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As I wanted to say something about an unusual nineteenth-century literary history—a uniquely idiosyncratic literary and cultural history of the nineteenth century—I found myself wishing that I could also say something a little more general about literary histories and also about the nineteenth century. I have been interested in literary history as a form or genre for some time, without being able to observe the crystallization of a theory, or to discern the outlines of a model. I found myself reflecting on a number of key texts—Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*,[1] Barthes's *Writing Zero Degree*,[2] Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music*[3]—that I wanted to call dialectical histories or historiographies, without it being clear (to me) how the concept of the dialectical was meant to function: was it to be a methodological signal, about a certain procedure such histories always needed to perform on the preexisting stereotypes of history that they came into the world to correct, reverse, overcome, or undermine in one way or another? But then in that case these were to be thought of as exemplary texts, which could be imitated by other historians and replicated for other historical periods and other kinds of historical content. Leaving aside the question of whether the dialectic should really be thought of in that way as a method at all, I also wondered whether we needed copies of these unique narratives exactly, even if it should prove possible to reproduce them at all. For what tends to make all theoretical or philosophical questions of genre boring and intolerably old-fashioned is the persistence in them of the schema of the universal and the particular, or the general and the individual or, worse yet, the genus and the species. But ours is an age peculiarly allergic to universals—whether for all that it is a nominalist age exactly is another question—at any rate, problems, which like this generic one invite us to rehearse the old formulas of the universal and the particular without challenging them in any way, tend to be discarded en route like so much excess baggage, if not ties that choke or unnecessary overgarments. Was the nineteenth century more inclined to give universals the benefit of the doubt than we are? It is a question that might well go to the heart of the matter, and one to which I'll return.

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The solution to the question of literary history will only come at the price of disposing of this issue of generic universals in one way or another; I have always appreciated Claudio Guillen's idea that the genres form unique historical conjunctures, and that texts are not to be classified in individual generic categories like items dropped in a box, but rather that each unique text is to be grasped as an individuality presided over by a generic constellation like so many stars in the sky.[4] The genre is not a classification scheme but an idea; the text comes into a world in which that idea also has a certain prestige and needs to be reckoned with. Thus, the individual text is "about" the generic idea, just as it is also "about" a certain number of other things. But how you negotiate this "about" is another problem altogether.

I would like to short-circuit the model of the universal and the particular in a different way, or rather I want to suggest that these unique historiographic performances that interest me are characterized by just such a capacity and that they somehow all do exactly that: they neutralize the concept of universals by problematizing the practice of historiography as such, without abandoning it altogether. For the latter is the one kind of solution to our problem that will do us no good, namely, a principled repudiation of historical narrative altogether, on the grounds that we cannot think of any way of justifying it philosophically. What distinguishes these literary histories formally is that they call into question, absolutely and by their own practice, the very notion of doing literary history at all, but they do so by way of a literary historiography that does not provide a model and cannot be repeated. There is a rhetorical term for this, I believe: the *hapax legomenon*, which designates a category for which there exists only a single item or specimen, a universal for which there is only one particular. Such literary histories give you history, and then they acknowledge the problem as such—that of historiography, that of universal genres, but they do away with it by historicizing it, and by offering one final historical narrative that explains why the problem can never be solved, that is to say, why no model of literary history can be given, why you can't imitate this one, which however *is* a kind of literary history. In short, they show us how you can have it both ways, find the very notion of literary history problematized as the age always thought it should be, and yet have a historical paradigm in the process.

If this way of doing literary history (and of not doing it) makes any sense at all, then we probably need to add on another generic question. For the lowest level of all literary history is the manual, which, sewn together with a few thread-bare concepts about influences and the evolution of forms, essentially furnished names, titles, and dates: even in an age that has problematized the name (death of the author) and the title (textualization of the older "work of art")—what it has done with the date may well be the topic of this discussion—even un-

der such conditions, we probably still need to look things up from time to time. Will these lofty new self-destructing metahistories do that for us, and can they be put to basely practical uses of that kind? I think so, at least selectively, and I imagine that the "facts" they furnish along these lines also have something to do with the problem of the canon, or at least that they furnish counter-canons, alternate canons, alternate lists and dates, that problematize the categories of all those things as well and foreground the historical construction of such literary and cultural "facts" in the first place.

So much for literary history, at least for the moment; now we need to see if we can say something about the nineteenth century, which may in fact be the same topic, since the past, the various pasts, resolve themselves more or less into little more than that, provided you understand literary in the largest sense of documentation, archives, and the like. Yet this is one specific archival past, among many, and we ought to find something specific and distinctive to say about it. It is true that twentieth-century history—even twentieth-century literary history—has tended to eat away at this idea of a nineteenth-century one, until there seems to be very little left of the latter. When you enlarge the notion of modernity, for example, you end up drawing a whole collection of formerly nineteenth-century phenomena into it, which now come to be seen as incomplete or emergent precursors or ancestors of their full twentieth-century forms: in the same way, industrialization—so nineteenth-century a thing once upon a time—comes to be seen as a preparatory stage for Fordism, if not post-Fordism altogether, while the emergence of the nineteenth-century press now comes to seem but a pallid foreshadowing of our own "media," Napoleon III a feeble anticipation of the great modern twentieth-century dictators, the various arts of the last century little more than a trial run for the triumphant moderns of the beginning of our own.

It was not always so. Here is Ezra Pound on *Ulysses*: "the end, the summary, of a period, that period is branded by La Tour du Pin in his phrase 'age of usury' . . . The *katharis* of *Ulysses*, the joyous satisfaction . . . was to feel that here was the JOB DONE and finished, the diagnosis and cure was here. The sticky molasses-covered filth of current print, all the fuggs, all the foetors, the whole boil of the European mind, had been lanced."[5] I believe that Kenner somewhere marvels at this characterization of *Ulysses*, and we might want to as well; but the disgust with the nineteenth century, which begins with Balzac, and at once reveals itself to be an immense junk shop, full of dusty or broken objects, mildewed textiles, antiquated furniture that has to be thrown out, insalubrious dank passageways that have to be torn down to let the sun in; eccentric people and publishing houses full of cranky and eccentric books and ideas, for which a satire very different from the joyous and social seventeenth- and eighteenth-century kind was

needed: this century, then, seems to end with Celine's *Mort à credit*; while most French characterizations of it will project the nineteenth century as the century of that object of disgust par excellence, the *bourgeoisie* and its mode of values and way of life.

Alongside this, I would like to set a rather different exhibit, Roland Barthes's well-documented taste for the nineteenth century and its leisurely "realistic novels," a nostalgia for this extraordinary bourgeois century and its secular furnishings and occupations, which reminds us that in France the nineteenth century may be thought to have outlasted formal chronology very long indeed, perhaps all the way to the onset of the Fifth Republic. I am unable to say which camp Walter Benjamin belongs in, who certainly gave a whole decade of his last years to a virtual immersion in this nineteenth century, from which, however, he also claimed he longed to awake: "This imminent awakening stands like the wooden horse of the Greeks within a Troy of dreams."[6] One has the same question to pose to the Surrealists, whose *marché aux puces* is itself one immense nineteenth century in which the Balzacian talisman is perhaps to be found, and then lost again. But does anyone still need to awaken from the nineteenth century? And do we still need to lance the boil of its sickening, nauseating bourgeois culture? I do think that this remains the best way to live with the nineteenth century: this impossibility of indifference, this obligation to feel either nostalgia or disgust, if not both alternately and in rhythms that somehow define the present for you as well.

At any rate, the book I want to talk about in this article very much keeps faith with this unavoidable alternation: it is the *1889* of Marc Angenot, a cube of some 1,200 pages printed in Montréal in the centenary year of the title, and therefore perhaps not so well known as it ought to be, nor so readily available in American libraries. But it is already, I believe, a classic if anything ever was, and an intervention which, if it does not exactly "blast open the continuum of history" in Benjamin's revolutionary spirit, then at least makes it impossible for us to go on living with this late nineteenth century in the traditional way (if there ever was a traditional way).

As for the form of this literary history, however, it belongs to an identifiable if uncommon sub-genre that we may call "the story of a year." Of its various exemplars, I only want to mention here James Chandler's recent book on 1819, the Peterloo year, which has the formal interest for us of a reflexive history:[7] he argues, indeed, that the very idea of a dated situation, the concept of a "year" as a category in its own right and a specific marker of cultural history as such, dates from precisely this "year" which is his subject. We will eventually want to ask ourselves whether anything of this reflexivity, this auto-designation, characterizes Angenot's own work. On one level the question merely has to do with the year itself: is it a decisive year, as the year of Peterloo cer-

tainly was, or is it merely representative, and might one not have dipped into the stream of time a thousand days earlier or later? It is certain that many interesting things happen in Angenot's year: the centenary of the French Revolution, for example, and the Universal Exposition, the opening of the Eiffel Tower and the flight and suicide of General Boulanger; across the Channel the mystery of Jack the Ripper, and closer to home the first publications of two unknown writers, Henri Bergson with *Les données immédiates de la conscience*, and Maurice Barrès with *Un homme libre*; the double love-death suicide at Meyerling of the Archduke Rudolph of Habsburg and his lover, and the appearance of one of the climactic novels of Zola's Rougon-Macquart series, *La bête humaine*. Enough to fill up any year, you will say, particularly if as is customary we add that it is the year of birth of Charlie Chaplin, Adolf Hitler, Martin Heidegger, and Jean Cocteau; but precisely, something similar could be said about any year, I'm afraid, every year is crammed full of just such astonishing and forgotten, yet unforgettable, *actualité* (a concept to which we will return). So we must presumably be careful not to reify the date in question, not to allow our arbitrarily chosen methodological frame to turn into this or that watershed, turning point, beginning or ending of something.

We must also distinguish Angenot's year from other such stories by an implacable methodological decision. *1889*, subtitled "un état du discours social," concludes a scholarly project that involved reading every text published in France during that period, including a systematic review of journals and periodicals, including the parliamentary debates, the Belgian press as well, a sampling of cookbooks, and so on and so forth (I forgot to say that 1889 was also the year that saw the first "bande dessinée"). Angenot's decision, however, analogous to Barthes's in *Système de la mode*, excludes everything that is not written and printed: thus, the concept of "discours social" is distinguished from "cultural studies" generally by its omission of cultural practices and non-linguistic "texts" of all kinds (although the words that go with the music allow Angenot a first significant probe of the "café concert"). I think that this methodological choice also ties him closely to the surface of "la chose imprimée": attitudes, conscious and unconscious, are certainly revealed throughout these analyses, but "objective spirit" (or what Sartre liked, for the nineteenth century, to call "objective neurosis") is never allowed to organize itself into an autonomous and free-floating social object of some kind, even though the terminology of ideology, doxa, hegemony and the like is certainly pressed into service, and we will want to examine it shortly.

At any rate, a project of this magnitude would certainly seem to qualify Angenot for the medal of a "hero of social discourse," if one existed. The Italians call an *uomo coraggioso* a heroic trencherman, who is able, like Herr Jakob Schmidt or the climbers of Mount Everest, to

put away anything in front of him, simply because it is there. The Chinese meanwhile respect and envy the strong stomach, the infinite reading capacity and experience, of the mandarin: a commitment perhaps more ambiguous in the West, where it can also be an occasion for disgust and nausea, as Angenot's opening invocation of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* suggests. But as I recall, Bouvard and Pécuchet, while occasionally exhausted, astonished, or in despair, never themselves feel nausea at their task: a reaction reserved for author and reader, as it perhaps is in the case of *1889*, which lances the boil of nineteenth-century ideology as comprehensively as Pound thought *Ulysses* did, yet another *coupe synchronique* which takes on a somewhat different interest in this context.

For this is perhaps the modernist, rather than the postmodern, strategy: to let history define itself as a totality of the cross-section, an immense yet ultimately limited inventory of "everything that is the case." Postmodern cultural historiography tends rather to be fancifully diachronic, I would think, and by the choice of an outlandish theme—Virilio's take on velocity, let's say—to pick out a chronological trajectory as bizarre as any Garcia Marquez family tree. These trajectories are anti-representational with a vengeance, and I'm tempted to say that their very power depends on the arbitrariness of their theme or starting point; to them also applies Angenot's denomination of the artifact, the construction or modeled entity, a characterization which for him holds for any partial or limited corpus:

> Tout travail historique qui isole un champ culturel, un genre, un complex discursif—fut-ce en réinscrivant à l'arrière-plan l'esquisse d'une culture globale—produit un artefact dont l'apparent cohésion résulte d'un aveuglement aux flux interdiscursifs qui circulent et aux règles topographiques qui établissent, sous diverses contraintes, une coexistence générale de scriptables.[8]

On the other hand, we may also wonder whether the synchronic method does not equally determine false perspectives of its own, most notably the baleful Foucauldian totality, in which the positing of the airtight system projects a well-nigh nightmarish closure.

But let's first outline Angenot's account of the preoccupations of this particular year, which begin, unsurprisingly, with French chauvinism and xenophobia, with the concept of the national language and all the legitimations and illegitimations that entails—accents and foreigners, illiteracy and cultural distinction, the narcissisms of class and the universalizing of fetishisms of the "grande nation" (as those significantly range from revolutionary republicanism to older and newer forms of reaction), along with fear of Germany, contempt for "perfide Albion," malaise in the face of Americanization (a word already in use in that period, apparently), along with the whole iconology of imperialism—higher and lower races, the "mission civilisatrice" and so forth (Angenot instructively reminds us that the first opposi-

tion to Jules Ferry's imperialism comes from the right rather than the left). This sink of unwholesome representations inspires some mixed feelings on which I want to dwell for a moment. First of all, I would have liked to have all this identified from the outset as bourgeois culture par excellence, at the first truly secular moment of the first truly bourgeois state (leaving Holland aside): surely all the French literature of interest to us (at least since the Revolution) has always held precisely this bourgeois culture in scorn and loathing—even Flaubert, who found so much of it within himself, was able to repudiate it by way of self-loathing. But I think that Angenot's position (like the more global Foucauldian one I alluded to) forbids him to acknowledge any negativity or critique or distance which would somehow fall outside the system. To be sure, he cannot take a diachronic nor even a sociological view of this mass of textual data, and must therefore omit the interpretive identification I have offered between a certain culture and a certain social class. But more than that—and the example of Flaubert could certainly be pressed into service for this alternative view—the possibility of negating the system is either programmed into the system itself and thereby remains part and parcel of it, or it is a retrospective illusion, obvious enough for us today but not available to the contemporaries.

Meanwhile, what of that retrospective viewpoint which is necessarily ours, and for which most of this constellation of attitudes—lumped together no doubt as "nationalism"—will be caricatural and scarcely invite sympathy or comprehension? Republicanism itself—the Jacobin tradition—has not had a very good press in recent times; and as for left attitudes or even what Americans call liberal ones—Angenot has an unpleasant surprise in store for us in his companion volume, *L'Utopie collectiviste*, which patiently elaborates the analogous interrelated stupidities of the Second International in the same period.

I want to add something else, however, which is that this first anatomy of French cultural "identity" (as we might say nowadays) is for Angenot not merely a set of ideologies among others, it is the very subject position of all the enunciations that make up the "social discourse" of 1889. And it occurs to me that literary or cultural histories rarely begin in this fashion, with an account of the collective or hegemonic subject-position: we're generally given some facts of social history, some of the ideas "in the air," a few of the great debates and the great cultural issues or problems; but the collective space from which such judgments and acts and works flow remains empty and indeterminate, unless we decide to objectify and externalize it, and identify it with a ruling class we can again see from the outside. Meanwhile, a deep and inveterate, dare I say patriotic, populism has generally prevented American intellectuals from painting so absolute a picture as this one of universal *bêtise*.

Now I want to go on to sketch in the three basic directions in which this immense historiographic tour de force develops: they are a general sense of twilight and decline, in this *fin de siècle*; a perplexed awareness of the increasing saturation of social space with media information, in this period of newspapers and what Angenot calls "publicistique"; and finally an omnipresent and dominant form of thinking and writing which he calls "le romanesque général," and which narrativises information and reality in some well-nigh universal fashion and which is novelistic, not because it comes from novels, but rather, the other way round, because the very rich novelistic production of the period feeds on it as its raw material and transforms it ceaselessly into its own cultural commodities.

The decline of the West, and more significantly and urgently, the decline of France itself and the innumerable threats to French civilization and culture is for Angenot (and long before Spengler) the dominant of 1889, a kind of collective cultural hypochondria (we will see shortly why the medical figure is not a gratuitous one here). We may of course want to observe that things are no different today; and to hazard the guess that some such collective national self-doubts were endemic in France ever since the loss of the race with England. Angenot's characterization of the causes for this collective anxiety, of the situation to which it is a response—and it should be understood that strictly speaking, according to the premises of the analysis of "social discourse" he cannot posit a cause, but merely reconstruct the situation on the basis of so many symptomatic discourses—is a loosely Deleuzian one. If I am more hesitant about his use of the word "deterritorialization" it is on the one hand because of the more joyous and liberatory feeling the word seems to have among Deleuzians, and on the other because it is not clear to me whether it means much more than secularization, Weberian *Entzauberung*, or whatever other sociological cliché one wishes to summon up for the malaise that is inspired by developing capitalism and commodification. Nor does it have to mean any more than that, since the word is simply meant to designate the inaccessible and itself enigmatic or mysterious source of a generalized anxiety which, as an effect, is more palpable in these texts than any supposed cause. Or rather, the litany of supposed and hypothesized causes makes up the very substance and fabric of this social text, for which Angenot coins the word "anxiogène." The inventory is rich and savorous, the etiologies range from racial degeneracy to neurasthenia, from "symbolisme" to syphilis, from the press and political veniality to various "modern" technological developments (such as cremation, a hot topic in this period): the antisemitisms have a field day, laying the groundwork for the Dreyfus case, only a few short years down the road; but anti-clericalism is also highly developed, along with the predictable emergence of a secessionist Roman Catholic culture,

even more intensely aware of "decadence" than the secular culture all around it. Here we may make a link with the conception of the novelistic or the narrative: for the conception of decline offers the interpretive framework in which all kinds of facts and events, scandals, new cultural movements, fashions, ideas and pronouncements, can be read and understood. Reality—but as we shall see in a moment, it would be more accurate to say "actuality"—is scrutinized for the signs of decay, and it is only in terms of this rewriting, this larger historical dramatization and narrativization that things find their most satisfying meanings. This emergence of the category of the "signs of the times"; this obsessive symptomatology of current events and social developments—this is, I think, one of the phenomena Angenot has in mind when he invokes "le romanesque général."

At the same time, the omnipresent feeling of the "decadence" offers an instructive context for new kinds of literary or cultural interpretation. Consider, for example, the list of figural synonyms that proliferate in order to translate all the shades of this feeling: "gâchis," "crise," "nuit," "crépuscule," "chute," "abîme," "effondrement," "dissolution," "chaos," "catastrophe," etc.[9] If one considers "high literature" to be a working over of this primal raw material of ideology as which Bakhtin described social language itself, a transformation of that raw material into a tangible object (as Althusser suggested), not merely an object of what used to be called "aesthetic value," but also an object on which a critical position can be taken and which can offer itself for analysis—then perhaps new perspectives became available for a rethinking of this period. Mallarmé's great shipwreck, for example, the immense "naufrage" of his poetic hero, can that case be taken less as a questionable and melodramatic symbol of some kind, part of the poetic bric-à-brac of the *fin de siècle*, and something closer to a working over of just this ideology of the shipwreck and the catastrophe so deeply inscribed in the language and collective ideology of this anxious period: yet something a little more than a mere remedy against anxiety, no doubt, and perhaps a little less than a full-blown ideological analysis or self-awareness. Meanwhile, on an even more massive scale, no one can doubt the kinship with the pattern of baleful heredity that gives Zola's Rougon-Macquart cycle its organizational pretext: whether any critical distance can also be attributed to this fundamental *idéologème* of decline and fall is a question to which we must also return further on.

Heredity, symptomatology: so many symptoms of the *fin de siècle Weltanschauung* we are tempted to say, without asking ourselves whether the word "symptom" is not itself profoundly symptomatic. And indeed the other omnipresent feature of the ideology of decline lies in the prestige of medical discourse as a privileged mode of interpretation throughout this whole period. The balefulness of the medical is something we have long since learned, from Foucault and so

many others: that it rests on apprehensions about the body and sexuality has also become obvious, so that it may be less popular to observe that such apprehensions are no longer quite so important in our culture: "le dispositif de *médicalisation* de l'exégèse social qui est bien soutenu par l'hégémonie 1889, n'a plus grand avenir—mais d'autres autorités technocratiques prendront la relève."[10] We are thus again confronted with the outmoding to the point of caricature of what contemporaries must have taken to be an existential characteristic and an "evidence" of daily life: what are we to do with errors of this kind, which are scarcely amenable to any imaginative act of the historical understanding?

The medical is at any rate a cluster of ideologemes which can in one way be studied in relative isolation: indeed, Angenot has devoted a spin-off volume, called *Le cru et le faisandé*, to just that, and it is one of his best and most readable texts. Here, however, he has a methodological warning for us:

> Il m'a semblé . . . que les caractères du discours médical sur l'hystérie par exemple ne sont pas intéro-conditionnés ni intelligibles dans leur immanence. L'hystérie (le discours de Charcot et d'autres sur l'hystérie) parle d'autre chose que d'un désordre neuropathologique, de même que les discours de la polissonnerie parlent d'autres choses encore que d'Eden prostitutionnel et de chronique du demi-monde. Ainsi encore, le discours de terreur sur la masturbation, orchestré par les médecins, se lira dans un intertexte ou, par "déplacement et condensation," il se fait homologue de la grande angoisse économique du gaspillage, de la dette publique, du déficit budgétaire, de la logorrhée des esthétiques décadentes, etc.[11]

These mobile allegories, in which figures from one field offer themselves as tangible bodies for the spirits of another, at the same time that—as with the medical doctrines of "suggestion"—they do double duty as certified "scientific" explanations, Angenot has theorized in terms of discursive "migrations,"[12] which one could ideally be in a position to map out according to their seasonal or sectorial rhythms. Clearly the medical sector is here and in this period a privileged one, which we cannot examine further in detail, save to add this interesting footnote on the development of the notion of the unconscious:

> Ce qui me semble se produire en 1880-1890, date à laquelle la notion dans son imprécision devient "à la mode" chez les savants, c'est que "l'inconscient" va se séparer de l'"instinct", de l'activité végétative (dont il est encore proche chez von Hartmann) de ce que chez l'individu relève de l'*espèce* dont il est membre, ou encore du "moi d'habitude" (Condillac), pour se mettre à designer cette *chose* que relèvent l'hypnose, la suggestion, "un monde d'affections purement vitales" dont "nous ne percevons que le retentissement" car elles sont "hors du *moi*, mais le moi sympathise avec elles" (pour reprendre les termes de Maine de Biran dont les Français, par chauvinisme, font un précurseur).[13]

The privilege indeed of the medical figuration lies in the migration along with it of various levels of the body itself: thus on the one hand

the dense realities of the individual body come to reinforce and to solidify the more disembodied figures of economic or social phenomena, while at the same time the concrete anxieties about the individual body itself add urgency to the more general national ones. Angenot points out that the omnipresent "Darwinism" of this period is scarcely drawn from Darwin himself, but rather from a long tradition of "social Darwinism" avant la lettre from Hobbes to Spencer:[14] at any rate, it is certain that lived experiences of bodily illness, fever, deterioration and even occasional convalescence, add power and content to the vaster collective and narrative fantasies of social Darwinism and a general crepuscular and entropic mood.

But now we face a significant problem: one which is both empirical, in the sense of the historical data themselves, and theoretical, in terms of our models. For is this not—this belle époque which is also a *fin de siècle*—the well-known apotheosis of the bourgeois doctrine of progress, of triumphant Victorianism and of utopias of wonder-working machinery in the far future, the golden age of European supremacy nourished—in different degrees by the different nation-states to be sure—by the certainty of infinite perfectibility and a historical telos as straight as an arrow? How then to imagine the coexistence of this euphoric doctrine of the bourgeoisie as the very goal and end of history with the other darker visions that Angenot documents in so much detail, and which seep, omnipresent, throughout all the fields and divisions of labor of "social discourse"? It will be too easy, but not at all wrong, to pronounce the word dialectic and to posit some profound "identity of identity and non-identity" between these two registers of value, which can only seem incompatible to the logician and the positivist; on the other hand the appeal to the dialectic is not meant to shut down explanation in some premature and facile way, but rather to authorize the invention of new models; and this is, I believe, what we find in Angenot. It will come as no surprise that in a work of this range, which seeks to organize so varied an array of contents, the theoretical interventions must be punctual and concentrated, intent on sorting out the irrelevant meanings of a term like "ideology" or marking references to theoretical authorities from Bakhtin to Bourdieu, but above all to the Montréal school of "social discourse" of which the present work is something like a monument.

I will, at the risk of greatly oversimplifying it, hazard my own version of Angenot's theoretical solution to the problem we have raised—progress versus decadence—which involves I believe a crucial distinction between ideology—which is to say ruling class ideology—and hegemony in this textual sense of the omnipresent doxa, the "totalité du dicible, du narrable, de l'argumentable d'une société donnée . . . le réseau complexe de relations interdiscursives [qui] enserre tout énoncé, tout récit et leur donne du sens."[15] In addition, it should

be noted that hegemony, in this sense, knows its own dual logic of identity and difference, "deux tendances [dont] l'une rassemble des facteurs de cohesion, de repetition métonymique de recurrence, de cointelligibilité, l'autre des facteurs de spécialisation, de dissimulation, de migration par avatars . . . ."[16] This use of the term hegemony will perhaps surprise those who thought of Gramsci's idea in terms of social power rather than culture strategy: it suffices to recall Angenot's insistence on the policing function of hegemony generally, which controls not merely the channels of communication but the very forms of expression themselves, and rules on what can alone be said. Hegemony in this form, as the Foucauldian omnipresent system, is really at one with the totality of social discourse in the sense in which nothing other than itself could possibly have been enunciated there.

In that case, ruling class ideology will be something somewhat different, and perhaps not altogether co-terminous with discourse at all, and something closer to those mythological entities the sociologists used to call "values." In the present instance, we have to do with the great official ideologies of Jacobinism and republicanism and of progress: these are the class ideologies of a triumphant bourgeoisie, and they offer positive visions of the world (and indeed, I am tempted to say, properly utopian ones, on which other future and different utopias will nonetheless have to draw). But they do not in that sense inform everyday discourse:

> . . . la *doxa* reflète les luttes de classes sous forme de leurs résultantes et occultations dans les discours. L'idéologie dominante, officielle, est au contraire chargée d'une *mémoire*, de la préservation "religieuse" des plus anciens et plus légitimes préceptes idéologiques de la classe régnante, avec un bricolage, une mise à jour toujours précaire. L'idéologie dominante récapitule et adapte partiellement l'ontogenèse évolutive des formes idéologiques de cette classe (esprit des Lumières, jacobinisme, libéralisme, humanitarisme quarante-huitard saint-simonisme, positivisme . . .) Elle doit enfin remplir synchroniquement sa fonction de legitimation du pouvoir et de ses politiques. Elle a des monopoles, dans l'appareil scolaire par exemple et joue un rôle d'apparat qui lui conserve un statut officiel. Mais elle a aussi une lourdeur spécifique, elle est constamment pénétrée par la *doxa* et obligée de composer avec elle et ses thèmes chargés d'actualité. Le rapport entre l'idéologie dominante et les effets déstabilisants de l'hégémonie est d'autant plus problématique que l'idéologie républicaine doit à la fois consolider et remotiver des thèses anciennes tout en faisant face à des "temps obscurs" où son amour de la Patrie est contesté par les forces nationalistes-boulangistes, son prétendu souci d'égalité par la montée des socialismes, des syndicalismes (sinon du féminisme) et son axiomatique du progrès par le concert décadentiste des lettres et des sciences.[17]

We are familiar with the prevailing narrative of bourgeois ideology, whose most influential versions can be found in Lukác's work on the one hand and in Sartre's *L'Idiot de la famille* on the other: both posit the ways in which the universalizing doctrine of the Revolution—"liberté, égalité, fraternité"—which permits the class alliances that

bring the bourgeoisie to power—is increasingly undermined and ideologically discredited by the emergence of a new class whose presence will become inescapable by the time of the Revolution of 1848. This narrative, which underscores the failure of nerve, the internalized guilt, and the symbolic self-maceration, of ruling class or bourgeois intellectuals after 1848, is less effective in dealing with the persistence or survival of the ruling class ideology: Angenot's more complex model thus has some advantages in accounting for the ideological double-bind of the period, certain both of its destiny—progress—and of its fate—decadence. Meanwhile, we must also recall the oft-quoted remarks of Marx about the bourgeois revolutionaries of 1848. This is itself a two-stage narrative in which the revolutionaries of 1789 are filled with anxiety about the historical originality of their situation and their project, and give themselves courage by wearing ancient revolutionary costumes, while those of 1848 imitate this masquerade as a kind of fancy-dress ball and simulate, not the historical confrontation with the New, but rather the affect that resulted from it: a representation of revolutionary anxiety rather than the thing itself.

This is, I believe, the sense in which Angenot can deny the word ideology in its positive sense to the textual hegemony of 1889: ideology is in that sense the consciousness of a rising class, the ensemble of its values, its slogans, its utopian visions, and there can thus be a genuinely bourgeois ideology only as long as the bourgeoisie remains an active social class in that sense. But this is no longer the case in the period in question here.

La vision du monde crépusculaire avec son pathos anxiogène, son ressentiment, ses mandats de reterritorialisation, *tient lieu* d'une idéologie bourgeoise (qu'on ne trouve guère esquissée que dans le saint-simonisme) qui aurait *aimé* et glorifié l'Effet-Capital jusque dans ses conséquences. L'hégémonie thématique qui domine en 1889 prétend aimer de tout son coeur ce que la "société moderne" vient fatalement désagréger, dégrader, déconstruire. Amatrice de progrès, mais atterrée par les décadences et les morbidités, nostalgique des axiologies précapitalistes, la vision du monde fin de siècle se présente comme une vaste *dénégation* qui cherche à réinstituer dans la "superstructure" ce que le capitalisme a pour vocation et dissoudre.[18]

This is also the sense in which Angenot reinterprets his own findings in the light of the question of modernity:

La modernité, perçue dans ses dominantes culturelles opérantes, c'est le retour obstiné, bien que métamorphique, des mêmes résistances [au moderne], avec toutes sortes de formations de compromis qui neutralisent le novum en feignant de lui faire place. Le discours social "moderne" reste une dénigration du monde moderne . . . .[19]

The discursive complex of this period then, with its various modernisms, is a substitute for bourgeois ideology and a systematic defense against modernity as such.

In principle, this new and more complex theory of ideology (and its distinction from hegemony) ought to open up new perspectives on

the periods that follow this one, whose modernities have so often been understood to cancel this era out and indeed to break their oppressive ties with this nineteenth century altogether. Whether Angenot's synchronic form allows us to glimpse those perspectives is a question we will only be able to raise after returning to his story rapidly to set in place its other two basic themes, that of the omnipresence of journalism and "publicistique," and that of the dominance of the "romanesque général," the narrative or novelistic paradigm.

The conception of the latter owes much to the work, no longer widely read or influential, I think, of Charles Grivel, and participates in a more general poststructuralist suspicion of narrative that ranges from the general anti-Communist critique of Marxian ideas of a telos of history all the way to *Screen* magazine's denunciation of the ideological effects of Hollywood-type storytelling. I do prefer the latter to the former, not so much because I want to defend providential conceptions of history in general (I agree with Angenot that "telos" generally means the teleological perspective of a specifically bourgeois notion of progress), but rather because I think that it is in the reduction of events to their individual dimension (as in Hollywood) that the vice of such storytelling lies. The collective also demands its forms of narrative, and it will have been clear that I want to consider *1889* itself as a kind of narrative, of a new type. But this is, I think, not Angenot's view, for whom the "gnoséologie" of the "generalized novelistic" is an "apparatus of resistance to other cognitive procedures":[20]

> Je pense que le "romanesque" a été dominant au XIXe siècle. Le discours social classique avait été oratoire; le XXe siècle devait être structural, nomothétique et relativiste . . . Les champs scientifiques en 1889 mettent de l'avant un paradigme—expérimental, moniste, organiciste, révolutionniste. Il faudrait toute une étude pour montrer combien le texte savant demeure cependant perméable à la narration expressive-romanesque.[21]

The stakes of this particular form of *Ideologiekritik* need to be spelled out: it offers a research program of the greatest interest, particularly at a moment when the pendulum of intellectual fashion has begun to swing back towards some generalized valorization of narrative as such. At the same time, it directs our attention toward the contamination of nineteenth-century discourse in general by the narratives of journalism, to which I'll return in a moment. But it would also seem to harbor a deeper hidden indictment of the aesthetic itself, insofar as one identifies that with narration (we will examine the analysis of poetry later on in connection with journalism). Space permitting, this would be the place to stage a debate about the work of Zola, so supremely representative, particularly in Angenot's account, of the doxa of contemporaneous social discourse. And it is certain that *La bête humaine*, with its multiple allusions to precisely the actualities of 1889, seems to fulfill the doubtful program Angenot ascribes to the novelist of this period:

Le roman canonique fonctionne comme fournisseur bénévole de prestigieuses narrations anxiogènes répondant aux inquiétudes dominantes. Dans sa logique globale, il est au service du dispositif d'interprétation de la conjoncture, *ancilla doxae*. Dans la topologie interdiscursive, le roman opère la met en connexion d'une série de thèmes journalistique venus de faits divers par exemple, et de thèses et axiomes venus d'ésotérismes médical, philosophique et scientifique. Il s'agit de connecter l'actualité transitoire et la vérité éternelle. Le regard romanesque, en concurrence avec le regard romanesque, en concurrence avec le regard médical et neurologique, *voit* alors une société de détraqués roulant vers toutes le déchéances et confirme ainsi que tout le monde redoute.[22]

This is no doubt very much the sense in which the Zola of *La bête humaine* can also show "un joli flair doxique, la littérature à la mode n'étant souvent qu'un cocktail habile de *topoi* régulés par une protestation crépusculaire et confusionniste."[23] But then this text no longer presents much similarity to the novel admired by Deleuze and Barthes and by Michel Serres (and for which I myself have a great fondness, I should add). I hope the divergence does not revive the ancient aesthetic problematic, however, in which literary value somehow derives from its unpredictable, that is to say, its natural energies (Kant's notion of genius): as we learn the detail of the period ever more closely, Zola's text seems to grow more and more transparent, we recognize more and more of its borrowings from actuality and the essential banality of its content, Zola's own intentions then take on form and seem to denounce their own vulgarity and sensationalism, and what was at first a kind of strange and inhuman, meteoric apparition dissolves into a host of the most futile and obvious literary gestures. This is then contextualization with a vengeance, in which the contextualized object ends up being completely volatilized by the ever more completely researched context and by our own fuller knowledge. In that case, the task of the historian is truly to obliterate the past, to work through it in such a way that we no longer have to repeat it, very much in the spirit of Freud's talking cure; and to free us in a joyous and Nietzschean forgetfulness. Let the dead bury the dead: we shall see in a moment whether poetry fares any better.

And indeed with this particular novelist we are in any case very close to that immense new continent of journalism and of "publicistique" about which *1889* also has so much to tell us: the new bourgeois "public sphere," not as it ought to have been, but as it really was. The statistics document an explosion in publications during this period, less in terms of book publishing (which showed a 20 percent increase over the preceding twenty years) than in newspapers and periodicals: thus, from 36 daily papers in Paris in 1870, the augmentation is such that by the year 1889 there are some 135, plus all kinds of specialized or ephemeral periodicals. Angenot takes an inventory of the division of labor represented by the genres of papers and their various kinds of "columns," as well as the pressures on and tendencies of this writing.[24]

The bulk of his extensive treatment of the press is however divided into what may be called the objective and the subjective dimensions of the phenomenon.

Objectively, what must be described is the way in which the press produces a whole new set of categories (or constructs them, if you prefer a less historical language): these categories are not directly ideological, nor are they purely imaginary or arbitrary. Rather, they offer "schemata" (to use the Kantian term) for organizing experience as such and for deciphering the world. Henceforth, indeed, the interpretation of the world, the understanding of it, is condemned to pass through such categories (and this obligation, which cannot be circumvented, is another feature of the concept of hegemony). Thus, "la publicistique produit deux entités discursives corrélées, l'Actualité du *Temps* et du *Journal des Débats* n'est bas celle de la 'presse à un sou'";[25] and by the same token, as we still know very well today, the struggle to characterize public opinion is often more important than the attempt to "influence" it, if indeed that notion has any coherent meaning when we are dealing with what Sartre would call a "serial" phenomenon par excellence. As for *Actualité*, the power to determine and classify what happens as such is a more subtle and intangible, yet perhaps even more significant new force, that reaches even more deeply into private life and has its say in the way people tell themselves their own biographical stories: "L'Actualité est ce qui produit la rencontre inattendue sur une table de dissection doxique de réel imprévisible et de la nécessité idéologique."[26] Indeed, it seems possible that the novel (whose external links with the press we have seen in naturalism, but which also mutates into a new psychological or intuitive genre in this period) will discover a whole new and perhaps more modern vocation when it begins to take as its deeper content the very categories of Experience and Event as such. As for the more obvious public forms of such categories, we need only think of the concept of the "Affaire," as, along with the "scandal," it organizes information from the social sphere ("en 1889, huit affaires ayant toutes une composante de mystère et d'horreur occupent les journaux"),[27] to grasp the shaping power of this new form of writing.

Its subjective dimension would then be constituted by the awareness people in general have of its historical novelty: that is to say, their willingness to act on the basis of what is perceived as a fundamental change. But how to decide whether this is a subjective or objective matter? In one of the most interesting episodes of his exploration, indeed, Angenot comes to the matter of poetic production in this period, which can itself be thematized as it were objectively and subjectively, in the explosion of little magazines and esoteric presses on the one hand, and in the quality and themes of the poems on the other. The picture one gets from Angenot's materials is one of an increasing

saturation of public space by the public discourse of journalism and "publicistique," such that there is no longer any room for poetry as an autonomous discourse, or rather that poetry must open a space for itself: a hermetic space, outside the public sphere (or claiming to stand outside it), and ideologically disdaining everything marked popular or public (without that disdain necessarily taking on political and aristocratic or anti-popular overtones).

The model is the one with which we have become familiar in Bourdieu's sociology, namely that the primal driving force of every intellectual activity is to secure an institutional space in which it can exist and perpetuate its existence: once it thus rationalizes its own specialized activities (rationalization being used here in a non-Weberian and psychological sense), once it can motivate its own existence, then it can turn its attention to the content with which it is allegedly concerned. The Bourdieu approach is thus more than a mere sociology of the intellectuals themselves, but also cuts deep into the structure of the various specialized discourses. That is, for example, the spirit in which Angenot describes the related crisis of philosophy, whose traditional concerns have now been replaced by the rise of experimental psychology in a neighboring discipline, so that little more than a watered down Kantian ethics is left over for the philosophers until Bergson appears, with the splendor of the rising sun, and signals the possibility of a counterattack on experimental psychology in general and thus of an eventual *reconquista*.

Poetry cannot pull it off in quite the same way, although its situation is equally imperiled: "Vers 1880, le discours social ne produit plus rien (ni épique, ni vision d'avenir, ni tragique même) qui puisse être reconnu par le poète comme potentiel de sublime. Le problème est alors de savoir *ce qui reste* à faire. Car la poésie, malgré son haut degré de discrimination sélective, se nourrissait du discours social. Il ne restait en effet que l'aventure de la folie ou l'autoreprésentations de la forme."[28] This diagnosis, however, would seem rather to hold for literature in general; the poets themselves need to pursue a more specifically linguistic strategy and to talk themselves into believing that they can locate some non-social linguistic space, some pure language outside of social discourse:

> Le mandat qu'en tâtonnant se donnaient ceux que Verlaine appelait "les symbolos, les décardards", consistait à créer dans le discours social quelque chose qui *eut l'air* de n'en pas souvenir. Si l'on veut voir une telle opération dans sa diversité révélatrice, il faut considérer globalement non seulement l'hermétisme de Mallarmé, mais aussi les "floupetteries" du *Décadent,* la wagnerisation de la prose de Peladan, les pastiches de la Pléiade chez les zélateurs de "l'École romane", les divers procèdes, "abstrus et abscons", de travestissement du discours social qui, dans leur concomitance manifeste la crise des lettres et la quête d'une autarcie, impossible et nécessaire, du poétique. La poésie rompt les ponts non par subversité, mais par fidélité à son mandat *traditionnel* que menace ce que Mallarmé allégorise comme "Le Journal."[29]

For anyone who, like me, wishes to grasp literature and its forms in relation to the situation it confronts at a given historical moment, such an analysis is plausible indeed, and I don't wish to question it. But I do think it is important to point out that, in the very spirit of the Bourdieu analysis and in the light of the practical preconditions and requirements of his own project, Angenot has to think and show this. If the poets were (or, *as it were*), in real life to be granted some space and some language *outside* social discourse, then the very constructural principle of *1889* would be called back into question: "le discours social" would no longer be a totality, and could no longer function as an absolute horizon.

But it certainly does so, and we need only to observe, as proof, the fateful reemergence of the august theological language that always tends to accompany the glimpsed emergence of that unrepresentable thing, the totality itself:

> "In eo movemur et sumus," dit Saint Paul: en lui nous évoluons et nous sommes. Le discours social est le medium oblige de la communication et de la rationalité historique, de même qu'il est instrument du prestige social pour certains, au même rang que la fortune et le pouvoir. En lui se formulent et se diffusent tous les "sujet imposes" (Bourdieu) d'une époque donnée . . . Pour qui ouvre la bouche ou prend la plume, le discours social et *toujours déjà là* avec ses genres, ses thèmes et ses préconstruits. Il va falloir se faire entendre à travers cette rumeur, ce brouhaha, cette facilité omniprésente. Nul ne peut se flatter de parler dans un vide, mais toujours en réponse à quelque chose. On songera à cet "et ego," moi aussi j'ai quelque chose à dire, si perceptible chez les "jeunes poètes," résolus à produire coûte que coûte de l'inouï.[30]

Thus with a grand historical gesture, we find ourselves back in the universal stupidity of Flaubert, the ineluctable dizziness at human imbecility, the inevitable nausea of the social world and the world of speech itself:

> Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
> And universal Darkness buries all.[31]

This perspective then inevitably exacerbates a question whose relevance it disputes in advance, and that is the question of the *novum*, of possible innovation, of the chance to say something new, or (at least for the historian) to glimpse something new in the process of emergence. I have said that for Angenot the glimpse of novelty is a retrospective illusion: we know which seeds have grown and which have not, but this is a knowledge denied the contemporaries locked in their present of time.

There is an exception to this historical closure, and it suggests that if the better cannot be identified here, then at least the worst can be identified: this is the solidification of any number of the elements of this doxa into a proto-fascism to come. It is a crystallization that will take place, unsurprisingly, around the name of Maurice Barrès, and what is

constitutive of this grim *novum* is unexpectedly the falling away of all the pathos of the ideology of decline, at the same time that all its historical assumptions are retained, but now cynically and joyously:

> "Simon et mois nous comprîmes alors notre haine des étrangers, *des barbares*." Il le dit, mais ne dogmatise pas; il affiche la désinvolture d'une composition humoristique, en digression et fragments. C'est le contraire de l'enquête systématique des poussifs naturalistes. Barrès réclame un lecteur qui ne se prend pas pour un imbécile, qui devine autant qu'il lit. Le *mépris* forme l'*ethos* du roman et c'est un sentiment nouveau en littérature. Mépris des femmes, par exemple, mais sans avoir à le dissimuler derrière de poussiéreuses argumentation évolutionnaires . . . En tout cela, Maurice Barrès c'est la *nouveauté*, un nouveau chant, cynique et allègre . . . le texte de Barrès représente la véritable originalité . . . [32]

It is a breath of fresh air that will not particularly cheer the contemporary reader, a lone example of "subversion" and undermining that will not particularly help revitalize those concepts.

In conclusion, I want to deduce another place of the *novum* and the modern, of historical change, which is not identified in the text as such. I have already suggested some of the formal contradictions involved in the choice of a single year: in particular the problem of reconciling its representative status with the inevitable uniqueness of its contents. The perspective of Flaubertian satire serves to transform that existential uniqueness. Occasionally, in a kind of science-fictional mode, names from the future are invoked—Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Musil[33]—which can alternately serve as examples of method and of "le recensement et l'interrogation accablée des 'idées reçues,'"[34] but also, no doubt, of the fresh air to be breathed in when we break this stifling historical window, and reach . . . what? a new age? an age of critical and satiric self-consciousness? Yet this startles one by positioning self-consciousness or reflexivity in another temporal world, an alternate universe: later on, over the horizon of our sight, which has been so oppressively limited to this year and this age, this nineteenth century. I wish therefore to ask two questions, the first of which has to do with "modernism" in its more Anglo-Saxon sense, and with the classical modernists in question. Is it possible that if we knew as much about their archive and their context as Angenot knows about 1889, the texts of Proust or Joyce or Musil would also be observed to disintegrate into a tissue of stupidities and commonplaces; those of Joyce into masses of the most obvious intentions? Is it enough that the writers of this later modernist generation shun Zola's lust for the sublimation of the *fait divers* into literature, and his untimely (or even unholy) avowal of "la parenté qui existe aujourd'hui entre le reportage et le roman"?[35] But surely the doxa of an age can suffuse the literary text in many other ways than in that of overt allusion; and in any case, the fascination with the new realm of "actuality" is surely itself to be thought of as a kind of dawning self-consciousness. Angenot himself quotes

any number of sources indeed who fasten on the journalistic phenomenon—grasped as a historical novelty and innovation—for further proof of the decline of the West.[36] Is it only this insertion into the "romanesque" of the period that deprives the writers of 1889 of their credentials as self-conscious critics and observers of the tendencies of the age?

Meanwhile, insofar as here finally "le discours social" is inseparable from the mass "de l'imprimé," which is to say, of journalism, is this not a secret autoreferentiality of Angenot's text itself to have thus designated its own precondition, its own conditions of possibility and production? These questions are not merely the desperate objections one grasps at in order to find something critical to say about an achieved project of this magnitude; they are also the desperate attempts to keep the lid from closing, to forestall the grim closure of the synchronic and the definitive imprisonment in the past. Must literary history make antiquarians of all of us? Or does *1889* in reality not perform the more Nietzschean function of letting us forget the nineteenth century once and for all?

Notes

1 Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1987).
2 Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero, and Elements of Semiology*, pref. Susan Sontag, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).
3 Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York, London: Continuum, 2003).
4 See Claudio Guillen, *Literature as System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); and also *The Challenge of Comparative Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
5 Ezra Pound, *Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1938), 96.
6 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Boston: Belknap Press, 2002), 495.
7 James Chandler, *England in 1819* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998). See also Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
8 Marc Angenot, *1889: un état du discours social* (Québec City: Le Préambule, 1989), 1083.
9 Ibid., 374–5.
10 Ibid., 1112.
11 Ibid., 1080.
12 Ibid., 903.
13 Ibid., 422.
14 Ibid., 876.
15 Ibid., 627.
16 Ibid., 1096.
17 Ibid., 732.
18 Ibid., 350.
19 Ibid., 1112.
20 Ibid., 197.
21 Ibid., 198.
22 Ibid., 836.
23 Ibid., 900.
24 Ibid., 1104.

25 Ibid., 505.
26 Ibid., 597–8.
27 Ibid., 611.
28 Ibid., 818.
29 Ibid., 817.
30 Ibid., 1087.
31 Alexander Pope, "The Dunciad," in *The Longman Anthology of British Literature,* vol. 1, ed. David Damrosch (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), 2557.
32 Ibid., 842.
33 Ibid., 1111.
34 Ibid., 1085.
35 Ibid., 785.
36 Ibid., 1095.