticism of all that exists." [1] Nietzsche's powerful polemics against religion, morality, and philosophy deploy a mixture of Enlightenment-inspired criticism and romantic vitalism to attack the life-negating aspects of modern culture. In addition, Nietzsche criticizes many of the institutions and values of modern societies as oppressing bodily energies and creativity, while blocking the generation of stronger individuals and a more vigorous society and culture. In his appraisals of the modern age, Nietzsche developed one of the first sustained critiques of mass culture and society, the state, and bureaucratic discipline and regimentation, producing perspectives that deeply influenced later discourses of modernity.

While Nietzsche is a major critic of modernity, he also exemplifies its spirit and ethos. Although he argues against democracy, liberalism, and various progressive social movements, Nietzsche's attack is at least partially carried out in a modern Enlightenment style, negating existing ideas in the name of a better future. Despite his keen appreciation for past cultures like classical antiquity and defense of some premodern values, Nietzsche is very future and present-oriented, attacking tradition while calling for a *new* society and culture. An impetus toward innovation, involving negation of the old and creation of the new, is therefore at the very heart of Nietzsche's complex and often enigmatic theoretical work, which, in the spirit of modernity, affirms development and transcendence of the old as crucial values for contemporary individuals and society.

Nietzsche wanted to surpass modernity for a superior mode of culture and society that would create stronger and more fully-developed individuals. He believed that fresh potentials for individual creativity and for a "higher" form of culture, made possible by the eruption of the modern age, were being curtailed and suppressed by the prevailing social and political organization, requiring radical socio-cultural change. This too, however, was in some ways a very modern posture. Thus, despite assaults on modernity, Nietzsche exemplified the modern ethos of critique, and throughout his career attacked the perennial and contemporary idols of the mind which he saw as obstacles to free thinking and living.

In this study, I will interrogate Nietzsche's critique of mass culture in the context of his analysis of modernity and broader philosophical perspectives. I argue that Nietzsche developed one of the first major

philosophical critiques of mass culture that inspired later thinkers on both the right, such as Heidegger and Junger, and the left, such as members of the Frankfurt School and Foucault. Nietzsche was one of the first to see mass culture as central to modern social reproduction processes and especially to what he saw as the distinctive features of modern societies: massification and the eradication of individuality, creating herd societies and mediocrity. He was thus a major source of the later critiques of mass society and culture which he saw as forces of decadence and nihilism, sapping cultural vitality and preventing the creation and dissemination of genuine culture and strong individuals.

The Debate Over Mass Culture

Critiques of mass culture and the press began emerging during the late 18th century. These critiques were rooted in reflections on modern life and leisure which began appearing in the 16th century during the demise of feudalism. The rise of the industrial and democratic revolutions was accompanied by the emergence of popular literature, journalism, and the modern press which fuelled great debates over their impact and consequences. Thinkers like Montaigne and Pascal noted the need for diversion already in the 16th century, and writers like Goethe began attacking the banal diversions offered by the press and mass culture, noting that they were serving as major means of escape from social reality.

We have newspapers for all hours of the day. A clever head could still add a few more. This way everything, what everybody does, wants, writes, even what he plans, is publicly exposed. One can only enjoy oneself, or suffer, for the entertainment of others, and in the greatest rush, this is communicated from house to house, from town to town, from empire to empire, and at last from continent to continent.[2]

Goethe argued that the press constitutes a squandering of time wherein the reader "wastes the days and lives from hand to mouth, without creating anything." [3] Also anticipating Nietzsche, he criticized the ways that modern entertainment and the press promoted passivity and conformity, noting in a ditty how the press is eager to provide its readers with almost anything except dissenting ideas:

Come let us print it all

And be busy everywhere;

But no one should stir

Who does not think like we.[4]

Others had more optimistic appraisals of the impact of mass media, and particularly the press. Karl Marx, for instance, had an especially high opinion of the press in the promotion of democracy and civil liberties, writing in 1842 that:

The free press is the ubiquitous vigilant eye of a people's soul, the embodiment of a people's faith in itself, the eloquent link that connects the individual with the state and the world, the embodied culture that transforms material struggles into intellectual struggles and idealizes their crude material form. It is a people's frank confession to itself, and the redeeming power of confession is well known. It is the spiritual mirror in which a people can see itself, and self-examination is the first condition of wisdom. It is the spirit of the state, which can be delivered into every cottage, cheaper than coal gas. It is all-sided, ubiquitous, omniscient. It is the ideal world which always wells up out of the real world and flows back into it with every greater spiritual riches and renews its soul.[5]

By the 1840s, the press was thus a contested terrain with fervent defenders and critics. Some saw it as an instrument of progress and enlightenment, while others saw it as a vehicle of distraction and banality. Moreover, different political groupings were developing their own distinct presses and attempting to shape public opinion in different ways. The most radical critiques came from thinkers like Kierkegaard who saw the press as a vicious attack dog that goes after individuals in a contemptible way and disseminates a "phantom" and spurious public opinion.[6] Nietzsche's contribution is to extend the critique of the press found in earlier writers to a critique of mass culture and society as a whole. Throughout his works, Nietzsche saw culture as central to human life and believed that strong and healthy cultures would create distinguished, creative, and powerful individuals, whereas weak and fragmented cultures would create mediocre and inferior beings. His critique began with his early writings that contrasted a strong and healthy Greek culture to his increasingly banal German culture and continued through his later writings where he contrasted his own conceptions of culture and strong individuality to dominant modern European conceptions.

The Young Nietzsche's Critique of Mass Culture

The early Nietzsche saw Greece as the model of a strong, healthy, and organic culture that would generate creative and robust individuals. In his first published book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche contrasted the vibrant Dionysian culture evident in pre-Socratic Greece and early Greek tragedy with the more rationalistic Apollinian strains evident in Socratic reason and later Greek tragedy. Dionysian culture was eminently life-affirming, expressive of bodily energies and passions, and bound together individuals in shared cultural experiences of ecstasy, intoxication, and festivals, which Nietzsche believed created strong and healthy individuals and a vigorous culture.

In Nietzsche's view, Socratic culture was a response to the breakdown and fragmentation of tragic Greek culture which it attempted to replace with a set of shared, homogeneous ethical values, theoretical norms, and methodological procedures, based on Socratic logic and reasoning, which would replace the warring gods of the Greeks with a more unified rational culture. In a sense, Socratic culture thus provided a cure for a cultural emergency with extreme rationalism coming to curb the strong, warring impulses that had been released and that Socrates/Plato believed were out of control. The result was an equation of reason and knowledge and virtue, making reason the instrument of both truth and morality.[7]

Thus, Socratic culture replaced what Nietzsche saw as the profound pre-Socratic tragic vision of suffering, and redemption through culture, with the Socratic optimism that reason can discover truth and produce a good life. For Nietzsche, the triumph of Socratic theoretic man provided the origins of modern rationalism and Enlightenment optimism. This was counterpoised to a tragic pessimism which, in the manner of his early mentors Schopenhauer and Wagner, perceived great philosophy and art as the teachers and redeemers of humanity and the instruments of strong, healthy cultures.[8] Throughout his work, Nietzsche saw Socratic culture as a formative force of the modern period, also with life-negating results (for example, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Socrates"). "Socrates" for Nietzsche was thus a symbol of decay, of atrophying life-instincts in which reason came to dominate the body and the passions, a process that intensified over the centuries and that Nietzsche saw as constitutive for the modern era.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche championed Richard Wagner's music-theater as a potentially revitalizing cultural force that he hoped would promote a rebirth of German culture, and with whom he formed a deep, albeit conflicted, friendship. Indeed, Nietzsche became a frequent visitor at Wagner's house in Tribschen and a propagandist for the maestro's music drama which he hoped could provide a basis for a new German culture. Near the end of the book Nietzsche describes the debasement in contemporary art and how a low level of cultural criticism "prepared by education and newspapers" has led to inability to appreciate genuine art:

The attempt, for example, to use the theater as an institution for the moral education of the people, still taken seriously in Schiller's time, is already reckoned among the incredible antiques of a dated type of education. While the critic got the upper hand in the theater and concert hall, the journalist in the schools, and the press in society, art degenerated into a particularly lowly topic of conversation, and aesthetic criticism was used as a means of uniting a vain, distracted, selfish, and moreover piteously unoriginal sociability (**The Birth of Tragedy**, S22, pp. 133-134).

Nietzsche thus sees a massified culture, perpetuated through both schooling and newspapers, as undermining authentic art and creating a mediocre culture. Nietzsche himself hoped to create the philosophical foundations for a new culture that would revitalize Germany and undertook studies of Greek philosophy which he believed provided essential components for a life-affirming culture which would create strong and superior individuals. In 1873, however, Nietzsche turned from his meditations on Greek philosophy and project of developing his own philosophical perspectives, to write a series of attacks on the present age. Commentators often see this turn toward the contemporary as an attempt to please Wagner who was contemptuous of purely philological or philosophical studies and as an active intervention on Nietzsche's part in the German cultural wars of the time.[9] While subservience to the Wagnerian project of shaping contemporary German culture and Wagner's desire to see a critique published of his enemy Strauss, who had once criticized him, might have influenced Nietzsche's immediate intention, the turn toward the "untimely reflections" was a decisive move to engage contemporary culture that was becoming a central element of Nietzsche's emerging philosophical project.

Nietzsche began to take on pivotal phenomena of the present age in a series of **Unmodern Observations** which attacked, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, key figures and features of Germany and the modern age while proposing ideas for cultural renewal. The target of the first **Observations** was the German writer David Friedrich Strauss, author of an influential **Life of Jesus** which through detailed comparison of the account of Jesus in the Gospels argued that Christianity was a myth that served the needs of people of the epoch. Nietzsche read Strauss' demythologizing bombshell at twenty and was deeply impressed with his philological critique.[10] After paying homage to Strauss' earlier work, Nietzsche sharply criticized his more recent writings which he saw as exemplary of the philistinism that was ruling German life since its victory over France and unification, and which blocked the rebirth of genuine culture that he desired (**Dionysus**, S2). Excoriating the joyful self-satisfaction of the Germans after the Franco-Prussian war, Nietzsche writes:

I sense this ecstatic joy in the incredible self-confidence of German journalists and the manufacturers of novels, tragedies, poems, and histories. These men clearly form a tightly knit club conspiring both to control the hours that modern man devotes to leisure and digestion, that is, his 'moment of culture,' and to stupefy him with printed matter. Since the war, all is joy, dignity, and self-satisfaction for this little club. After such a 'triumph of German culture' its members consider themselves not only established and sanctioned, but nearly sanctified, and therefore speak all the more solemnly. They delight in direct appeals to the German people, publish their collected works in the manner of classical authors, even announce in the journals at their disposal the few from their own ranks who will serve as our new classical models (**Dionysus**, S1).

This constitutes for Nietzsche an "abuse of success" and he hopes that at least some Germans would step forth to criticize "the distressing spectacle enacted before them" (ibid). Nietzsche himself reprimands "the scholarly caste" for neglecting to engage "popular German culture" and to examine the lack of a vibrant and unifying culture in Germany. Strauss for Nietzsche was the exemplar of a "cultural philistinism" that Nietzsche believed was undermining contemporary German culture and society. Nietzsche was especially appalled that Strauss had set himself up as the teacher of the German nation, the

molder and shaper of the next generation, the teacher of youth. For Nietzsche, it was a horrifying to contemplate that such banal philistinism could shape the future of Germany (**_Dionysus_**, S7).

Nietzsche saw the prevalence of mass culture as the source of the debasement of thought and culture in contemporary Europe. Strauss' ideas "are all uniformly bookish, in fact, journalistic (**_Dionysus_**, S8). [11] The degradation of culture results from mass culture that influences the language, style, ideas, and judgements currently circulating and dominant. In Nietzsche's view:

The bulk of the German's daily reading material can be found, almost without exception, on the pages of the daily papers and the standard magazines. This language, its continual dripping -- same words, same phrases -- makes an aural impression. For the most part, the hours devoted to this reading are those in which his mind is too weary to resist. By degrees the ear feels at home with this workaday German and aches when, for any reason, it is not heard. But, almost as an occupational hazard, the producers of these newspapers and periodicals are the most thoroughly inured to the slimy journalistic jargon. They have quite literally lost all taste and relish, above all, the absolutely corrupt and capricious. This explains that *tutti unisono* with which every newly coined solecism instantly chimes in spite of the general torpor and malaise. With their impudent corruptions these wage-laborers of language take revenge on our mother-tongue for boring them so incredibly.

... When the flat hackneyed, vulgar, and feckless are accepted as the norm, and the corrupt and malapropos as charming exceptions, then the powerful, the uncommon, and the beautiful fall into disrepute. This is why in Germany we so often hear the story of the handsome traveler who visits a land of hunchbacks. Wherever he went, he was mocked and abused for his apparent deformity--his lack of a hump. Finally a priest took up his cause, saying to the people: "Have pity on this poor stranger and offer thanks to the gods for gracing you with such stately humps of flesh" (**_Dionysus_**, S11).

Throughout his **_Meditations_**, Nietzsche claimed that modern culture was "barbaric" (i.e. a formless amalgamation of fragmentary competing styles, ideas, and works) and assailed the excessive rationalism, egotistical individualism, shallow optimism, homogenization, and fragmentation that he saw as characteristic of modern culture. In **_On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life_**, Nietzsche argued that with the proliferation of historical studies modern man was becoming paralyzed and overwhelmed with historical knowledge (**_Husserl_**, Foreword). He argued that: "We moderns... possess nothing which is truly ours," assimilating an overwhelming amount of factual knowledge that does not play a transformative role in social life: "And so all of modern culture is essentially inward; on the cover the binder has stamped some title like 'Handbook of Inner Culture for Outward Barbarians'" (**_Husserl_**, S4).

Believing that modern individuals suffered from a weakened personality, Nietzsche wanted the study of history to be put into the service of creating great personalities, to help make possible a rebirth of a life-affirming culture. During the 1870s, Nietzsche was becoming increasingly disappointed with the philistinism of the German Reich and progressively intensified through the 1880s his critique of German bourgeois culture, Wagner, Bismarck, German militarism, and the Reich. He distanced himself from his search for a new German culture based on Wagner's music dramas and published a series of aphoristic works which promoted a the ethos of enlightenment and social critique, beginning with **_Human, All Too Human_**.

Nietzsche's Critique of the Present Age

For Nietzsche, mass culture encompassed the press, forms of culture from magazines to scholarly

publications, religion, politics, beer, and nationalism.[12] Nietzsche saw the importance of emergent modes of communication and technologies in the development of modernity: "The press, the machine, the railway, the telegraph are premises whose thousand-year conclusion no one has yet dared to draw" (**Harvey**, p. 378).[13] On the whole, mass culture in his middle and later writings is that which massifies, that which levels, that which produces a mediocre culture and individuals. Religion, for example, was a form of mass culture for Nietzsche. Although Nietzsche is sometimes accused of being an irrationalist he assaulted Christianity precisely because of its irrationality and attack on the body and this world. Jesus Christ, he claimed, "promoted the stupidifying of man, placed himself on the side of the poor in spirit and retarded the production of the supreme intellect" (**Harvey**, p. 112). Nietzsche also dissected the Christian transvaluation of values which declared strength and wisdom as bad, while lowliness, humility, and submission were deemed "good". He believed that this promotion of a slave morality excessively valued spirit over body and promoted general societal repression and regression (**Genealogy of Morals**).

Modern politics for Nietzsche are also a form of mass culture. Nietzsche was "anti-political" in the sense that he believed contemporary mass politics led to herd conformity, the loss of individuality, and mass manipulation and homogenization. In **Thus Spake Zarathustra**, he carried out one of the first critiques of the modern state in "The New Idol," presenting the state as "a cold monster" that is the "death of peoples." The contrast is between a "people" with its traditions, "customs and rights" and the modern state with its lies and pretensions, spread through the press and mass culture. Nietzsche's critique of the state takes place from a radically individualistic position in **Zarathustra**, espousing withdrawal and isolation over participation and involvement in mass society: "Foul smells their idol, the cold monster... break their windows and leap to freedom."

Nietzsche's critique of the state is bound up with his critique of mass society and culture which he sees as homogenizing and harmful to vital life energies, creativity, and superior individuality. Nietzsche thought that modern democracy, liberalism, and enlightened social movements contributed to the regression of "modern man" behind the more vital and powerful individuals of the Renaissance. Consistently championing ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance as paradigms of strong, vigorous cultures, Nietzsche's strategy was to choose past ideals which could serve as models or norms for future "greatness." Greek and Renaissance cultures affirmed the body, were secular, developed science and technology, were highly aesthetic, and produced strong individuals -- all Nietzsche's ideals. These prototypes, he believed, were concentrated in strong individuals like Julius Caesar, Caesar Borgia, and the "great men" of the Renaissance. Nietzsche's normative contrasts are supported by a distinction between sickness and health, between descending and ascending life. His texts exult in an affirmation of life energies and criticize everything that suppresses and inhibits the full expression of primary instincts. His assault on religion, morality, mass culture, and the banality of modern societies is thus unleashed from the standpoint of an ideal of the free and uninhibited flow of life energies, an unrestrained expression of instinctual powers.

Likewise, he argues that the democratic, liberal, feminist, anarchist, and socialist movements are expressive of declining life, of sickness, of resentment. All are manifestations of Socratic culture that posit reason over passion, ideas over life, and all are also manifestations of modern homogenizing tendencies, and are thus anti-life, helping to produce weak individuals and cultures. In opposition to liberal cultural tolerance, Nietzsche advocated cultural war which he believed would generate cultural diversity and a stronger, more creative culture and individuals.

Although Nietzsche's assault on liberalism and other progressivist social movements contain elitist and anti-democratic attitudes, one also finds some positive positions on democracy in his writings, as when Nietzsche presents the democratization of Europe as irresistible and a "link in the chain of those tremendous *prophylactic measures* which are the conception of modern times and through which we

separate ourselves from the Middle Age" (**_Harvey_**, p. 376). Moreover, "[d]emocratic institutions are quarantine arrangements to combat that ancient pestilence, lust for tyranny: as such they are very useful and very boring" (**_Harvey_**, p. 383). These passages indicate Nietzsche's dual attitude toward democracy quite clearly: on one hand, it is useful as a counterforce to tyranny, but it is boring and promotes mediocrity. In his writings later in the 1880s, Nietzsche will sift out the positive aspects of democracy and his posture will be predominantly negative.

Thus, Nietzsche attacked both the modern state and mass society and culture, for their normalizing and homogenizing tendencies, endearing himself to the Frankfurt School and French theorists like Foucault. For Nietzsche, the state and mass culture were bitter antagonists against genuine culture and he saw both the modern state and mass society as producing mediocrity and cultural backwardness, as well as generating mass hysteria such as nationalism and anti-Semitism. The modern state and mass society and culture level status and value hierarchies, reducing ideals and tastes to the lowest common denominator and producing mediocre individuals.

Critical Concluding Remarks

Nietzsche was generally pessimistic about the impact of modern social processes. For the most part, he felt that modern society and culture had become so chaotic, fragmented, "arbitrary," and devoid of "creative force" that it has lost the resources to create a vital culture and ultimately advanced the decline of the human species. He especially thought that the press and mass culture were forces of degeneration and mediocrity, focusing attention on the trivial, superfluous, and sensational, and creating homogenization and conformity. He did not, however, develop systematic critiques of the press or specific forms of mass culture, except, perhaps his critique of Strauss and cultural philistinism, or Wagner and Wagnerianism which he eventually came to see as a lowbrow exhibition of mass culture and bad taste. He thus did not develop an institutional critique of the media or the culture industries, as did Adorno and Horkheimer,[14] or detailed criticisms of the phenomena of mass culture, as did those in the field of critical cultural studies.

Moreover, Nietzsche was radical and totalizing in his critique of mass culture, he saw no progressive moments, except perhaps in light opera that expressed a *joi de vivre* and gaiety of which he approved. Culture for Nietzsche fundamentally consisted of an "ordering of rank" (**_Rankordnung_**) that established higher and lower values and he called for a revaluation of values, an overturning (**_Umwertung_**) of the highest values and establishment of superior values that would promote stronger individuals and a more vital culture. His "Übermensch", therefore, is a superior individual who overcomes the decadent values of mass culture, and is able to create life-affirming values and a stronger and more life-affirming culture.

Developing superior individuality requires overcoming dominant forms of culture and conformity, pitting the individual against mass society and culture. Nietzsche believed that some individuals could exert their will to power to create higher, more refined selves, thus ultimately he champions a form of aristocratic individualism and aestheticism. Making an implicit distinction between high and low art, Nietzsche argues that authentic art allows "freedom above things" and the demands of morality and other repressive institutions:

we need all exuberant, floating, dancing, mocking, childish, and blissful art lest we lose our *freedom above things* that our ideal demands of us.... We should be *able* also to stand *above* morality -- and not only to *stand* with anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling any moment, but also to *float* above it and *play*. How then could we possibly dispense with art -- and with the fool? (**_GS_**, p. 164).[15]

Authentic art was privileged by Nietzsche precisely because it cultivated the senses, imagination, and other aspects of the mind and body, allowing individuals to enter a realm that transcended conventional morality and social norms. Nietzsche championed art as the most powerful enemy of the ascetic ideal and the ultimate source of cultural vitality. The crisis in modern culture is partly rooted in the fact that aesthetic sensibilities have been savaged by the repressive forces of instrumental rationality, social rationalization, and mass culture and society, thus art has been relegated to the margins of society. For Nietzsche, however, these rationalizing forces must be constrained by aesthetically rooted values. Free spirits were needed who would experiment with art, ideas, and life and who would create new values and a superior culture that would produce in turn higher human beings.

Ultimately, Nietzsche wanted a life-affirming culture that would create superior individuals. He is a cultural revolutionary who seeks a healthy and vibrant culture and believes that culture is the most powerful mode of social and individual transformation. His radical critique of mass culture is fuelled, in part, by the conviction that it represents a degeneration of culture, that it is a debased form of precisely that mode of existence that is supposed to produce better, higher, and healthier human beings. Thus, Nietzsche resolutely affirms a normative distinction between high and low culture and is an unabashed cultural elitist. As my parenthetical asides have suggested, Nietzsche would probably be appalled at the debased state of contemporary culture,[16] and Nietzschean impulses have contributed to radical cultural studies today that carries out a systematic assault on contemporary culture as a whole -- often mediated with Marxian, feminist, or post-structuralist motifs.

Nietzsche's negative critique cuts across and against the populist turn in cultural studies that would affirm and celebrate popular culture. On the whole, Nietzsche's cultural critique is dialectical, affirming what he considers life-enhancing and empowering, and criticizing what he believes to be life-negating and disempowering. In ***Twilight of the Idols***, Nietzsche wrote: "Formula of my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*..." ("Maxims"). Thus Lyotard gets it wrong when he claims that Nietzsche is a fundamentally affirmative thinker, attacks Adorno's proto-Nietzschean conception of philosophy as negation, and himself champions purely positive and affirmative "libidinal economy." [17] To be sure, Nietzsche is not just a nay-sayer and always accompanies his No! with a Yes! It is therefore not a question of the negative versus the affirmative Nietzsche, but is rather a dialectical relationship of both, seeing how the yes and the no always necessarily supplement each other in Nietzsche's thought.

In my view and to conclude, Nietzsche's radical and negative critique of mass culture is valuable and certainly finds plenty of targets today. But I would argue against Nietzsche for a more dialectical optic that sees what I call media culture as a contested terrain, as a site of social struggle, that contains reactionary and progressive, life-affirming and oppressive features.[18] A critical theory of media culture would thus be as relentlessly negative as Nietzsche, but would also affirm socially critical, subversive, and democratizing moments. Its cultural politics would not just be for superior individuals, but would attempt to develop a cultural pedagogy which assaulted all forms of oppression and domination and attempted to produce a more democratic, just, and pedagogical society and culture.

Notes

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works. Vol I* (New York: International Publishers, 1975, p. 142). This study draws on collaborative work with Robert Antonio on an unpublished text on theories of modernity and work with Steven Best in works on postmodern theory, so I am indebted to these collaborations for my readings of Nietzsche. In this article, I am interpreting Nietzsche predominantly as a modern theorist, addressing crucial issues of modernity; for discussion of how Nietzsche anticipates the postmodern turn, see Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997).

2. Goethe, in Leo Lowenthal, *Literature, Popular Culture and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961, p. 20).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Marx, op. cit., p. 165.
6. For his critique of the press and public opinion, see Soren Kierkegaard, *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and *The Corsair Affair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). For commentary, see Steven Best and Douglas Kellner "Modernity, Mass Society, and the Media: Reflections on *The Corsair Affair*," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary, The Corsair Affair*, edited by Robert Perkins. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1990) and Best and Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*, op. cit.
7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 1967) and *Twilight of the Idols* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968, p. 33). The historical Socrates, of course, was much more intuitive, passionate, aesthetic, and erotic than in Nietzsche's model, thus his conception of Socratic culture should be read as an ideal type that crystallizes a type of Greek rationalism in the figure of Socrates, a mode that Nietzsche believes continues to characterize modern culture.
8. See Nietzsche's meditations on Schopenhauer and Wagner in *Unmodern Observations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990). On Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, see Georg Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991 [1907]). It was under Schopenhauer's influence that Nietzsche could proclaim in *The Birth of Tragedy* that art is the "essential metaphysical activity" and that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, p. 52).
9. See Herbert Golder, "Introduction" to *DS* in *Unmodern Observations*, op. cit, pp 3ff.
10. Ronald Hayman, *Nietzsche. A Critical Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980, p. 63). Strauss' text greatly influenced the Young Hegelians when it was published in 1835 and intensified the modern philological and philosophical critique of religion begun in the Enlightenment which culminated in Nietzsche himself. Indeed, the Young Hegelians anticipated Nietzsche's critique of religion with Bruno Bauer declaring "God is Dead," Marx describing religion as "the opium of the people," and Feuerbach interpreting religion as the projection of human qualities onto a deity.
11. Nietzsche intended to write a critique of religion, school, press, state, society, Man as I, Nature, and the road to liberation as part of a series of *Unmodern Observations*, after the four he published (see the list on pp. 321-322). While he never completed this project, reflections on these topics are found throughout his succeeding aphoristic works, such as *Human, All-Too-Human*.
12. See, for example, *Twilight of the Idols* where Nietzsche complained that the press, beer, religion, education, and nationalism had stupefied the German people ("Germans"). He makes a similar criticism in his Strauss critique (S4).
13. See *Human, All Too Human* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 378.
14. See Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1972) and Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

15. See *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 164.

16. Thus, in contrast to Stephen Barker's paper also published in this issue, it is hard for me to imagine Nietzsche as affirmative of contemporary technoculture in the light of his radical critique of mass culture. I would imagine that Nietzsche would find appalling many of the examples of contemporary technoculture that Barker affirms in his name, and that Nietzsche's higher culture and individual would posit themselves against technoculture.

17. See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Economie Libidinale* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974) and "Adorno as the Devil," *Telos* 19 (Spring 1974): 127-137.

18. Kellner, *Media Culture*, op. Cit.