Newman did not have a single 'idea' of the university; he had several, among them being the idea that knowledge should be its own end and that students sometimes learn more effectively from each other than from teachers. One of the more interesting ideas he must have had emerges from the circumstances of the writing of the Idea of a University. Newman is an English Catholic addressing Irish Catholics, and one would expect him to exhort them to put God first; in other words, to make the other disciplines subservient to Theology. What he actually says is very different. If you want to have the power of the English Protestants, he tells his audience, if you want to avoid being domineered over by them, learn from Oxford and Cambridge, learn secular wisdom. Let Theology have a place in university studies, indeed a pre-eminent place. But let the pursuit of knowledge be undertaken for its own sake, and do not interfere with the labours of scientists. Elsewhere Newman showed his appreciation of the Biblical injunction to be as wise as serpents, and this advice to the Catholics of Dublin was of a piece with his understanding of religion's delicate relationship with the secular world. Newman was aware that the university was one of the important locations of what I am calling the negotiation of modernity.

Our relationship with secularism is the beginning of our
modernity. Whether we see this relationship pessimistically, in terms of alienation from a benevolent deity or a nourishing community, or optimistically, in terms of an exhilarating release from the stifling bonds of dependency, it is a relationship every one of us is forced to think about, if not think through. The university, one of the institutional legacies of the rational Enlightenment, is a place in which this relationship with secularism, this modernity, can be evaluated and gauged, its contours charted, its dangers anticipated, its benefits welcomed.

The natural sciences have played the chief role in initiating the process of modernity, and in fuelling its continued existence. The humanities, sensitive to both the potential dangers and the opportunities for freedom and growth, have always displayed a much more ambivalent attitude towards modernity, and the social sciences, which came into existence precisely to deal with the problems of modernity, have in general moved from an optimistic, somewhat positivist attitude towards modernity to something more nearly approaching the humanist's ambivalence.

I believe it is the function of the humanities, within the university, to maintain this ambivalence; to oppose, on the one hand, positivist or technocratic hubris, and on the other, the complete rejection of modernity, the nihilistic dismissiveness towards rationality per se. The latter tendency, having only lately lodged itself firmly in the university, appears to be more dangerous, but it may actually be an extreme reaction to the
former, in which case it makes no sense to speak of one being more dangerous than the other.

This ambivalence towards modernity, this alertness to its possibilities, this poised awareness of its two-edged quality, which I am arguing should be central to the humanities' understanding of their function, was, I will suggest, best captured in the writings of three Germans: Immanuel Kant, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller. As Germans, they were at a sufficient distance from the English empirical tradition and the optimistic French rationalism of Condorcet and Voltaire to be critical of these currents of Enlightenment thought; as Europeans they were close enough to the Enlightenment as a whole to participate in the sense of excitement at the freedom that the future seemed to promise. But it was only for a short period that this response to modernity remained influential; already, in the lifetimes of these men the development of an extreme idealism and a hubristic Eurocentric historicism threatened this carefully achieved balance.²

Kant's work has been a major influence on modern philosophy, and as such has been so thoroughly discussed that I could not possibly add anything of consequence, even if I had the necessary technical competence, which I don't. Schiller, however, who in much of his theoretical writings (and especially in On the Aesthetic Education of Man) declared himself Kant's disciple, is both more accessible and less known, even perhaps in English departments. Goethe, perhaps because he eschewed obvious
didacticism, is in his own way difficult to understand. I have found Schiller's writing, especially *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* and *On the Naive and Sentimental in Literature*, extraordinarily useful and suggestive, and, as the links with Kant and Goethe's thought are often obvious, and frequently pointed out by Schiller himself, I thought it best to concentrate on these writings. Schiller's influence on the university, and especially the humanities, has already been considerable, if difficult to trace with any degree of exactness. Arnold's conception of the civilizing mission of culture (which he thought could take the place of religion) owes much to Arnold's reading of Goethe and Schiller, and, more directly, to the example of their friend, Wilhelm von Humboldt. Humboldt's conception of the function of the university (he was the founder of Berlin University, and the Minister for Education of the Prussian State) had a considerable influence on the American universities, which modelled themselves on the German universities at least as much as they did on Oxford and Cambridge. And, by what may seem a bizarre coming together of influences, the Sixties *counter-culture*, which arguably transformed university culture in the U.S., and which to most observers was as far as one could get from Schiller and Arnold, owed some of what theoretical consistency it had to Herbert Marcuse's amalgam of Marx and Freud in *Eros and Civilization*; a book in which Schiller's `play-drive' has a crucial role in the anticipated freeing of libidinal energies.
Diderot, Hegel, Nietzsche, Baudelaire; these are the writers, it is often suggested today, who prophetically enunciated the guiding principles of modernity, or who described its characteristic features. Schiller has not, as far as I know, figured among these prophets and topographers. Yet his On the Naive and Sentimental in Literature can be read as one of the more important documents of modernity. (Habermas describes On the Aesthetic Education of Man as "the first programmatic work toward an aesthetic critique of modernity," but as far as I know, does not discuss On the Naive and Sentimental in Literature). It is more usually read as the text that established the divide between the Romantics and the Classics, and, as such, as the first theoretical document of Romanticism. At one level, the essay is an attempt to lay out the differences between Schiller's own style of writing, and that of his friend and greatest rival, Goethe. Goethe tells Eckermann: "In literature I held to the principle of an objective procedure and only wanted to admit this as valid. Schiller, however, who worked quite subjectively, thought his way was the right one and in order to defend himself against me, he wrote the essay" (quoted in Introduction, On the Naive and Sentimental 13). As the translator of On the Naive points out:

We can thus see that terms associated with the naive are intuitive, Hellenic, classical, real and objective whereas the sentimental is linked with speculacive, Romantic, ideal and subjective. (13-14)
The disagreement between Schiller and Goethe very closely parallels the disagreements between Wordsworth and Coleridge, discussed in an earlier chapter. Wordsworth, like Goethe, was more realist than idealist; Coleridge, like Schiller, was powerfully influenced by Kant's transcendentalism, and was much more inclined to take the idealist position. Coleridge, in this again like Schiller, was somewhat unsure of his poetic gift when he compared it to that of Wordsworth (Schiller's oscillations between envy of Goethe's gift and straightforward admiration are well known). Both Coleridge and Schiller belonged to that rare hybrid species, the poet-philosopher, and both had an immense influence on poetics (and criticism), quite apart from their influence on poetry.

Goethe is not quite fair to Schiller, however, as Schiller did not write On the Naive only to `defend himself' against Goethe; it is clear that what Schiller was driving at was a reconciliation between the contrary approaches. For Schiller, the naive poet, such as Homer or Shakespeare (or Goethe), lives in a relationship to Nature that is so close as to exclude the possibility of self-reflexivity, of detached contemplation of the relationship. The naive poet, identified with Nature, childlike, limited in his subject matter, realistic and mimetic in his treatment, is nevertheless (in the superior manifestations) great in his simplicity and unfailingly a genius. The sentimental poet (Schiller does not obviously include himself among these, but the implication is obvious):
...reflects on the impressions which objects make on him, and the emotion into which he himself is transposed and into which he transposes us is based only on that reflection. The object is related here to an idea and his poetic strength rests only on this relationship. The sentimental poet therefore is constantly dealing with two opposing concepts and emotions, with reality as boundary and with his idea as the infinite, and the mixed feeling which he excites will always bear witness to this double source. (42)

Schiller's neutrality between the two types begins to give way to a decided preference for the sentimental type:

But if the naive poet has the advantage over the sentimental one on the side of reality and brings to a real existence that for which the other can only awaken a lively urge, so the latter again has the great advantage over the former in that he is able to give the urge a greater object than the former did and could do. All reality, as we know, falls short of the ideal; everything which exists has its boundaries, but thought is boundless. The naive poet therefore suffers under these limitations to which all that is sensual is subject, while on the other hand the unconditional freedom of the capacity for ideas profits the sentimental poet. Of course the former fulfils his task but the task itself is somewhat limited; the latter
indeed does not quite fulfil his but the task is
infinite. (67)

The sentimental poet, who is an idealist rather than a
realist, has been cut off from Nature, thrown back on his own
thinking, forced to give himself the moral categorical
imperative, made miserable by the variousness and multiplicity of
the options available to him; in a nutshell, the sentimental poet
is a modern, subject to the familiar existential angst.

Not only is Schiller's description of the type immediately
recognisable and marvellously detailed, the very mixture of
despair at the loss of roots and defiant celebration of the
perilous gains of this independence, so familiar from a thousand
Romantic writings, is, perhaps for the first time, elaborated.
The sentimental poet will never reach the level of the naive
poet, but that is because the sentimental poet's task is so much
greater; the very potentiality destroys or weakens him. The naive
poet is in actuality more noble; but the sentimental poet is
potentially far more noble. The antinomies proliferate
dazzlingly; but the guiding idea is clear. Basically, enormous
potential perhaps gallantly unfulfilled is being set up against
a limited perfection. This, I would suggest, is the
characteristic understanding of modernity (by moderns, of
course). Modernity is seen as forced on us, as immensely
difficult, perhaps fatal to us; nevertheless, it is more noble
than the ignoble ignorance of pre-modern thought. Like any
modern, Schiller oscillates between despair at the inevitability.
of our fate (modernity had to come) and stoicism or optimism about the future (since it had to come, our greatness lies in accepting it; moreover, does not the absence of psychic and other support require of us greater heroism than that needed by pre-moderns?)

Schiller's unhappy but noble sentimental poet, or idealist, is not just the modern surveying the pre-modern period, torn between envy and an uneasy and intermittent consciousness of his own superiority; he is also Western man surveying the non-West. Schiller, the idealist, ends his essay with a warning against the dangers of untrammeled idealism which is very close to Conrad's understanding of imperialism as an evil practice arising out of a mistaken sense of superiority and sheer greed, but also out of a genuinely moral impulse. Schiller writes:

If... the effects of true idealism are unsure and often dangerous, then the effects of false idealism are terrible... the deluded visionary leaves nature from mere caprice, in order to be able to give in, all the more freely, to the self-will of the desires and the whims of the imagination. He does not place his freedom in independence from physical needs, but in licence from moral needs... But just because this deluded visionary quality is no aberration of nature but of freedom and therefore springs from a disposition worthy of respect in itself which is infinitely perfectible, so it leads also to a never-ending fall into a
bottomless pit and can only end in complete destruction. (90)

Like Schiller's idealist and Goethe's Faust, Conrad's Kurtz, into whose making all Europe went, possesses "a disposition worthy of respect in itself." He believes in the civilizing mission of Europe, he is an idealist (in both senses of the word), and his life ends in complete destruction: lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

Schiller's ambivalence towards modernity comes through in that last, emphatic statement about 'false idealism.' In On the Aesthetic Education of Man, the ambivalence is even more pointed, with Schiller forcefully presenting both sides of the case for modernity (there is a direct line running from Schiller's condemnation of that which prevents man from developing the 'harmony of his being' to the criticism of industrial civilization I argued was the distinctive feature of English criticism of the early part of the century). Look at his critique of instrumental rationality and specialisation, for instance, in a passage that influenced the whole tradition of Romantic criticism of modernity:

It was civilization itself which inflicted this wound upon modern man. Once the increase of empirical knowledge, and more exact modes of thought, made sharper divisions between the sciences inevitable, and once the increasingly complex machinery of State necessitated a more rigorous separation of ranks and
occupations, then the inner unity of human nature was severed too, and a disastrous conflict set its harmonious powers at variance.... State and Church, laws and customs, were now torn asunder; enjoyment was divorced from labour, the means from the end, the effort from the reward. Everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the Whole, man himself developed into nothing but a fragment; everlastingly in his ear the monotonous sound of the wheel that he turns, he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialized knowledge. (Aesthetic Education 34-35)

But Schiller insists on presenting the arguments on the other side, for specialization:

...little as individuals might benefit from this fragmentation of their being, there was no other way in which the species as a whole could have progressed.... One-sidedness in the exercise of his powers, must, it is true, inevitably lead the individual into error; but the species as a whole to truth. Only by concentrating the whole energy of our mind into a single focal point, contracting our whole being into a single power, do we, as it were, lend wings to this individual power and lead it, by artificial means, far beyond the limits
which Nature seems to have assigned to it. (40-41)'

Later in the essay, there is again a parallel criticism and defence of aspects of modernity. In the Twenty-Fourth Letter, Schiller discusses 'the demand for the Absolute' which inevitably comes upon all men (he does not say so, but this must mean all moderns, since Reason did not need to ground itself for pre-Enlightenment man). This is one of the first discussions of what we are more familiar with as the concept of 'totality,' the concept which assumes such gigantic proportions in Hegelian and Marxist thinking. Schiller's basic argument is that the totality, when it impinges on the thinking of those who are not intellectually and morally prepared for it, those who are dominated by utilitarian or empirical theories, has a disastrous effect. Overwhelmed by the totality, the unprepared man falls into sensuality and greed, since, at least, if "this world of sense shows him nothing which might be its own cause and subject to none but its own law... it does show him something which knows of no cause and obeys no law" (177). The totality of the moral law which man must give himself comes into conflict with man's unpreparedness for such a stern demand; what it provokes (since man must respond to the demand one way or another) is a contrary totality of self-interest and sensuality. Here, in embryonic form, is a systematic theory of desire, morality and potential human tragedy which rivals that of Freud.

After this description of the disastrous effects of the 'demand for the Absolute on the unprepared man, Schiller pointedly
distances himself from Rousseauistic glorification of Nature. Only when man objectifies Nature and frees himself from her laws, he writes, can man consider himself truly human (185). Today's ecologist, who may be delighted by Schiller's criticism of man's degradation at the hands of technological civilization, would probably be dismayed by Schiller's calm acceptance of the necessity of man's domination of nature. But it is the carefulness of these explorations of moral and aesthetic positions that finally establishes Schiller's maturity.

Schiller and Arnold

The whole business of Arnold's debt to Schiller, Goethe and Humboldt is matter for a separate thesis; here I will only touch on what seem to me to be rather important differences in the way Arnold and Schiller approached the idea of education. Schiller's understanding of aesthetic education as a reconciliation between sensuous and formal (rational) drives is, in the first place, much more subtle than anything to be found in Culture and Anarchy. Indeed, it may have been too subtle for institutional implementation at all. Schiller's theories were transformed into something much simpler, and less effective, as they entered the domain of the university. Lionel Gossman's description of Wilhelm von Humboldt's efforts to realise in institutional form the ideas he and Schiller had worked out to secure the harmonious development of man's powers is instructive:

Early in his career Wilhelm von Humboldt had argued in
favor of strictly limiting the power of the state, but as Prussian Minister of Education he found himself exploiting the very instrument he wished to hold in check in order to realize on a significant scale his goal of regeneration through literary culture. It was Humboldt who set up the system of state-run classical Gymnasien, which was to institutionalize and routinize the ideas of the neohumanists in Germany and to transform them ultimately from a liberating force into a repressive instrument of class domination.... their original function, the formation of free and harmonious personalities (in opposition to the specializing and fragmenting trend of modern times) was made over into something more like its opposite: the production of competent and disciplined bureaucrats and managers. (46)

If Humboldt, whom Arnold praised as "one of the most beautiful souls that have ever existed" in Culture and Anarchy (218) was unable to achieve his goals in Germany, it is not to be expected that Arnold would fare much better in England. Part of the problem was Arnold's own not-quite sublimated class consciousness. Gossman writes of "the fear and distrust" with which Arnold responds to the "growing ranks of class-conscious laborers," and of an "unsuspected harshness in the advocate of sweetness and light" (43). Schiller never lost his revolutionary ardour, his belief in the ultimate importance of political freedom. In On the Aesthetic Education he writes of "that most
perfect of all the works to be achieved by the arts of man: the construction of true political freedom" (7). Arnold, on the other hand, never lost his English upper class distrust of the unregulated masses, whose tearing down of Hyde Park railings seems to have affected him the way the guillotine affected some French aristocrats.

Arnold's idea of culture was also quite distinct from Schiller's. Schiller quite clearly distanced himself from the "general culture," or the desirableness thereof, as he saw specialization as both inevitable and necessary. So Arnold's culture, much more vaguely distinguished, easily modulates into upper class good taste (Arnold's criticism of the Barbarians is mild compared to the savageness with which he attacks the Philistines). Arnold's vagueness extends to his aesthetic criteria. His "touchstones" of great poetry are at the other extreme from Schiller's complex aesthetic theory, which combines playfulness, wholeness, orderliness and passivity (as in contemplation), and, most important, associates it with the moral will rather than with objects of art.

At the heart of Arnold's theory of education was a nostalgic repudiation of modernity, more obvious in "The Scholar Gypsy" and some of the other poems than in the prose. While one can hardly blame him for this, it is fair to say that this nostalgia was an unfortunate element in a theory of education which, after all, was intended to help us deal with modernity. It is interesting that Newman, from whom Arnold learnt so much, and who is usually
considered much more conservative, seems not to have succumbed to nostalgic longings, and was far more excited at the findings of the natural sciences than Arnold. But then, religious conservatives, by definition, have their God; perhaps only liberals feel nostalgia.  

Amateurism and Self-fashioning

"Man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is only fully a human being when he plays," Schiller boldly announces in On the Aesthetic Education. This statement, like the Greek injunction to 'Know thyself' and the Biblical exhortation to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, must be the starting point of a philosophy, rather than something to be demonstrated. As such, it is too vast a topic to be discussed here, so beyond saying that I think the statement is profoundly true, I will use it only as a means of getting a perspective on the new professionalism that is making its way in the humanities, and especially English departments.

Stanley Fish is probably the best known of those who have been urging that teachers of English should professionalise themselves, and should do so with a clear conscience, as their guilt about making profits and so on is just a hangover from the older humanities' suspicion of the business world. Fish's arguments are too depressing to recount, but Edward Said's response to his article "Profession, Loathe Thyself" sums up what argument there is succinctly: "Let us... assume that whereas
[Walter Jackson] Bate wants the profession to be less apolitical and more humanistic, I want it either to be more political or less unworldly. By way of rejoinder, Fish simply says that he wants the profession to be” (371).

Opposition to professionalism rarely wishes to label itself, since the opposite of professionalism often seems to be shoddy amateurism, adhocery, bungling, managing somehow, muddling through, and so on. It is therefore a relief when someone like Edward Said, whom nobody would dare to accuse of lack of professionalism (in the sense of publishing rather than perishing, or scholarly awards) says quite clearly that he is opposed to professionalism, and that he endorses amateurism, not in the sense of it being inferior to professionalism, but in the etymological sense that it describes the activity of a lover. In Representations of the Intellectual, he writes:

The particular threat to the intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and publishing houses, but rather an attitude I will call professionalism. By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behaviour, not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits,
making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolarical and `objective.' (55)

This professionalism, Said believes, can be "countered by ... amateurism, the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections...in refusing to be tied down to a specialty" (57).

Said has made the important point that genuine scholarship largely consists in a self-denying and loving attention to the object of scholarship; and he has drawn the inevitable conclusion that the refusal of specialization must be central to any definition of amateurism. But play, which he does not mention, is surely as central to amateurism as loving attention or manysidedness. Play, in fact, may be the most intractable element of amateurism, the least amenable to professionalization.

It is surprisingly difficult to talk about 'play' at all in an academic thesis, except perhaps in the sociological- anthropological sense in which Johan Huizinga, for instance, discusses it in Homo Ludens. Schiller seems to have been aware of the difficulty, for after having brought in the idea of the 'play-drive,' and after pointedly emphasizing its primacy in human society, he does not go into any great detail about its characteristic features. The problem is that in an increasingly technological and rational world, even play is rationalised or drawn into the market. In an age of professionalized sport and
artworks as *investments*, the very idea of play changes, is routinized and stripped of charisma.

It may seem like an odd suggestion that we have to learn, or re-learn the importance of play (after all, we have all been children): but it is precisely the danger of the times we live in that we may forget what play actually is. The restructuring of the idea of play as lucrative professional sport, or beneficial therapy, or even time-filling activity, is far more dangerous than outright denial of the value of play. Literary academics, I am convinced, can learn much more (and not only about play) from Shakespeare, Cervantes, Montaigne, Rabelais, Goethe, Schiller, Fielding, Sterne, Lamb, Lewis Carroll and Oakeshott than they can from theories of necessary professionalism or strenuously philosophical *jouissance*.

The `Aesthetic Education' of man is, of course, and in a very important sense, the education he gives himself. Schiller's tract is a primer or guide, but no more than that. The aesthetic education is a form of *self-fashioning*; a form that becomes inevitable in the modern period, with the erosion of religious faith and tightly knit communities. Both Schiller and Goethe were virtually obsessed with "the harmonious development of man's powers' and `giving shape and form' to themselves. In the very last of the Letters, Schiller writes:

```
...as form gradually comes upon him from without... so finally it begins to take possession of him himself, transforming at first only the outer, but ultimately
```
the inner, man too. Uncoordinated leaps of joy turn into dance, the unformed movements of the body into the graceful and harmonious language of gesture. (213) Schiller was reading Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* when he was writing *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. This first of the *bildungsromans* sets out to describe the self-fashioning of a young *bourgeois*, whose one goal is to "attain the harmonious development of [his] personality" (175) whose very name (Meister) indicates his resolution to master external circumstances and his destiny.

Goethe and Schiller were steeped in European literature, including the literature that described the education of the "Renaissance Man." Goethe himself has been called the last great universal man, and must have studied the lives of Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo, of Alberti and Cellini, with particular attention. He must have read Pico Delia Mirandola's "On the Dignity of Man," Castiglione's *Il Corteggiano* and Rabelais's description of the education of Gargantua. Perhaps the very immensity of their achievements, the impossibility of matching them, pushed him towards the rejection of this many-sided self culture, and towards a cautious but definite endorsement of the necessity of specialization in a modern age. But his own life and manifold talents remained as an example and a standard; and in one crucial respect he went beyond the Renaissance geniuses. What Albert Borgmann says of Goethe's friend and admirer Wilhelm von Humboldt could be said of Goethe himself:
Wilhelm von Humboldt who is one of the authors... of the liberal democratic notion of self-realization has also pointed out that no one person can hope to realize all that human beings are capable of; we would in fact weaken our development if we tried. But far from being frustrated by our inevitable one-sidedness, we should embrace and develop our peculiarity and join it with those of others and through this connection experience and enjoy the fullness of humanity. (213)

What was, in the Renaissance artists, a forbidding and awe-inspiring genius is modified into something less ferociously individualistic; the work of art is as much a social work of art as the product of solitary labours. We are reminded here of Ruskin's celebration of Gothic cathedrals as monuments of anonymous, unified, religious faith and work. But with Goethe, as with Ruskin, the enormous work on the self remains to be done; in fact, it is one's life work.

Newman also, in his Idea of a University, amidst the discussions of the specificities of various disciplines, does not forget the centrality of self-fashioning, the blend of intransigent individualism and peer-group socialising that goes into it:

...independent of direct instruction on the part of Superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard
of judgement is found in them, which, as developed in
the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a
twofold source of strength to him, both from the
distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the
bond of union which it creates between him and
others.... self-education in any shape, in the most
restricted sense, is preferable to a system of
teaching, which, professing so much, really does so
little for the mind. Shut your College gates against
the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the
searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will
gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. (147-
48)

And Lionel Trilling, in a late essay, "The Uncertain Future
of the Humanistic Educational Ideal," has a long passage on
Bildung, or education, with its special connotations of work on
the self, and the strenuous effort and the ordeal of the process
(171). He is obviously discouraged at the Bildung (more
precisely, the absence of evidence of it) he saw around him. The
idea of making a life, he writes, that is, of treating one's
existence as if it were a work of art, no longer has much
influence:

This idea of a conceived and executed life is a very
old one and was in force until relatively recently; we
regard it as characteristic of the Victorian age, but
it of course lasted even longer than that.... cognate
with the idea of making a life, a nicely proportioned one, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, was the idea of making a self, a good self....Castiglione in The Book of the Courtier represent[s] men laboring to come up to standard, to be all that men might reasonably hope to be.... This desire to fashion, to shape, a self and a life has all but gone from a contemporary culture whose emphasis, paradoxically enough, is so much on self. (175)

Trilling blames the very multiplicity of options of modern life. Like Arnold, he believes that "this strange disease of modern life/ With its sick hurry, its divided aims" has undone man's capacity to educate himself.

If self-fashioning seemed anachronistic in Trilling's period, what is the scholarly consensus on it now? A new phase of aggressive deconstruction of the idea seems to be under way. Bill Readings (in "For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics") sardonically dismisses the idea that anyone can "imagine him or herself as the hero of the story of the University, as the instantiation of the cultivated individual that the entire great machine labours night and day to produce" (166), and Stephen Greenblatt, in Renaissance Self-Fashioning, unable to believe in contemporary self-fashioning, projects his scepticism back in time to Thomas More, Wyatt, Spenser, Marlowe and others. As his work progressed, he notes in an epilogue

I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned
by cultural institutions--family, religion, state,—were inseparably intertwined. In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact. (256)

What is troubling is that Greenblatt, rather than arguing that human agency has diminished as a result of the growth of instrumental rationality or technology, argues that the idea of autonomy, of human control over circumstances, has always been a delusion. In Trilling's time, the tradition of self-fashioning, perhaps more honoured in the breach than the observance, at least existed as a potentiality, a telos, something to work towards; today, belief in the possibility of self-fashioning is widely perceived as an astonishing naivete.

And finally, there is (there always is) Michel Foucault, whose indefatigable scholarly labours extended, towards the end of his life, to a detailed exploration of "technologies of the self."

Let me admit that I find Foucault difficult to read. His Care of the Self is a fiendishly boring summary of various texts, mainly of the Greek period, that describe techniques of "Care of
the self.' If it was not so long and so detailed one might be forgiven for suspecting the entire book was an elaborate practical joke. And what is the point of all the detail?

According to Patrick H. Hutton, who seems to have followed Foucault's intellectual trajectory closely, it is part of a running battle Foucault has been having with Freud, whose influence Foucault thinks has been pernicious. Foucault's intellectual journey into early Greek documents was intended to expose the methods of Freudian psychoanalysis as the tools of forgotten philosophies of the self, honed by the analysts of earlier epochs who hailed from different intellectual traditions and who had unrelated purposes in mind. The Freud who descends from the genealogy of psychoanalysis in Foucault's deconstruction is not the creator of a new method but an inventor whose genius it was to bring together into a unified theory of medical discourse the techniques of self-analysis used and then discarded by the past societies of Western civilization. (134-35)

Hutton points out that all Foucault's early work "concerned the ways in which external authority shapes the structure of the mind" (125), and argues that "in his last project on the technologies of the self, all of his attention is focused on the way in which the individual participates in the policing process by monitoring his own behaviour" (132). This certainly sounds like the Foucault of Discipline and Punish, but this may be how
some people want to see him. Perhaps this Foucault, instead of becoming his admirers, was about to embarrass them. There are signs that Foucault was withdrawing from the extremely hostile anti-Enlightenment position of his early years; and certainly The Care of the Self, while it is incredibly dull reading, gives us a Foucault who seems fascinated by the techniques of the self he is describing, and not necessarily intent on proving that ways of inducing self-monitoring went back to Galen and Musonius.¹⁰ In an interview called "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress" (in Technologies of the Self) he is enthusiastic about the freedom of work on the self in antiquity. People decided for themselves whether to work on themselves or not. He sounds nostalgic about the disappearance of self-fashioning:

We have hardly any remnant of the idea in our society, that the principal work of art which one has to take care of, the main area to which one must apply aesthetic values, is oneself, one's life, one's existence. We find this in the Renaissance, but in a slightly academic form, and yet again in nineteenth-century dandyism, but those were only episodes. (362)

But Foucault's fascination with self-fashioning, as is usually the case with him, is strangely scientific, (this is evident from the use of terms like 'technologies'). There is no self to discover, only techniques to explore. He speaks dismissively of the Californian cult of the self but his
condescension is *unjustified*, and his version is only distinguished from this cult by the aura of *scholarliness*, or scholasticism that surrounds his writings. Like the Californian New Age enthusiasts, with Foucault it is the technique that matters. Instead of a regimen of fresh orange juice, yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Jungian psychotherapy, bio-feedback, and lots of positive thinking, we have an armoury of early Greek, largely ascetic, practices of the self. From celebrating experiments with sado-masochistic sexuality, Foucault has swung to the extremes of austerity and renunciation. Perhaps it is a sign of the difficulty of genuine self-fashioning in our time that a man of Foucault's undoubted genius should so perversely misunderstand the point of the exercise.

**Conclusion**

Schiller's ambivalence towards modernity was a considered one. His method of understanding was dialectical; again and again in the *Aesthetic Education* we find the pattern of contraries, built up and extended until they are forced to develop into a new unity. With regard to the future he saw coming into existence, he refused to withdraw into nostalgia, political quietism, and conservative broodings about past excellences, though the pull in these directions must have been very strong. Though there is evidence that he was disgusted by the excesses of the younger German Romantics, he did not react against them to the extent of denying the principles they held in common.
This considered ambivalence, together with his endorsement of playfulness and an aesthetic self-fashioning that takes into account the importance of specialization and an abstract moral obligation: these may help us to understand the role the humanities can play in the university. To the thoroughly politicized, for whom ambivalence is conservatism, and self-fashioning a feature of an earlier age, this may sound both self-indulgent to the point of frivolity and completely detached from today's realities. Differences of opinion at this level cannot be resolved; they can only be stated in such a way that ambiguity is kept to a minimum.

Schiller's understanding of modernity has been ignored partly because of the tendency to regard aesthetics as a whole as a trivial enterprise, when compared with epistemology or ethics. But as I have tried to show, Schiller is far from being a 'mere' aesthete. His conception of the aesthetic is complex enough to incorporate both theories of knowledge and morality; and his insistence on both determinedly emphasizing differences in points of view and trying to reconcile them at the highest level is extraordinarily useful, as in his account of instrumental rationality and the value of specialization in the Sixth Letter. I believe that his thought is better suited to our real requirements than many of the cynical and facile dogmas that largely constitute the intellectual and cultural environment of our fin-de-siecle.
1. Unfortunately, it was only after writing most of this thesis that I came across Samuel Weber's very interesting (and difficult) Institution and Interpretation. In a final chapter entitled "Ambivalence: The Humanities and the Study of Literature," he discusses "the crisis of the humanities" in terms of what he calls "the ambivalence of demarcation" (138). The sciences work by progressive exclusions, and the humanities have defined themselves in terms of opposition to science; so the humanities, paradoxically, practice the 'exclusion of exclusion' (138). Weber wonders if the humanities, literally defined by their ambivalence, can embrace this ambivalence usefully, "without...resorting to the kind of archaeo-teleological self-determination that Freud suggests is a factor in provoking neurotic illness"? (148) The suggestion here is that the 'crisis' of the humanities is similar to the Freudian obsessive neurosis, which is a result of ambivalence, as drive and prohibition constantly increase in strength and reinforce each other.

2. Both these tendencies, of course, reach their fulfilment in Hegel's philosophy of history.

3. Charles Taylor, in Sources of the Self, has drawn attention to the connections between Schiller's criticism of 'the instrumental stance' and the various radical student movements that emphasized community, honesty, playfulness, living in harmony with nature, and so on (500-501).

4. See Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 45.

5. Goethe was perhaps the first to discern this. He tells Eckermann: "The concept of classical and romantic literature which is now spreading worldwide and is causing so many quarrels and divisions... emanated originally from Schiller and me" (qtd. in Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly's introduction to On the Naive and Sentimental, 13). Arthur O. Lovejoy carefully lays out the origins of the concept in "Schiller and the Genesis of German Romanticism" Essays in the History of Ideas (207-27). See also M.H. Abrams Natural Supernaturalism and Rene Wellek's "Kant and Schiller," in A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950: The Later Eighteenth Century.

6. Among those influenced by Schiller's writings, only Weber and the early Marx seem to achieve this complex poise, this profound neutrality towards modernity. Nietzsche, Lukacs, and Adorno and Horkheimer tend in their writing towards a more hostile analysis.

7. For an interesting discussion of Newman's and Arnold's views on education, see G.H. Bantock's Freedom and Authority in Education.
8. Another type of criticism of professionalism is that made by writers like Russell Jacoby. In *The Last Intellectuals*, Jacoby takes academics to task for no longer attempting to address a general public, in the way that Edmund Wilson or C. Wright Mills did. Jacoby's criticism has been dismissed by some academics as an exercise in nostalgia, but more and more people seem to share his fear that university intellectuals today might be dangerously cut off from the world outside academia. Trilling pointed to this danger in his "The Two Environments: Reflections on the Study of English" in *Beyond Culture*; and, closer to our time, Edward Said (in *The World, The Text and the Critic*) has expressed similar fears.

9. In passing, it is worth noting that there are distinct national differences in regard to amateurism and professionalism. Said stands out for his criticism of an already highly professionalised group; in England, on the other hand, John Bayley, John Carey and Christopher Ricks are highly respected without being, in the American sense, professionals. By this I obviously don't mean that they are not paid salaries or don't publish, but that they seem to be comfortable with generalizations that American scholars tend to be wary of, and that they feel no need to cultivate a jargon that sounds scientific, or at least sociological.

10. Foucault's "What is Enlightenment?" (in *The Foucault Reader* 32-50), his response to Kant's famous work of the same name, seems to mark a new ambivalence in Foucault's attitude to the Enlightenment. The essay has already triggered off a considerable controversy. See Habermas's "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present" and Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow's "What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on "What is Enlightenment?"", both in *Foucault: A Critical Reader* 103-108 and 109-121; Geoffrey Galt Harpham's "So...What Is Enlightenment? An Inquisition into Modernity" *Critical Inquiry*, Spring 1994, Vol 20, No 3. 524-556; and Christopher Norris "What is enlightenment?: Kant according to Foucault" in *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. (159-196).