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Media and Message in Modern Political Thought: From the Age of Print to the Age of Digital Reproduction

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Media and Message in Modern Political Thought: From the Age of Print to the Age of Digital Reproduction

by

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The manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Media and Message in Modern Political Thought: From the Age of Print to the Age of Digital Reproduction

By

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Adviser: Professor Jack Jacobs

The dissertation investigates the relationship between media and message in modern political thought. In the research I situate the ideas of three modern political theorists Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, and Theodor Herzl in the material conditions prevailing in the printing industry of their times. I investigate in each case how the media culture the thinker was working in influenced his political ideas. My findings indicate that in all three cases the political ideas were shaped and conditioned by the particular position of the author, the prevailing attitude to the printed word, and the existing media technologies. Based on the historical research, in the last part of the study I explore the future of political ideas in the age of digital hypertexts. Overall, the findings of the research lead me to call for a broadening of conventional analysis of political ideas: Political ideas must be seen as part of the highly regulated streams of information that flow between author and reader in any given historical period.

For Hila, who always believes

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Introduction

The words on this page were written either on my Asus laptop computer or on one of the Dell desktop computers scattered throughout the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Whatever computer I used, these alphabetic signs are the product of electric pulses transmitted by a power supplier to a computer processer which, in turn, used them to execute a series of commands given to it by a Microsoft Word electronic processing program. At the beginning of that process (or at its end, depending on a person's perspective) were my fingertips, pushing electronic levers on a keyboard, converting my thoughts into the electronic fonts now filling the page.

At first glance, the fact that most political thinkers since the time of Plato communicated their ideas in writing seems trivial. The actual activities of writing and producing texts appear to have little to do with the political ideas they hold. Yet, this is only true if we consider 'texts' to be a historical constant; if we presuppose that political ideas are products of language in abstract; if we deem the relationship between authors and readers to be the same throughout history. Yet, what if we consider pushing buttons on a typewriter and moving a quill across a piece of paper as two different activities? What if we think of ancient scrolls and mechanically printed books as two different modes of communication? Doing so suggests that, although Niccolò Machiavelli and Michel Foucault may both be considered political thinkers, they were engaged in two very different activities. By the same token, Plato's *Republic*, handwritten on a papyrus scroll, and Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, produced by a steam-driven press, could not both be said to simply constitute political texts. If indeed texts are historical variables, then the full understanding of political ideas conveyed in writing requires an exploration of how the texts that carry them were produced.

Walter Ong notes that, while *homo sapiens* has been in existence for between thirty thousand and fifty thousand years, the earliest preserved script dates from only six thousand years ago.[1] Yet only in recent years and thanks to the spread of digital technologies, is it possible to see texts for the first time as a changing *technology*.[2] This understanding allows an appreciation of Western philosophy, science, and literature as expressions of chirographic (i.e. writing) cultures. This, in turn, calls attention to the fact that political theory is, for the most part, a text-based tradition. With the noted exception of the pre-Socratic philosophers and Socrates himself, the major political ideas at the heart of Western civilization have come down to us through a particular technology – written language.

Once we understand written language as a changing technology, it becomes clear that writers never face an abstract text detached from its materiality. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier write: "In contrast to a purely semantic definition of the text … we need to hold that forms produce meanings, and that a text is invested with a new meaning and a different status with every change in the support that makes it available to reading."[3] By the same token, Roland Barthes makes the firm distinction between *text*, which excites only in discourse, and *work*, which is a fragment of substance occupying a portion of space and held in the hand.[4] Cavallo and

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[1] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, (Routledge, 2002), 2.

[2] This point was made by Walter Ong (1982) and repeated later by George Landow (1992). See George Landow, *Hypertexts 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) 46; Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, (Routledge, 2002), 2.

[3] Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 2.

[4] Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, (University of California Press, 1989), 57.

Chartier's and Barthes' treatment of texts indicates that, in addition to the personal and socio-political circumstances surrounding political thinkers, they are also always operating under particular norms and standards that govern the production of written words and that these norms and standards inform in some shape or form their ideas. This understanding suggests that the analysis of political ideas should include not only the reasoning of the political argument and the historical environment in which the text was produced but also the prevailing modes of textual production. This is the agenda guiding this research.

Media Culture

In order to investigate whether political ideas are indeed influenced by the means of textual production, we first need a theoretical tool that will enable us to place political ideas in the larger stream of written language flowing between authors and readers in each period. For that purpose, I would like to offer in this research the notion of media culture as a conceptual framework that will allow us to demarcate the norms and standards that regulate the production, circulation, and consumption of written language in any given period. As illustrated by Figure 1 below I wish to use the concept of media culture to broaden the typical analysis of political texts and point to a whole realm found between political thinkers and their texts which has hitherto rarely received adequate study.

Figure 1: The Media Culture Model

The Political Text	Media Culture	The Political Thinker
	Media Technologies **The position of the author** **The attitude to written language**	
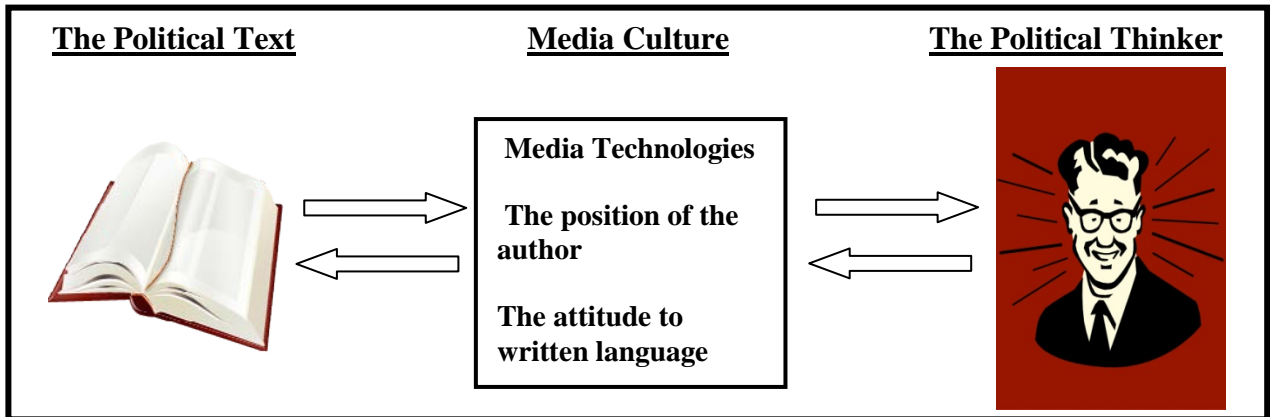
Each media culture is determined by three interdependent factors: the existing media technologies, the position of the author in society, and the prevailing attitude to written language. The most fundamental component of any print culture is the available media technologies. As was just noted, from the dawn of Western civilization, the relationship between human beings and the external world has been mediated by word-producing technologies. Whether they are pieces of chalk, steam-driven presses, or computer-based word processing programs, in each historical period we find particular media technologies that determine the way human beings relate to their surroundings. Yet, as media theorists and book historians Book Historians have shown, each media technology has its own bias. Different media technologies favor different political configurations. The political economist Harold Innis, for instance, argue that modes of communication which are durable such as clay and stone favor decentralized and hierarchical political organizations, while those that are less durable and light such as papyrus and paper favor centralized and less hierarchical ones. According to Innis, the different kinds of media explain the different ways in which the ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman

empires which made use of them developed.[5] In the same vein, Hans Magnus Enzensberger argues that modern technologies such as the transistor radio, in which there is no contradiction between transmitter and receiver, are essentially predicated on the existing division of labor and therefore facilitate social inequality.[6]

If, indeed, media technologies have their own biases, the analysis of political ideas must take into account the technologies which were used to produce the media by which those ideas were conveyed. Such a research design was employed, for instance, by Eric Havelock in his study of Plato's dialogues. Havelock places Plato's dialogues in the context of the transition taking place at the time in ancient Greece from oral to written culture. Doing so led Havelock to argue that the Platonic dialogue was a paradoxical effort to preserve the fading Greek oral culture by writing it down. The Platonic dialogue, according to Havelock, and the ideas it holds must be seen as an attempt to preserve the dialectic and open-ended nature of Greek oral culture against the backdrop of the invention of the Greek alphabet.[7] By the same token, the German media theorist Friedrich Kittler contends that the transition in Nietzsche's writing from the early prolonged reflections to the later concise aphorisms was due to his use of a typewriter. Kittler maintains that this is so because the typewriter which Nietzsche purchased late in his career (due to his deteriorating eyesight) prevented him from seeing the paper on which he was typing.

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[5] Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (University of Toronto Press, 1995), 33-60.

[6] Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," in Michael Roloff (ed.), *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics and the Media*, (Seabury Press, 1975), 267.

[7] Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, (Harvard University Press, 1963), 254-275.

Kittler maintains that the new typewriter forced Nietzsche to adopt a telegraphic style of writing which changed not merely his rhetoric but also the nature of his ideas.[8]

Both Havelock and Kittler suggest that media technologies are not merely tools in the hands of writers but play a role in shaping their ideas. Kittler takes this view to the extreme when he quotes Nietzsche's remark following his experience with his new typewriter: "Our writing tools are also working on our thoughts."[9] In this research I seek to bring this perspective to the study of political theory by tracing the possible ways in which historical media technologies influenced political ideas.

The second feature of any media culture is the existing attitude to written language. Thinking of written language as technology allows us to see text not as a uniform discursive field but as a changing technology that served different purposes in different historical contexts. Cornelia Roemer notes that for the classical Greeks and Romans texts were organic extensions of the human body. They were produced by hand and conveyed by voice. As long as the production of texts remained a manual labor, texts were not perceived as independent means of communication.[10] Jacqueline Hamesse points out that in medieval monasteries texts were kept away from most people. They were created not so people could read them but in order to amass knowledge that would fortify the authority of the church.[11] By the latter part of the eighteenth

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[8] Friedrich Kittler, *Gramaphone, Film, Typewriter*, (Stanford University Press, 1999), 203.

[9] Ibid,. xxix.

[10] Corneila Roemer, "The Papyrus Roll in Egypt, Greece, and Rome," Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *The Companion to the Histroy of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 85.

[11] Hamesse Jacqueline, "The Scholastic Model of Reading," Cavallo Guglielmo and Roger Charrtier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 104.

century, during the Romantic Period, the printed word in Western Europe came to be seen as an embodiment of the intangible human soul. By the mid-nineteenth century, with the rise of Realism, the attitude to the printed word flipped again, and texts came to be perceived as mirror-images of the concrete world.

Thus, throughout history texts have served many different functions, each having an apparent influence on their content. They were both means of recording as well as forgetting; they were used to express inner life as well as to describe the objective world; they both conveyed knowledge and concealed it. Given the changing nature of texts, the analysis of political ideas must also take into account the prevailing attitude towards them. This was done, for instance, by Moshe Harbertal in his study of the Jewish attitudes toward texts from biblical to modern times. Habertal shows different kinds of authority in the Jewish tradition to be founded on the changing functions of canonical texts – the Torah, the Mishnah, and the Talmud.[12] The same agenda guides George Landow in his study of digital hypertexts in which he shows them to be a novel mode of communication which carries the capacity to transform social and political relations.[13]

The last feature of any media culture is the position that authors occupy in the society they are working in. The author is perhaps one of the most enduring social agents in modern times. Foucault contends that the very notion of the modern self is a product of the privileged

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[12] Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, (Harvard University Press, 2009).

[13] George Landow, *Hypertexts 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

position authors enjoy in Western culture.[14] Yet, the social role of authors is never fixed; it changes according to the technologies and norms that determine the production of texts. Before the eighteenth century, for instance, men of letters in most European countries were not independent social agents. As a general rule they were not financially independent nor were they legally defined. They worked for patrons and were not considered to be the owners of their works. Nonetheless, by the end of that century the growing literacy rates, the increasing numbers of print products, and the establishment of copyright laws transformed the author into an esteemed social and cultural agent – a member of the Republic of Letters. Robert Darnton, Richard Altick, Jürgen Habermas, and others have shown the privileged position of the author since the eighteenth century to be the precondition facilitating the basic values of modern Western culture. According to these scholars, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and representative democracy were all possible thanks to private men of letters who used their pens to mark out the notion of the rational and free human being.[15] Thus, given the changes in the position of the author, the study of political ideas should, in the final analysis, take into account the social position of authors in their own epoch.

The existing media technologies, the prevailing attitudes towards texts, and the social position of authors taken together give us a comprehensive picture of the media environment

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[14] Michel Foucault, "What is the Author?", in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, (Pantheon Books, 1984), 101.

[15] Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, (University of Chicago Press, 1998); Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775-1800,* (Belknap Press, 1979); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1989).

political thinkers work in. Once we have an idea of the media culture surrounding political thinkers, we can begin investigating how it might have shaped their thought. We can explore the typically neglected technical aspect of writing down political ideas and the mechanical task of producing them. As a conceptual framework, media culture offers a way out of the binding dichotomy between form and content often presumed in the study of political ideas. It provides us with a materialist understanding of political ideas attentive to the dialectical interplay that goes on between form and content in political thought.

Yet, the question of how a given media culture influences a political thinker must be complemented by the question of how political thinkers use media culture to convey their ideas. Determining the relationship between media culture and political thinkers goes right to the heart of one of the central debates among media theorists: On the one side, we find those who presume that media shapes (or *is*) the message, while, on the other, we find those who see media as mere tools subject to human will. While for Foucault, Ong, Marshall McLuhan, and Lawrence Lessing the codex, mass media, and computer networks play a decisive role in determining human interaction, others such as Pierre Bourdieu, Fredric Jameson, and Jacques Ellul stress the human factor in using (or abusing) media technologies.[16] When it comes to political ideas, there seems to be even more at stake. Are political texts mere products of larger media cultures? Are political thinkers ever free from the media they use? Are our ideas about liberty, equality and power

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[16] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (Routledge, 2002); Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (MIT Press, 1964); Lawrence Lessing, *Code*, (Basic Books, 2006); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, (Columbia University Press, 1993); Fredric Jameson*, Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, (Princeton University Press, 1971); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, (Vintage Books, 1964).

determined by a fixed socio-technological realm? This dissertation will attempt to provide answers to these tough questions.

A Word about Case Selection and Methodology

I chose to focus my research on the ideas of four modern political thinkers: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), and Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). Those four thinkers exhibit differences in time, subject matter, and media that put to test the utility of media culture as a theoretical tool. Rousseau was operating in the mid-eighteenth century at a time when the first literary markets emerged; Marx and Engels were working in the industrialized media culture of the mid-nineteenth century; and Theodor Herzl was toiling in the more familiar setting of mass media. As we will see later on, whether it was standardized printing, copyright laws, steam-driven presses, stereotypes, or the telegraph – the media culture in each period posed a set of opportunities and limits for each one of the four thinkers.

Another consideration in choosing those four thinkers was the influence of their works on actual political events. The texts I have chosen to center on are said to have played a significant role in three prominent revolutions namely, the French revolution, the Bolshevik revolution, and the Zionist revolution. Even though it is possible that a single word has never caused any political event, it is hard to imagine those historical revolutionary events without Rousseau's, Marx's, Engels's, and Herzl's ideas. Rousseau is perhaps the *philosophe* most identified with the political upheavals taking place in France between 1789 and 1799. Similarly, it is difficult to exaggerate the influence that Marx's and Engels's writings had on the leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. By the same token, when Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the

State of Israel in November of 1948, he did it under the piercing eyes of Theodor Herzl's portrait. Even if the actual happenings were the result of broader socio-historical circumstances, it is safe to assume that they would have taken a different path if it were not for the political visions that will be the focus of my research.

I would like to say a word here about the choice of including Herzl in this study. While it is true that unlike Rousseau and Marx, Herzl could not be considered among the greatest philosophers of modern times, I believe that he is a key to our understanding of the relationship between media and message in modern political thought. As we will see in the fourth chapter, Herzl provides a remarkable case of a professional author who managed to use the media he was working in (mass-circulation newspapers) to transform himself into a leader of an international revolutionary movement. As this is so, when considering the relationship between media and message in modern political thought, as will be done in this study, Herzl's case is as important as those of Rousseau and Marx.

In the case of Rousseau, the texts I centered the research on are *The Discourse on the Origins and foundation of Inequality among Men* (henceforth *the Second Discourse*) (1754) and his novel *Julie or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps* (1758) (henceforth *Julie)*. In order to establish Rousseau's approach to the media culture of his time, I will also allude to particular passages from *The Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (henceforth *the First Discourse*) (1750), *Emile or on Education* (henceforth *Emile*) (1762), *The Social Contract* (1762), and *An Essay on the Origin of Languages* (published posthumously in 1781), the *Confessions* (1781), as well as Rousseau's personal correspondence.

In the case of Marx and Engels, I chose to center the research on their early writings, in which they established their notion of historical materialism. The study will focus mainly on

Marx's and Engels's journalistic works between 1839 and 1842: *The Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights* (1843) and *The German Ideology* (1845). As in the case of Rousseau, in order to establish Marx's and Engels's attitude toward the media culture of their time, I will also examine some of their personal writings.

Lastly, the research on Herzl will focus on *The Jewish State* (1896) and the personal diary he kept from the moment he embarked on his Zionist mission until his untimely death. Since, in the case of Herzl, the available materials in libraries across New York are limited, I also made use of materials found in the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem (CZA) which houses Herzl's full literary output.

Media Culture & Political Theory

The relationship between media technologies and political ideas has been the focus of various historical and philosophical works ever since the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century. Martin Luther's sophisticated use of the press as a weapon against the Catholic Church is well documented. In his famous *Acts and Monuments* (1563) John Foxe predicted that either the pope would abolish printing or printing would eventually destroy the pope. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico divided ancient political history into three grand periods, each determined by a particular writing system. According to Vico, the theocratic *Age of God* was the product of the divine "metal language" of the Egyptian hieroglyphs; the aristocratic *Age of Heroes* was a product of the archaic system of signs; and the democratic *Age of Man* was a product of the ancient Greek alphabet. Later in that century the French *philosophes* and the German *Aufklärer* put their faith in the capacity of the

Republic of Letters to beget the Enlightenment-era values of individual autonomy, freedom, and social justice.

In more recent times, studies by Arthur Dickens, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and Altick show the printing press to be an engine behind the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, modern science, and modern democracy.[17] Many of the works published since the 1970s that stress the link between print and power were informed in some way or another by Foucault, who in *Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *The Order of Things* identifies literary production as one of the major *epistemic* systems dominating Western culture.[18] Other studies, such as Darnton's treatment of Denis Diderot's and Jean d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie,* display a more nuanced understanding of the political impact of print both as a means of political liberation as well as of ideological oppression.[19] The same could be said about Paul Starr's survey of the politics behind the creation of mass media in the United States.[20]

In recent years, the advent of the digital age has generated a new wave of works that attempt to conceptualize the political ramifications of digital media technologies. Those works appear to oscillate between glorifying the liberating capacity of digital technology and demonizing its oppressive nature. Works by Gilles Deleuze (1992), Lessing (1999), and

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[17] Arthur Geoffrey Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, (Brace & World, 1966); Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge University Press, 1979); Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[18] Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, (Routledge, 2002); *The Order of Things*, (Routledge, 2002).

[19] Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment : A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775-1800*, (Belknap Press, 1979).

[20] Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*, (Basic Books, 2004).

Alexander Galloway (2004) all point to digital specters appearing in the shape of "diagrams," "codes," or "protocols" that take control of the "networked society."[21] Other works such as those of Manuel Castells, Yochai Benkler, and Barry Wellman et al. extend the traditional liberal faith in technology into the digital age and stress the aptitude of computer-based networks to facilitate moral and material progress.[22]

Despite this extensive literature, over the years only a handful of political theorists have investigated the relation between media technologies and political ideas. One of the major works in the field that is an exception to the rule is Benedict Anderson's classic work, *Imagined Communities*. Building on earlier works by Williams Haller, Lucien Febvre, and Henri-Jean Martin, Anderson argues that the convergence of capitalism and print technology in the beginning of the eighteenth century made possible new forms of imagined communities that set the stage for modern nationalism. While the printed book kept a permanent form – capable of virtually infinite reproduction, temporally and spatially – print-language laid the groundwork for national consciousness by creating a unified field of communication below Latin and above the

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[21] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59, (Winter 1992), 3-7; Lawrence Lessing, *Code*, (Basic Books, 2006); Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*, (MIT Press, 2004);

[22] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, (Blackwell, 1996); Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks*, (Yale University Press, 2006); Barry Wellman, Anabel Quan-Hasse, Jeffrey Boase, Wenhong Chen, Keith Hapton, Isaebl Diaz, Makuko Miyata "The Social Affordances of the Internet for Networked Individualism," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (April, 2003), http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2003.tb00216.x/full.

spoken vernacular languages.[23] Yet, while Anderson describes how the printing press facilitated modern nationalism, he omits from his analysis its use by revolutionary movements *against* national movements since the end of the eighteenth century. Anderson overlooks the fact that Heinrich Heine, Thomas Carlyle, Ferdinand Freiligrath, and, as we will see later on, Marx and Engels used the new printing technologies to propagate *revolutionary* ideas that undermined the very notion of the nation-state.

Another formative work in the field that explored the influence of the printing press on modern politics and remains one of the most comprehensive treatments of the subject is Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.[24] Habermas points to the press as the technology that facilitated the structural transformation of the modern public sphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by enabling the initial debate among political philosophers over the principle of sovereignty. Although Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophers were already familiar with the notion of *lex generalis*, it was primarily thanks to the press that private men of letters such as Thomas Hobbes, Montesquieu, and John Locke were able to think about the notion of the law as a general, abstract, and permanent form of authority unbound by traditional religious and hereditary rule.[25] Later, in the late eighteenth century, Habermas argues, the reading societies, libraries, and salons that developed around the new moral weeklies, journals, and periodicals were the perfect means for bourgeois writers to convey their private experiences

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[23] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (Verso, 2006), 44.

[24] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1989).

[25] Ibid., 54-55.

to the growing reading public. According to Habermas, these new publications moved the private worlds of writers to the center of the public realm – thereby facilitating the establishment of the modern bourgeois public sphere.[26]

Yet, while Habermas views the press as the "public sphere's 'preëminent institution'" as he moves to a more philosophical treatment of Marx's critique of Kant and Hegel, the press fades away from his analysis. By separating Marx's critique of German philosophy and the developments in textual production of the time, Habermas seems to gloss over the connection between them. By adhering to the common disciplinary division of labor between political/social theory and textual/media analysis, Habermas seems to overlook the extent to which Marx's and Engels's ideas were entrenched in the industrialization of print taking place at the time.[27]

It is this lacuna, typical of works in political theory, which I wish to fill here. I seek to add to the works of Anderson and Habermas by placing the ideas of the four selected modern political thinkers in the original media culture in which they were produced in hope of better understanding the interrelations between media and message in modern political thought.

Chapter Outlines

The first chapter situates Jean-Jacques Rousseau's egalitarianism in the early days of the French Enlightenment literary market. The chapter traces Rousseau's conscious use of the new direct channel that the Enlightenment literary market had opened between professional authors

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[26] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1989), 56.

[27] Ibid., 117-129.

and the reading public to address his readers' intimate thoughts and feelings. The chapter delineates Rousseau's careful design of his works as public sites of a new kind which brought into light the readers' sense of self that until then was only whispered behind closed doors. I argue in the chapter that Rousseau's works posed a mode of communication of a new kind that opened the way for his readers to cut across all existing social hierarchies and embrace a new type of egalitarian subjectivity.

The second chapter moves almost a hundred years later to Germany of the mid-nineteenth century, where Rousseau's emotive approach to the printed word became the foundation of what Friedrich Kittler terms, the 'discourse network of 1800'. In this world, print-language became an arcane system of signs embodying esoteric knowledge which was dominating all cultural and political life in Germany. Yet, soon enough the industrialization of German print – which detached print-language from metaphysical abstractions and attached it to the prevailing socio-economic realities – challenged the mere essence of the 'discourse network of 1800'.

The chapter places Marx's and Engels's early historical materialism in this dramatic shift taking place in the German printing industry in the 1830s and 1840s. Doing so leads me to contend that the transition in German philosophy from idealism to materialism did not take place merely in the realm of ideas. It was a manifestation of a very concrete shift that was taking place in the medium that was conveying it – print-language. Whereas the Hegelian system was a relic of the so-called 'discourse network of 1800', in which written language was held up as a portal to metaphysical abstractions, Marxist historical materialism was the product of a new generation of mechanically produced print products that was attaching print-language to the prevailing socio-economic realities.

The third chapter sidetracks from the main discussion on media and politics to explain the choice of including Theodor Herzl – the "visionary of the Jewish state" – in a study that includes Rousseau, Marx and Engels. Contrary to the widespread treatments of Herzl's Zionism as either a modern day Jewish messianic movement or a typical turn-of-the-century European enterprise I offer in the chapter a third way of looking at Herzl's Zionism that underscores the unique relationship between those two traditions found in his thought. My findings indicate that, although early on Herzl's fin-de-siècle surroundings alienated him from the Jewish messianic themes he grew up on, it eventually showed him the way to recover them and endow them with a novel and politicized meaning. Fin-de-siècle social criticism and Jewish messiansim came together to form a novel type of Jewish political messianism which I call Herzlism.

The fourth chapter moves back to probe the relationship between media and message, this time in Herzl's thought. In this chapter I investigate the relationship between Herzl's journalistic career and his Zionist enterprise. Contrary to the commonly held view that Herzl's post at the *Neue Freie Presse* had little to do with his Zionist vision, I maintain in this chapter that Herzl's Zionist awakening sprang essentially from his experience as an influential journalist working in the early days of mass circulation. I also demonstrate in the chapter that, once Herzl took up the Zionist cause, he made a sophisticated use of mass circulation newspapers and of his position at the *Neue Freie Presse* to bring about and propagate his Zionist plan.

This leads me to contend that Herzl's Zionism posed a revolution not only in Jewish consciousness but also in Jewish textuality. For Jews who always saw texts as a source of both spirituality and collective identity, Herzl's sophisticated use of mass circulation conjured up a novel political-messianic vision that offered redemption not by divine will but by a political

deed. With the aid of mass-circulation, Herzl was able to detach the Jewish communal identity from the traditional Jewish canonical texts and set it in the midst of international politics.

The last chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part offers some thoughts and reflections about the merits of media culture as a theoretical tool, based on the findings of the three case studies in this research. I will also put forward some overarching conclusions about the relationship between media and message in modern political thought. The second part of the chapter discusses political ideas in the age of digital networks. The understanding of political theory as a print-based tradition leads me to raise some questions about the future of political theory in the Digital Age: Can digital hypertexts convey the emotive experience that served as the basis for Rousseau's egalitarianism? Can digital networks facilitate essentialist arguments such as Marx's and Engels's historical materialism? Can global, computer-based digital networks sustain a Jewish territorial-based national identity? In this chapter I hope to offer answers to these questions as well as others.

Chapter One

Imprinting the Cry of Nature: Rousseau's Hidden Media Theory

Around the mid-eighteenth century, when Rousseau was working on his novels, discourses, and treatises, written language was still the only mode of communication which could transcend the human body. With the telegraph, telephone, and camera still well over a hundred years away, fixed alphabetic signs were the only means to reach out to other human beings across time and space. Nonetheless, in early eighteenth-century France print-language was far from fulfilling its promise of getting people together. This was due to the set of social and political institutions that ensured that the printed word would remain fastened to the existing social and political hierarchies.

In the days of the Ancien Regime there were three main institutions that regulated the production, circulation, and consumption of print language in France: the Privilege System, royal censorship, and patronage. The Privilege System was an elaborate network of edicts and decrees regulating every aspect of the French printing industry. Under the Privilege System printers could operate only upon getting a special license. The production and dissemination of print materials was granted to a handful of guilds which were closely connected to one another as well as to the ruling monarchy. It was called the Privilege System because each publication required the guild to obtain an official *privilège* from the king. The Privilege System benefited all sides. While it insured that the Ancien Regime would maintain complete control over all print materials in France, it also secured the financial basis of the printers' guilds. The Privilege System remained in place right up to the French Revolution.[28]

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[28] John Lough, *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century France* (David McKay Company, 1960), 260.

The Privilege System operated hand-in-hand with the work of the royal censors. Every single (legal) publication published in France from the mid-seventeenth century up to the French Revolution had to be approved by them. Rietje van Vilet notes that between 1659 and 1789 the French censors threw over nine hundred people involved in the publishing industry into the Bastille.[29] Voltaire served two terms there in the early 1740s due to the "subversive" nature of his works. Eventually, he was forced to leave France and live in exile (from 1750 until 1778). Diderot also spent a few months in the Bastille, but not before the court instructed to burn his works in public. Rousseau managed to stay out of the Bastille only because most of his works were published outside of France. Nonetheless, Rousseau's fear of the French censors led him to spend long periods of time outside of France.

As long as the Privilege System and French censorship were regulating the production of print in France, a literary market, in the modern sense, could not come into being. In the first part of the eighteenth century, most men of letters did not make a living from selling their works nor did they enjoy any legal status. Being a writer was not a profession per se. Men of genius such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau were lucky enough to have a strong financial basis to begin with or managed to win the support of wealthy patrons along the way. Montesquieu was a large landowner. Voltaire was born into a well-to-do family and later received the support of wealthy and powerful patrons such as the Marquise du Châtelet and Frederick the Great. Diderot, although he struggled in the early stages of his career, later made a comfortable living from selling his share of his father's estate as well as winning the patronage

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[29] Rietje van Vliet, "Print and Public in Europe 1600-1800," in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 255.

of Catherine the Great.[30] Rousseau made a living by working as a music tutor but also enjoyed early on in his career the financial support of Françoise-Louise de Warens (1699-1762) who served as his patron in various stages of his writing career,.[31]

Under these circumstances, print-language could not develop into an independent medium. Reading was not yet a private act of individuals searching for knowledge but was mostly used by the Ancien Regime to reinforce its control over the social order. The Privilege System, French censorship, and the persistence of patronage all insured that print language would remain essentially tied to class.

Words Set Free

Despite the tight control of the Ancien Regime on the production of print up to the French Revolution, towards the middle of the eighteenth century print-language began to depart from the rigid French class system. This was a result of the emergence of a literary market which was challenging the dominance of the Privilege System and the French censors and undermining the principle of patronage. The emergence of the literary market was primarily the result of the steady growth in literacy rates in France. There are only rough figures regarding literacy rates in France (and in the rest of Europe) in the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, historians agree that, as the century progressed, more and more French people were able to read. Most estimates describe increase from under thirty percent among men and around thirteen percent among women at the end of the seventeenth century to over forty percent among men and about twenty-five percent

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[30] John Lough, *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century France*, (David McKay Company, 1960), 244 & 264.

[31] For more on the relationship between Rousseau and Françoise-Louise de Warens see F. C. Green *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Critical Study of his Life and writings*, (Barnes & Noble,1970), 13-19, 27-32, 42-74.

among women in the last couple of years of the Ancien Regime.[32] Yet, the new readers belonged, for the most part, to the upper social strata. Gaps in literacy rates between the rich and poor, bourgeois and working class, and men and women continued to persist all through the century.

Unlike the two other cases which this study will discuss later on, the increasing literacy rates did not correspond with any major technological leaps made in the printing industry. Throughout the eighteenth century, printing remained mostly a manual craft carried out on wooden presses. Nonetheless, during the century a set of improvements were introduced to the printing process, which proved to be instrumental in the departure of the printed word from the French class system and its transformation into a popular mode of communication.

One such improvement was the establishment of a standard size of paper. Up to the 1770s, the size of paper varied from one printer to another. A French decree of 1723 was a first attempt to establish a single size of paper, but it was ignored by most printers.[33] However, after the installment of the *Fournier's Point System* and the *Didot Point System* in the last decades of the century, did printers begin using universal sizes of paper for different print products.

The same process of standardization took place in typefaces as well. Up to the 1750s there was no agreed-upon standard of type. Because of the importance attributed to the aesthetic aspect of print, many of the types used were striking, yet unreadable for most people. Baskerville's Bible, printed in France in 1763, is considered to be the first work in which a

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[32] Rietje van Vliet, "Print and Public in Europe 1600-1800," in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 251. Also see, John Lough, *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century France*, (David McKay Company, 1960), 236.

[33] Henry Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, (British Library, 1996), 76-77.

simple and clear Latin style of type was used. Later, Baskerville's style became the standard across Europe and was used to produce a range of texts from religious ones to daily newspapers.[34]

The standardization of paper and type opened the way for the gradual popularization of the printed word. This was evident in the establishment of the first modern libraries in Western and Central Europe. The great national libraries were established in the second half of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.[35] However, initially the national libraries were not meant to serve the general reading public. They were intended for the use of the monarchies and later the well-to-do middle class. In 1750 the first lending libraries in the German-speaking world opened their doors in Frankfurt-am-Main and in Karlsruhe. Altick notes that as late as the 1720s, Benjamin Franklin had to arrange with a neighboring bookseller to borrow from him books for a fixed fee, since there were still no lending libraries in London.[36] The first circulating library did not arrive in London until 1740, and the first in France was founded in Paris as late as 1761. It was only at the end of the eighteenth century that European libraries became true public institutions serving anyone who could read.

The eighteenth century also saw the initial development of the newspaper. Before printers identified the growing need to obtain information about the happenings of the day, hand-written

[34] Henry Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, (British Library, 1996), 80; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, (Verso, 1997), 158-9.

[35] The French *Bibliothéque nationale de France* opened its gates to the public in 1692; the *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale* in Florence was established in 1747, the *British Museum Library* in 1753. See, Henry Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, (The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 1996), 127.

[36] Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, (University of Chicago Press, 1998). 61.

newsletters containing political and economic news were circulating mostly within courts, big trade companies, and government officials. Thanks to the growing literacy rates, however, in the beginning of the eighteenth century early versions of newspapers (often called newsbooks or broadsheets) reached wider circulation across Europe. This was especially true in France, where, from the 1750s on, the newspaper industry grew substantially. Between 1751 and 1788, more than two-hundred-and-fifty newspapers were launched in France, most of them based in Paris.[37] Starr notes that this was a large number compared to the number of newspapers in England and Germany in the same period.[38] At the time when English newspapers did not surpass four thousand subscribers on average, the *Gazettte de France* already reached over twelve hundred by 1780).[39] Yet, the many periodicals which appeared in France did not report political news; they targeted housewives, artists, and professionals. Despite the impressive circulation of French newspapers, the Privilege System and French censorship made sure to repress most political publications.[40] Thus, when it came to the political happenings of the day, the French readers were, to a large extent, kept in the dark right up to the French Revolution.[41]

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[37] Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France 1789-1799*, (Duke University Press, 1990), 18.

[38] Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*, (Basic Books, 2004), 41.

[39] Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutinary News: The Press in France 1789-1799*, (Duke University Press, 1990), 18.

[40] Ibid., 19.

[41] The growing number of readers and the rising number of standardized print products also conjured up a literary underground. Robert Darnton describes that, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, an underground market of clandestine publications came into being in the shadows of the official legal market. The works which were sold in this market – under the codename "philosophical books" – were a mix of works considered to be offensive to the general morals and pirated editions of legal books. Some of the best-known French works of the century were printed in Amsterdam, London, Geneva, and other printing centers and only later smuggled into France.

The Emergence of the Enlightenment Literary Market

The growing literacy rates and the rising number of standardized print products created the preconditions necessary for the emergence of a literary market. The growing reading public began replacing patronage as the main source of authors' revenue. As the literary market expanded, the privilege system weakened, and writers were presented with more and more opportunities to live by their pens. Consequently, in the 1730s publishers began to pay authors for their works directly. Nonetheless, despite the handsome sums publishers were willing to pay authors, especially after 1750, even the most esteemed writers of the period, figures such as Rousseau, Diderot, and d'Alembert, continued to struggle financially.[42]

The payments Rousseau received for his works are of particular interest in the context of the discussion here. For the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) (which won the first place in the Academy of Dijon's essay competition) Rousseau received no payment at all. However, two years later he did receive a considerable sum for his opera, *The Village Soothsayer*. He received six hundred from his publisher and twenty-four hundred as a grant from Louis XV (who also attended the opening). Two years later, Rousseau submitted the *Second Discourse* to the Academy of Dijon, but this time he did not wait for the results of the competition. Upon finishing the manuscript, he sent it out for publication for the sum of six hundred livres. Later on, from his best-selling novel, *Julie* (1761,) Rousseau earned twenty-one-hundred livres. For the *Social Contract*, published a year later, he received a thousand livres, and for *Emile* – which was

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Montesquieu's, *Persian Letters* (1721) was published in Geneva; Voltaire's *Philosophical Letters* (1733) was published first in London; almost all of Rousseau's works were published in Amsterdam. See, Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, (Harvard University Press, 1982), 23, 140-147.

[42] Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, (Harvard University Press, 1982), 237.

a much larger work – he got six thousand livres. All in all, during his thirty-year career as a writer, Rousseau managed to receive handsome sums for his works. Yet, although he was one of the most esteemed and best-selling authors of the century, until late in his life he did not make a living solely from his writings; he continued to serve as a music copier and a tutor.

The growing sums that authors received for their work in the latter part of the century was primarily thanks to the institution of the first copyright laws. Until the last decades of the eighteenth century, French authors could not earn a living by their pens simply because they were not considered to be the owners of their works. Before the institution of copyright laws, the publisher/bookseller would pay a fee to the author based on the profit anticipated from the sales of the first edition. This onetime fee made the publisher the *de facto* the owner of the work. The idea that the author continued to own his work after selling it to the publisher was considered absurd. Once the publisher/bookseller made payment, the publisher/bookseller would get the profits from all future sales. Consequently, if anyone would make a profit from books, it would be the publisher rather than the author.[43] Yet, in the 1760s and 1770s a series of decrees, surprisingly issued by the court and the king, established the rights of authors over their works.[44]

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[43] Marc-Michel Ray, Rousseau's Dutch publisher/bookseller, for example, estimated that for the first edition of *Julie* he would make five times the sum he originally paid Rousseau for the manuscript. As we will see later, the novel exceeded all expectations and turned out to be one of the bestsellers of the century.

[44] These rulings sparked an intense public debate in France of the time. Whereas some were advocating for freeing the author from the guilds' monopoly, others argued that an unregulated literary market would compromise the quality of literary products and leave the authors at the mercy of capitalist interests. This last argument was put forward by none other than Diderot in the *Letter on the Commerce of Books* which was commissioned by the guilds in defense of their case. See, John Lough, *Writer and Public in France: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, (Clarendon Press, 1978), 195-198.

Although copyright laws were not fully implemented in France before the 1810s, as the century progressed, subsequent rulings gradually increased the legal and financial independence of authors.[45]

The legal recognition of authors and their growing financial independence revolutionized their stature. Whereas in the beginning of the century authors were still mostly considered as merely scribblers or heralds of patrons at best, from the 1730s they were gradually recognized as independent cultural agents. By the time of the High Enlightenment, figures such as Voltaire, the Comte de Buffon, and Montesquieu came to be seen as icons and a source of inspiration to young men and women who flocked to Paris pursing the dream of becoming the next rulers of the Republic of Letters. Voltaire's account of men of letters in his entry in the *Encyclopédie* to "*gens de lettres*" as a classless aristocracy united by its intellectual merits and moral convictions captures the high esteem authors had acquired at the time.

This new generation of writers utilized their newly-acquired independence to create literary products of a new kind. Men such as Voltaire, Étienne Condillac (1715-1780), Diderot the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), and others produced dictionaries, journals, novels, and plays that challenged the existing social and religious orthodoxy. They were all using print-language as an independent medium which was connecting human beings regardless of their social class. The most groundbreaking product of this kind was Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. The twenty-eight volume *Encyclopédie*, published between 1751 and 1772, came

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[45] The most significant step in the legal recognition of the author was a surprising ruling by the French court in 1761 deciding to grant La Fontaine's granddaughters the *privilège* to publish her grandfather's works despite the fact that he had sold it earlier to his publisher. See Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, (Verso, 1997), 165.

in compact quarto format designed so that readers could carry each volume easily to the coffeehouses, salons, or their bedrooms – where they could read them in private.[46] The most famous authors of the time were recruited to contribute to the publication of the *Encyclopédie* that was shaping up to be a self-contained typographical body of knowledge. Although philosophers since the time of Aristotle constructed intellectual matrixes of the concrete word, the *Encyclopédie* was unique in attempting to rearrange the boundaries between the known and the unknown through a print product designed for popular consumption.[47] This encyclopedia was an attempt to create the world anew in the space between writers and readers.

In the article Diderot wrote for the *Encyclopédie* he expressed the aims of his enterprise:

> In truth, the aim of the *encyclopédie* is to collect all the knowledge scattered over the face of the earth, to present its general outlines and structure to the men with whom we live, and transmit this to those who will come after us, so that the work of past centuries may be useful to the following centuries, that our children, by becoming more educated, may at the same time become more virtuous and happier, and that we may not die without having deserved well of the human race.[48]

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[46] Rietje van Vliet, "Print and Public in Europe 1600-1800," in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 253.

[47] This was argued by Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (Basic Books, 1984), 192.

[48] Quoted by Isaak Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, (Penguin, 1995), 17-18.

Figure 2: Extract of the front piece of the *Encyclopédie* (1772) drawn by Charles-Nicolas Cochin and engraved by Benoît-Louis Prévost showing reason and philosophy (the two figures on the right) tearing the veil from truth (the figure at the center)

Figure 3: The title page of the *Encyclopédie*
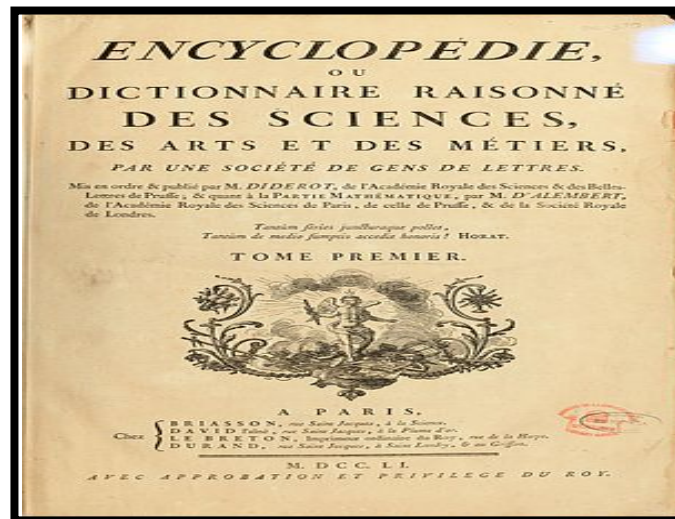
As long as a literary market did not exist and writers depended on patronage, print language remained attached to the existing social hierarchies. As the literary market expanded, however, the hold the Ancien Regime had on print weakened. As a growing number of independent writers produced more and more print products such as the *Encyclopédie*, designed

to appeal to the growing reading public. Inch by inch, they dragged print language from the dark halls of ministries and colleges and into the center of the public stage. Consequently, print language transformed into a medium of a new kind – one through which men of letters could convey their private thoughts and feelings directly to the reading public.

Rousseau's Media Theory

Rousseau was among the first generation of writers who witnessed firsthand the guilds, censors, and patrons giving way to the emerging literary market. What were his views about the changing media culture of his time? Answering that requires a look at Rousseau's treatment of language.

Rousseau imagined the first language as consisting of cries of stress, moans of joy, and groans of pleasure which flow naturally from the human throat.[49] The first language, according to Rousseau, was a pure expression of human sentiment: "…love, hatred, pity, anger wrung their first voices … it would have to answer to its primary aim, and convey to the ear as well as to the understanding the almost inescapable impressions of passion seeking to communicate itself."[50] Rousseau describes the first language as an oral one, born together with music.[51] He maintains that even in the later stages of its development, the first language still managed to articulate pure

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[49] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 256-6.

[50]Ibid., 255.

[51]Ibid., 253.

human sentiment.[52] For Rousseau, the first language was an oral mode of communication that facilitated man's perfect liberty as was found in the state of nature when his desires still corresponded to his needs.[53]

Nonetheless, Rousseau points to the first language as also the first step in man's departure from nature. The desire to communicate with fellow human beings follows the understanding that individuals share with them, common traits which may allow them to overcome nature altogether: "The earth nourishes men; but after the first needs have dispersed them other needs bring them back together, and it is only then that they speak and cause others to speak about them."[54] Man's understanding that he shares his needs with other men leads him to form vocabulary and grammar in order to regulate his use of language. Once he does this, language no longer expresses the human emotive nature but rather the human need to overcome the elements. The first natural language, which conveyed man's connection to nature, turns into a structured one that manifests man's departure from nature. Soon enough, language transforms into the basis of the power relations between men:

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[52] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 253.

[53] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140.

[54] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 273.

In proportion as Mankind spread, difficulties multiplied together with men. Differences of terrain, cimate, season, could have forced them to introduce differences into their ways of living … This repeated interaction of the various beings with himself as well as with one another must naturally have engendered in man's mind perception of certain relations. The relations which we express by the **words**, great, small, strong, weak, fast, slow, fearful, bold, and other such ideas, compared as need required and almost without thinking about it … (emphasis added).[55]

Rousseau describes in detail the transformation of the first natural language into a functional mode of communication comprised of definite articles. He deems this process as natural to all languages. As time goes by, all spoken languages become more exact, clearer, but also muted and cold.[56] The ability to distinguish between subjects and predicates and to attribute adjectives to objects manifests man's departure from nature and lays the ground for the inequality among men: "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to <u>say</u> **this is mine**, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true

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[55] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 162.

[56] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 256.

founder of civil society" (underline added).[57] It is in this moment that the natural language all human beings share in the state of nature morphs into an artificial system of domination.

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Interestingly enough, Rousseau saw spoken and written language as two disparate modes of communication: "The art of writing does not in any way depend on that of speaking. It depends on needs of a different nature...."[58] While Rousseau thought that spoken language may allow human beings to express their natural needs, he deemed written language as an alienating system of signs which represents the external world.

Just as in the case of spoken language, Rousseau thought that written language develops through history. He describes the first written language as a pictographic system of signs which directly denoted objects in the world. One example of this type of language is the Egyptian hieroglyphs. This system of signs, according to Rousseau, was used by savage man in the later stages of his development, as it must be grounded in some conventions, however basic they may be.[59] In the second written language, pictures give way to conventional characters. Each character represents an object, an idea, or a proposition. The example Rousseau gives for this type of written language is the Chinese writing system. Since writing systems of this sort require

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[57]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 164.

[58] Ibid., 258.

[59] Ibid, 256.

shared conventions of a higher level than the first, Rousseau associates them with what he terms "barbaric people."[60]

In the third, and most advanced writing system, the speaking voice is broken into sounds, each is represented by a particular letter. This system was first invented by the Phoenicians and later adopted by the ancient Greeks, since they were both traders who needed a universally accepted system of signs that people speaking different languages could understand. To do so, they created the first alphabetic system in which each letter corresponds to a particular sound. According to Rousseau, this phonetic writing system serves as basis of all Western languages, and is used by all "civilized people."[61]

The discussion so far begs the question: Given the fact that Rousseau saw spoken language and written language as two disparate modes of communication, which one of them was morally higher? One would expect Rousseau as a professional writer to stress the merits of written language over spoken language. However, as a musician who thought about man's cry of nature as the most pure human expression, Rousseau was, in fact, much more suspicious of the written word than of the spoken one. He maintains that writing, in fact, does not fix language, but adulterates it.[62] This is so due to the essential nature of written language as a mode of communication that transforms either visual objects or sounds into linguistic signs. As such, written language is always one step removed from either the human voice or the actual object it

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[60] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 257.

[61] Ibid., 256-57.

[62] Ibid, 261-62.

depicts. Yet, Rousseau thinks that what written language loses in expressiveness, it gains in precision. Thus, Rousseau considers written language as best suited to communicate general ideas, whereas spoken language remains the only means of communicating pure human sentiment.[63]

This discussion raises a further question: While it is clear why Rousseau holds a skeptical view of the first and second pictographic writing systems – as they are unrelated to sounds – why was he so critical of the phonetic alphabet? One would think that Rousseau would single out the phonetic alphabet as the only writing system which may express the human passions since, after all, it is based on speech. The reason Rousseau maintains his skepticism in regard the phonetic alphabet is found in the historical circumstances in which the Western alphabet developed. First, Western alphabet systems originated not from poets who yearned to express their feelings but from traders who sought to maximize their profits. Rousseau takes pains to prove that Homer, being the greatest Greek poet, did not even know how to write.[64] Rousseau further argues that the detached nature of the ancient Greek alphabet was amplified in later European languages (written as well as spoken) since they were originally set to communicate the need of people living in those societies to survive in harsh climates. French, English, and German do not convey warm human affection, but the functional needs which allowed these societies to endure cold

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[63] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 260.

[64] Ibid., 261-62.

winters, long droughts, and extreme weather conditions.[65] It is those historical circumstances, according to Rousseau, that turned Western phonetic alphabetic systems into things tainted in their very nature.

All in all, it is evident that Rousseau maintained a highly skeptical approach to language as a mode of communication. He attributes to language a key role in the departure of man from the state of nature, and his descent into civil society. Whereas he thought about the first spoken language as a musical instrument tied to the human soul, he deemed modern written languages to be mere tools of oppression. Thus, for Rousseau, the history of language tells the story of a slow degeneration of a mode of communication which started off as the purest means of human expression and ended up as a cold, detached, and functional system of signs. This is more so in regards to written language which Rousseau views as a tainted mode of communication in all its forms. Whereas spoken language was once able to express undiluted human feelings, from the very beginning written language was removed from human nature.

Rousseau vs the Enlightenment Literary Market

Rousseau's critical approach to language – especially written language – suggests that his literary and philosophical works were, in fact, outright indictments of the up-and-coming Enlightenment literary market of his time. It indicates that Rousseau's critique of the modern arts and sciences was an expression of his larger critique of the media that conveyed them – written language. What follows will make clear that Rousseau did not simply reject the content of all

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[65] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages in which Something is said about Melody and Musical Imitation" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 279-81.

modern arts and sciences, but he was critical of language, especially written ones, as a mode of communication.

Rousseau's approach to language was the lens through which he saw the modern arts and sciences. This is clearly seen in the *Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences* (1750), in which he points to the artificial nature of language as the reason for the degradation of morals in modern society: "Before art had molded our behavior, and taught our passions to speak artificial language, our morals were rude but natural."[66] It is the alienating nature of language that leads Rousseau to conclude that all modern arts and sciences did not liberate man but enslaved him:

> So long as government and law provide for the security and well-being of men in their common life, the arts, literature, and the sciences, less despotic through perhaps more powerful, fling garlands of flowers over the chains which weigh them down. They stifle in men's breasts that sense of original liberty for which they seem to have been born; cause them to love their own slavery.[67]

In the preface to his play, *Narcissus, or the lover of Himself* (henceforth *Narcissus*) (1752-3), Rousseau goes on to attack literate society: "A taste for letters always heralds the beginning of corruption in a people, and very rapidly accelerates it."[68] His suggestion is to

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[66] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences" in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, (Everyman, 1993), 6.

[67] Ibid., 4-5.

[68] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Narcissus, or the lover of Himself" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 97.

cleanse society from the written word by: "… burn[ing] our libraries, clos[ing] our Academies, our Colleges, our Universities."[69]

Rousseau's treatment of books in *Emile* and *Julie* further points to the extent in which his denunciation of the arts and sciences was grounded in his general rejection of written language: "I hate books. They only teach one to talk about what one does not know," Rousseau states in *Emile*.[70] Rousseau's resentment of books leads him to forbid Emile to open a book before the age of twelve: "In thus taking away all duties from children, I take away the instruments of their greatest misery – that is, books. Reading is the plague of childhood …."[71] By the same token, in *Julie* (1761) Rousseau dedicates the first and second prefaces to stressing the dangers of books: "When it comes to morality, no reading, in my view, will do worldly people any good."[72]

In his later years, Rousseau's critique of books seems to have become even more extreme. In the *Confessions* and the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1777-1778) he describes his profession, as a man of letters, as a terrible mistake.[73] In his final years, the few friends who made an effort to visit Rousseau testify that, towards the end of his life, he gave up books and decided to cease reading all together.[74]

One prominent theme throughout Rousseau's writings is his critique of professional authors. In *Narcissus* Rousseau states: "All lettered people have at all times been corrupt; all

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[69] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Narcissus, or the lover of Himself" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 96.

[70] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or on Education*, (Basic Books, 1979), 184.

[71] Ibid., 116.

[72] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New* Heloise *Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 13.

[73] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitery Walker*, (Penguin, 1979), 11.

[74] Ibid., 10.

ignorant peoples have been virtuous: in a word, only the learned are vicious, only a man who knows nothing is virtuous."[75] In *Emile* Rousseau equates professional men of letters with the luxury trades which artificially extend human need thereby further divorcing man from his nature. For Rousseau, being an author was no different from being a blacksmith.[76] He centers his critique particularly on the *philosophes*. Throughout his works Rousseau repeats his view of their works as just another expression of the slavish salon culture of the time. According to him, instead of taking advantage of the new literary market to strike a genuine connection with the growing reading public, Diderot's, Friedrich Melchior Grimm's, and d'Alembert's principles and rules turned out to be as authoritative as the systems they set out to tear down. In *Julie*, Rousseau urges his readers to put aside all philosophical works: "Let us therefore not go searching in books for principles and rules that we more surely find within ourselves. Let us leave aside all these idle disputes of the philosophers about happiness and virtue ....."[77]

In the *Confessions* Rousseau makes the most explicit attack on the literary market of his time. He explains that writing for profit further taints written language as a mode of communication. He maintains that he himself continued to work as a tutor and music copier not because he could not make a living as a writer but as a result of a conscious decision not to sell

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[75] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Narcissus, or the lover of Himself" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 96.

[76] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or on Education*, (Basic Books, 1979), 184.

[77] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse* , (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 47.

his pen.[78] In a revealing passage Rousseau lays out his critique of the Enlightenment literary market:

> I might have thrown myself entirely into the most lucrative path, and, instead of lowering my pen to copying I might have devoted it entirely to writing, which, in the flight which I had taken, and which I felt myself capable of continuing, might have enabled me to live in opulence, even in luxury … But I felt that writing for bread would soon have stifled my genius and destroy my talents … Nothing great, nothing vigorous can proceed from a pen that is entirely venal … I have always felt that [the] position of an author is not and cannot be distinguished or respectable, except in so far as it is not a profession. It is too difficult to think nobly, when one thinks only in order to live. In order to be able and to venture to utter great truths, one must not be dependent on success. I threw my books

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[78] Rousseau's critical views of the literary market also led him to question the reading habits of the time. From Rousseau's many comments about reading we learn that, given his skeptical view of written language, Rousseau believed that the fashionable, so-called extensive mode of reading further detached the reader from his true inner self. Saint-Preux warns Julie about the dangers of engaging with a variety of texts:

> … many people … read much and reflect little, because being wrong-headed, they garner nothing so bad as what they produce by themselves … many people for whom this method would be quite harmful and who need to read much and reflect little, because being wrong-headed, they garner nothing so bad as what they produce by themselves. (*Julie* 46-47)

In the time when most literary products were produced for "wrong-headed" readers, Rousseau was still writing to the old intensive reader. Saint-Preux teaches Julie the correct way of reading a book: "*I recommend just the opposite to you, for what you put into your readings is better than what you find in them, and your active mind makes from the book another book, sometimes better than the first*" (*Julie*, 46-7). He adds: "*To read little, and reflect much on our readings … is the way to digest them* [books] *well*" (*Julie*, 46).

amongst the public with the sure consciousness of having spoken for the general good, without caring for anything else.[79]

Imprinting the Cry of Nature

The discussion so far raises a tough question that goes straight to the heart of Rousseau's philosophy: How can Rousseau's critique of written language – as a medium – and his scolding of professional men of letters and his choice to dedicate his life to the written word be reconciled? A clue to the answer is found in the way Rousseau saw his own writings.

Rousseau's numerous comments about his works make clear that he considered them as a mode of communication of a new kind. Unlike the other authors of the day, he asserted, authors whom he denounced as either manifestations of abstract knowledge or engenderers of synthetic pleasure, Rousseau strived to utilize his autonomy as an author and the literary market of his time to lay out before the reading public his most intimate thoughts and feelings: "I desire to set before my fellows the likeness of a man in all the truth of nature, and that man is myself. Myself alone!" he proclaims in the opening lines of the *Confessions*.[80] Rousseau utilized the direct channel that had opened between authors and the reading public thanks to the Enlightenment literary market to turn print-language into, in the language of Marshall McLuhan, an "extension of his nervous system."

Yet, an obvious difficulty was that Rousseau was bound to engage the public by using the French alphabet which, as we just saw, he thought of as a degenerate medium in its very nature.

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[79] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1996), 391-2.

[80] Ibid., 4.

One way of overcoming this obstacle was Rousseau's habit of speaking directly to his readers in his own voice. In *Emile* Rousseau turns to his readers and asks them:

> Readers, always remember that he who speaks to you is neither a scholar nor a philosopher, but a simple man, a friend of the truth, without party, without system … I believe that I cannot better put you in a position to judge of them than often to report to you some example of the observations which suggested them to me.[81]

In the same personal tone, Rousseau reaches out to his readers in the *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theater*: "I do not **speak** here to the few but to the public, nor do I attempt to make others think but rather to explain my thought clearly."[82] (Emphasis added)

Rousseau opens the *Social Contract* (1761) by stating:

> I shall be asked if I am a prince or a legislator, to write on politics. I answer that I am neither … As I was born a citizen of a free State, and a member of the Sovereign, I feel that, however feeble the influence my **voice** can have on public affairs, the right of voting on them makes it my duty to study them.[83] (Emphasis added)

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[81] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1996), 110.

[82] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter to M. D'Alembert on Spectacles" in *Politics and the Arts*, (Cornell University Press, 1960), 6.

[83] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract" in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, (Everyman, 1993), 181.

In all these instances Rousseau makes use of the phonetic alphabet to reproduce his own *voice* in ink and paper: He describes his craft as a writer in the following way: "The art of **speaking** to and **hearing** from absent people, the art of communicating our feelings, our wills, our desires to them at a distance without a mediator." (Emphasis added)[84] By instilling his voice in his works, Rousseau turns reading from a mechanical activity into an intimate and personal one. He transforms his works into channels through which he strived to build a genuine relationship with the reading public. In the second preface to *Julie*, which Rousseau writes as a dialogue between himself and his publisher, he proclaims his conviction to expose himself in full before the reading public:

> **R**. Own it, Monsieur? Does an honorable man hide when he addresses the public? Does he dare to print what he would not dare to acknowledge? I am the Editor of this book, and I shall name myself Editor.
>
> **N**. You will name yourself? You?
>
> **R**. Myself.
>
> **N**. What! You will put your name on it?
>
> **R**. Yes, Monsieur.
>
> **N**. Your real name? Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in full?
>
> **R**. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in full.
>
> **N**. You wouldn't! What will people say?
>
> **R**. Whatever they will. I put my name at the head of the collection, not to claim it as mine; but to answer for it. If it contains evil, let it be imputed to me; if good, I do not plan to boast of it. If the book is found to be bad in itself, that is

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[84] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or on Education*, (Basic Books, 1979), 116.

all the more reason for putting my name on it. I do not wish to be thought better than I am."[85]

As this exchange suggests, Rousseau saw his relationship with the reading public as no different from any corporal relationship between flesh and blood human beings. He did not think of himself as an author, about his works as books, or about those who engaged with them as readers. His works were sound bites of himself, and his readers were his friends, enemies, and lovers. As this was the case, Rousseau showed the way for his readers to experience through his works an array of emotions, something which comes with all human relationships. They could feel sad, lonely, or they might even fall in love. It was as if in his works Rousseau strived to recreate savage man's cry of nature, this time in the space between himself and the reading public. Darnton captures lucidly the novelty of Rousseau's use of the printed word:

> Rousseau's rhetoric opened up a new channel of communication between two lonely beings, the writer and the reader, and rearranged their roles … By confessing his moral failures, he underlined his honesty and at the same time created an ideal Jean Jacques who could speak directly from the heart to the ideal reader envisioned in the text. Author and reader triumphed together over the artifice of literary communication … Rousseau did not aspire to be novelesque. He wanted to reach through literature into life, his own and that of his readers.[86]

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[85]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 19.

[86] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (Basic Books, 1984), 231-34.

Julie, or the New Héloïse

Rousseau put into practice his unique approach to the printed word in the most sophisticated way in his epistolary novel, *Julie*. When *Julie* was published in 1761, it immediately became a sensation. According to L. S. Mercier, the demand for the novel was such that, in the first months after its publication, bookstores in Paris rented copies of it by the day.[87] One-hundred-and-fifteen French editions and ten English editions were published by 1800. Darnton notes that *Julie* was, perhaps, the biggest bestseller of the eighteenth century in France, surpassing Richardson, Goethe, and Voltaire.[88]

As the title of the novel indicates, it was a modern version of a medieval exchange of letters between Pierre Abélard (1079-1142) – a French scholastic philosopher – and his brilliant student Héloïse (1090-1162) – acclaimed for her own learning and poetry. Abélard and Héloïse were as famous in eighteenth century France as Romeo and Juliet are today in the English-speaking world. For the typical French person, the couple stood as a symbol of romantic, tragic faith.[89] The exchange of letters between Abélard and Héloïse (whose author is unknown) recounts in a first-person voice their tragic love story.[90]

In *Julie*, Rousseau transmutes the well-known medieval love story to the Geneva of his day. In Rousseau's version, Julie, a simple and virtuous Genevan girl, takes the role of Héloïse,

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[87] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (Basic Books, 1984), 242.

[88] Ibid., Ibid.

[89] Ibid., III.

[90] On the recent developments in the debate about the source of the letters see *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, (Penguin Books, 1974), XII-XXXII.

while Saint-Preux, a young French traveling scholar, takes that of Abélard. As in the original version, Abélard is hired by Julie's family to serve as her tutor and soon after the two embark on a passionate love affair. The love affair serves Rousseau as a hook by which he strikes a heart-to-heart relationship with his readers.

Rousseau's first step in doing so is the design of the title page of the novel. On March 6, 1760, Rousseau instructed his printer/publisher Rey to make sure to use a large typeface for Julie's name so that it would appear bigger than "*ou la nouvelle Héloïse*." On July 17, 1761, he further instructed him to add a second title to the novel, *Letters from Two Lovers Living in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps* [*Lettres de deux amans habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes*]. He ends the letter by stressing the importance of following accurately his instructions: "it is absolutely essential to find the means to make the single or double title contain all I have put in it."[91]

First, by highlighting the common name, Julie, at the expense of the iconic Heloise, Rousseau gives his readers a first indication that the novel is about everyday people rather than about mythical figures. Thus, from the very beginning Rousseau sets the agenda: to use print-language as a popular means of communication which transports his readers not into a world of fiction, but into real life. Yet, the second title was as important as the first. It served as a further indication for the reader that the novel was not really a novel but a real exchange of letters, which Rousseau did not write, but merely collected. In the opening lines of the first preface, Rousseau continued to spread doubts as to his role in the novel: "Although I bear only the title of Editor here, I have myself had a hand in the book, and I do not disguise this. Have I done the

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[91] On the publication process of *Julie* see Philip Stewart "Introduction" in *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), xiv.

whole thing, and is the entire correspondence a fiction? Worldly people, what matters it to you? It is surely a fiction for you";[92] "It is not a Novel … It is a Collection of Letters," Rousseau insists in the second preface to *Julie*.[93] Thanks to Rousseau's effort to move the novel closer to the readers' daily lives and wipe out his authorial fingerprints, many of *Julie's* readers believed that what they were reading was not a work of fiction but an exchange of letters between two flesh-and-blood lovers. This, in turn, proved to be instrumental in Rousseau's ability to use print-language to reach the most personal thoughts and feelings of his readers.

Looking inside the novel makes it evident that the epistolary novel was a perfect genre within which Rousseau could use print language to strike a personal bond with his readers. He did that by assuming the voice of Julie and Saint-Preux and speaking through them directly to the reader. Doing so allowed Rousseau to produce an intense effect on his readers. This is especially seen in the first part of the novel.

Reading the first part of *Julie* is like falling in love. Right at the beginning Julie and Saint-Preux literally bathe the paper with their emotions. Rousseau makes use of the epistolary form to let the reader experience firsthand the intensity of first love. Gazing through Saint-Preux's eyes at Julie, readers are dazzled by her beauty; they can sense her passion for him. He is willing to trade his life for a single kiss; she prays to heaven to unite with his beautiful soul; her heart pounds faster every time she lays her eyes on him. When their hands touch, a tremor goes through their young bodies; his eyes meet hers, and they immediately shy away; a sigh escapes her, leaving them both embarrassed.

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[92] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 3.

[93] Ibid., 9. The second preface was not included in the first edition of the novel.

In the *Confessions* Rousseau gives us a peek on the writing process that enabled him to take the role of the two Genevan lovers and fill their letters with sweet words of love. Rousseau first describes the way he produced the many touching portrayals of nature found within the novel: "…I set aside my mornings for copying as I had always done, and my afternoons for walking, armed with my little notebook and pencil; for, as I had never been able to write or think freely, except sub divo." (Rousseau used the phrase *sub Divo* to refer to the open air)[94] His next step was setting "[t]he two idols of my heart … love and friendship."[95] Then, Rousseau gave a human form to the two virtues. The ones Rousseau chooses are after his own personal taste: "I bestowed upon them two analogous, but different, characters; two faces, not perfect, but after my taste, lighted up by kindliness and sensibility."[96] Lastly, Rousseau placed the characters in the scenery of his childhood: "the birthplace of my poor mamma still possessed a special charm for me. The contrast of natural situations, the richness and variety of the landscape, the magnificence, the majesty of the whole, which enchants the senses, moves the heart, and elevates the soul ...".[97]

Even if *Julie* was not an autobiographical work per se, it is evident from Rousseau's account that Julie, Saint-Preux, and the others were made out of materials he drew from his own life. Whether it was the virtues he admired, the physical attributes he was attracted to, or the nostalgic scenery of his childhood, Rousseau based the typographical words of *Julie* on his own experience. He describes doing this thusly:

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[94] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1996), 393.

[95] Ibid., 418.

[96] Ibid., Ibid.

[97] Ibid., Ibid.

These fictions, by their constant recurrence, at length assumed greater consistency, and fixed themselves in my brain under a definite shape. It was then that it occurred to me to give expression upon paper to some of the situations which they offered me, and, recalling all the feelings of my youth, to a certain extent, to the desire of loving, which I had never been able to satisfy, and by which I felt myself devoured.[98]

The personal tone and the epistolary form allow Rousseau – cloaked by the literary characters – to engender a deep empathy in his readers. The reader cannot resist relating to the honest emotions which flow from Rousseau's pen as he delves into the role of the two young lovers. Yet, as readers engross themselves in Julie's and Saint-Preux's love affair, they are waiting for something bad to happen. Well-aware of the tragic faith of Abélard and Heloise, the reader cannot help but noticing a sense of looming danger Rousseau slowly builds up as the novel progresses: "My Julie, look out for yourself," Claire, Julie's cousin and best friend, warns her early on.[99] The tension between the reader's bird's eye view and the limited perspective of the literary characters accumulates as the story pushes forward. In an ominous premonition Julie writes to her lover: "Some sad foreboding arises in my breast and cries to me that we are enjoying the only happy times Heaven may have allotted us. For the future I can glimpse only absence, tempests, troubles, contradictions."[100] The more readers are captivated by the emotions

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[98] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1996), 420.

[99] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 36.

[100] Ibid., 42.

that radiate from the text early on, the more helpless they feel as they watch the love story reaching its inevitable tragic end.

Sure enough, towards the end of the first part of the novel the love affair takes a bad turn. The reader is left helpless as Julie's father finds out about the affair. Consequently, Saint-Preux is forced to leave the family household, but not before Julie finds out she is carrying his baby. In one of the most dramatic letters in the novel, Julie describes to her cousin Claire the events which took place when her father returned home upon learning about the affair and her pregnancy: " [M]y father entered my mother's room, his eyes flashing, his face inflamed; in a state, simply put, I had never seen him in"[101] When Julie's mother defends her fiercely (since she does not know about the affair) Julie, who listens through the doors, describes her shame and humiliation:

> Imagine the most excellent and most deceived of mothers speaking well of her guilty daughter, and the praising, alas! All the virtues she has lost, in the most honorable terms, or to put it better, the most humiliating. Picture an angry father, overflowing with offensive epithets, and who in all his rage does not let escape a single one that would indicate the slightest doubt about the purity of her who is torn by remorse and crushed by shame in his presence".[102]

Listening to her father's insults, Julie cannot contain herself and barges into the room. Her attempt to defend herself leads her father to lose his temper:

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[101] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 141.

[102] Ibid., 142.

At that instant, my father … whose wrath awaited only a pretext, rushed at your poor friend: for the first time in my life, I received a box on the ear which was not the last, and yielding to his transport with a violence equal to what its containment had cost in effort, he beat me mercilessly, although my mother had thrown herself between us, covered me with her body, and received some of the blows that were intended for me. Recoiling to elude them, I stumbled, fell, and my face hurtled into the foot of the table, making me bleed … My fall, my blood, my tears, those of my mother moved him. He lifted me up looking anxious and solicitous, and after sitting me on a chair, they both examined closely whether I was not hurt ".[103]

At this point, the empathy Rousseau carefully constructed early on in the novel becomes an emotional trap. In a matter of a few pages, the sugary love affair turns into a source of extreme emotional stress. As readers move on in the text, the printed word is no longer a source of enjoyment, but entangles them in an array of intricate feelings. As the novel continues, Rousseau enmeshes the reader more and more in a web of compound relationships. In each section, in each letter, Rousseau makes sure to create a new situation which fills his readers with a gallery of thorny emotions: rage, resentment, spite, and guilt – all generated in the space between the reader and the printed word. The more enchanted readers are with the love affair early on in the novel, the more disturbed they feel later on.

In one of the dramatic highs of the novel, after Julie forces Saint-Preux to move away, he confronts her, and fills her with shame and guilt:

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[103] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 143.

How has the sacred fire died out in your pure soul? How have you lost the taste for those celestial pleasures which you alone were capable of feeling and returning? Answer me, now, deceived or deceitful Lover … Where are those vain expectations with which you so often baited my naïve credulity? Where is that holy and desired union, the sweet object so ardently wished for, with which your pen and your mouth flattered my wishes? Alas! … Angels of Heaven! I would have scorned your fate. I would have been the happiest of beings … Alas! Now I am nothing, a moment has taken everything away.[104]

The climax of the novel comes at the very end, when, after saving one of her children from drowning, yet suffering deadly injuries herself, Julie picks up her pen and with her last effort, bids goodbye to her lover in the only way she knows – through writing him one last letter:

Farewell, farewell, my sweet friend ….. Alas! I end my life as I began it, I say too much, perhaps, at this moment when the heart no longer dissembles a thing… Ah why should I shrink from expressing all that I feel? It is no longer I who speak to thee; I am already in death's embrace … But would my soul exist without thee, without thee what felicity should I enjoy? Nay, I leave thee not, I go to await thee. The virtue that separated us on earth shall unite us in the eternal abode. I die in

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[104] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 157.

this flattering expectation. Only too happy to pay with my life the right to love

thee still without crime, and to tell thee so one more time.[105]

Placing the emotional journey on which Rousseau takes the readers of *Julie* in the

broader context provided in this chapter so far suggests that in the novel Rousseau utilized his

autonomy as an author to transcend the alleged, muted and cold nature of the alphabetic signs

with the purpose of engendering in his readers heartfelt sentiments. Inserting his own voice into

the novel and presenting it as story taken from real life, Rousseau thought to turn the novel from

another print product circulating in the Enlightenment literary market to an extension of himself,

one through which he could reach out and touch the reading public.

The reactions Rousseau received from *Julie*'s readers when the novel was published

illustrate how successful he was in doing exactly that: "I dare not tell you the effect it made on

me," one female reader wrote to Rousseau. "Julie dying was no longer an unknown person, I

believed I was her sister, her friend, her Claire."[106] In another letter a retired army officer wrote

Rousseau about his experience of reading about Julie's death: "The reading created such a

powerful effect on me that I believe I would have gladly died during that supreme moment."

Another reader wrote: "One must suffocate, one must abandon the book, one must weep, one

must write you that one is choking with emotion and weeping."[107] In summarizing the extreme

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[105] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, (Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 610.

[106] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (Basic Books, 1984), 243.

[107] Ibid., ibid.

emotional reaction that the novel evinced in him, still another reader wrote: "One must die of pleasure after reading this book … or rather one must live in order to read it again and again."[108]

The Discourse on Inequality

Two months before Rousseau began working on *Julie*, he finished writing the *Second Discourse* (he wrote the discourse between November 1753 and June 1754). The discourse was Rousseau's answer to the question proposed by the Dijon Academy: What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorized by the natural law? Reading the *Second Discourse* in the context of the discussion so far indicates that the moral argument at the center of the discourse was based on the same sophisticated use of the Enlightenment literary market which Rousseau later made in *Julie*.

As in the case of *Julie*, in order to strike an emotive bond with his readers, Rousseau sets out to establish the authenticity of his account of the state of nature. He does so right at the opening section of the discourse by accusing all previous philosophers of never really reaching the state of nature, since what they were doing, according to him, was describing it by using notions derived from the later development of language. This practice led philosophers: "to ascribe to Man in the state of nature the notion of the Just and the Unjust, without bothering to show that he had to have this notion." Rousseau accuses philosophers of "transferr[ing] to the state of Nature ideas they had taken from society."[109] Challenging this practice, Rousseau

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[108] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (Basic Books, 1984), 242.

[109] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 132.

promises his readers to take them into the state of nature unmediated by language. He ventures to present to the reader the state of nature as it really was: "O Man, Whatever Land you may be from, whatever may be your opinions, listen; Here is your history such as I believed I read it, not in the Books by your kind, who are liars, but in Nature, which never lies."[110]

Rousseau's account of writing the *Second Discourse* in the *Confessions* show that, just as in the case of *Julie*, when he promised his readers he was going to "read nature," he meant that literally: "In order to consider this great subject at my ease, I went to Saint-Germain on a seven or eight days' journey . . . I buried myself in the forest, where I sought and found the picture of those primitive times, of which I boldly sketched the history."[111] Whereas the small Genevan town of Vevey provided Rousseau with the authentic scenery he needed in which to situate the literary figures in *Julie*, the woods of Saint-Germain provided him with the genuine experience he needed in order to transcend language, so to speak, and take his readers back in time to the state of nature.

Unlike the other philosophers who wrote about the state of nature, the practice of writing in nature allowed Rousseau to convey to his readers savage man's experience of the state of nature as if they were not reading about it in a book, as if they were not extracting knowledge about it from alienating alphabetic signs. Right from the beginning of the discourse, the reader gazes through savage man's eyes, "surveying that vast expanse of heaven."[112] Looking at the

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[110] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133.

[111] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1996), 378.

[112] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 134.

state of nature from savage man's eyes, the reader is soon confronted not by moral or philosophical questions but by the menial tasks of providing for physical needs. He sates his hunger, slakes his thirst; he runs, hides, hunts, and finally falls asleep exhausted at the foot of an oak. Rousseau lets the reader feel the state of nature through savage man's crude touch and sharp senses.[113] He allows him to sense the cold wind against his naked skin and the fright of facing a wild beast bare-handedly.[114] In these passages Rousseau disappears from the text. The reader is no longer a reader. As a result, readers can enthrall themselves with the figure of savage man. Voltaire captured the reading experience Rousseau generates in the *Second Discourse* when, after finishing reading it, he wrote to Rousseau: "One feels like walking on all fours after reading your work."[115]

Obviously, the *Second Discourse* is no epistolary novel, but a philosophical treatise. Nevertheless, as in the case of *Julie*, by assuming a first person voice, Rousseau was able to produce a personal connection between the reader and the pre-historic creator. After watching savage man in his most intimate moments, readers feel as if they know savage man through and through. This feeling leads the reader to empathize with the simplicity of savage man as he carries himself all with one, driven only by his essential needs and natural pity. Yet, as Rousseau leads readers to engross themselves in savage man's life in the state of nature, he utilizes the genuine bond he created between the reader and savage man to gradually build up a sense of looming danger. If, in the case of *Julie*, Rousseau built on his readers' knowledge of the tragic fate of Abélard and Héloïse in order to generate in them the feeling that something is about to go

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[113] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140.

[114] Ibid., 135.

[115] Quoted by Jean Guéhenno, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, (Routledge, 1966), 320.

wrong, in the *Second Discourse* he utilizes the contrast (both social and linguistic) between the state of nature and modern society to turn the discourse into an accident waiting to happen.

As the reader progresses through the text, the tension between the two levels of knowledge – that of the reader and that of savage man – grows. In the foreground of the text the reader remains confined to savage man's oblivious view, while in the background Rousseau allows the reader to look a bit further into the future and see that savage man is steadily heading towards a cliff. As in the case of *Julie*, the interplay between the two levels of knowledge engender in the reader strong feelings of helplessness. Rousseau's depictions of the slow, unintentional, almost accidental flight of savage man from the state of nature are frustrating to read:

> How many centuries perhaps elapsed before men were in a position to see any other fire than that in heaven? … What progress could Mankind make, scattered in the Woods among the Animals? … How much time and knowledge it took to find numbers, abstract words, Aorists, and all the tenses of Verbs, particles, Syntax, to connect Propositions, arguments, and to develop the entire Logic of Discourse?[116]

In these rhetorical questions, which Rousseau asks as savage man climbs out from the state of nature, he suggests that it could have been different if it were not for a series of mishaps that pulled savage man out of the state of nature. In the lengthy passages depicting man stumbling into society, Rousseau gives readers a feeling that they are watching a helpless spider

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[116] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 143, 144, 149.

getting entangled in its own web. If, in the opening passages of the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau ties the bond between the reader and savage man, in the later ones he leaves the reader to watch helplessly as the character approaches his inevitable demise. As in the case of Julie, The initial empathy Rousseau generates in the reader towards savage man turns out to be an emotional trap.

Towards the end of the first section, Rousseau gives the reader one last nostalgic look at savage man in the pure state of nature. Here is one last chance to feel empathy toward him:

> Wandering in the forests without industry, without speech, without settled abode, without war, and without ties, without any need of others of his kind and without any desire to harm them, perhaps even without ever recognizing any one of them individually, subject to few passions and self-sufficient, Savage man had only the sentiments and the enlightenment suited to this state, that he sensed only his true needs, looked only at what he believed it to be in his interest to see and that his intelligence made no more progress than his vanity.[117]

Rousseau immediately contrasts this moving portrayal of savage man with his sudden descent into society when the first man enclosed a piece of ground and said, "this is mine."[118] This is a moment of transition, both in terms of morals and of the spoken language conveying them. Once the first man is able to use language to communicate to others the notion of property, the state of nature vanishes, the first language evaporates. In line with this transition, from this

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[117] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" in Victor Gourevitch (ed.) *Rousseau: the Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 157.

[118] Ibid., 161.

point forward, Rousseau's authorial perspective raises above the first person account of the state of nature. Now, Rousseau speaks the language of the *philosophes*, the tainted language of morality.

Looking at Rousseau's accounts of the transition from the serene state of nature to the commotion of civil society, it is evident that he carefully constructed it to generate in the reader torrents of shame and guilt. These emotions are the product of the readers' understanding that it was the civilized incarnation of savage man's best qualities that led them to empathize with him early on, that brought about savage man's extinction. It is his free will which detached him from nature; his capacity to perfect himself that led him to be vain; his ability to love which turned into a desire for domination. If in *Julie* the passionate love radiating from the first part of the novel turns later on into the source of Julie's misfortune, in the *Second Discourse* the fine qualities which led the reader to empathize with savage man turn out to be the source of modern man's depravity. By making clear that the values by which the modern reader lives are the reason for savage man's demise, Rousseau shows the reader that every good deed he has ever done to ease his life and the lives of his dear ones – providing for his family, loving his wife, climbing up the social ladder – are the reasons why he cannot hope anymore to salvage savage man. The inverse relationship Rousseau draws between savage man and the modern reader is the engine animating the whole dialectical argument of the discourse. By transforming savage man's best qualities into modern man's worst vices, Rousseau shames and guilts the reader into buying his critique of modern society.

Conclusion

After more than two hundred years of professional authors, copyright rules, and literary markets, it is easy to miss the novelty of the reading experience Rousseau constructed in his works. Rousseau utilized the direct channel that had opened between the author and the reading public to appeal to his readers' most intimate thoughts and feelings. When eighteenth-century readers picked up Rousseau's works, those objects were not just books but pieces of cutting-edge technology that opened for them a way to reflect on their private lives. Rousseau's works were a new form of communication that brought to light a sense of self that, until then, was only expressed in private. They were public sites of a new kind that allowed readers to divulge a range of intimate emotions. Rousseau's works were like a modern-day version of the first pure language man used in the state of nature designed to connect readers to their truer selves.

Yet, the new form of subjectivity generated by Rousseau's works was not brought about by figures the readers actually knew, but by complete strangers. This emotional closeness Rousseau generated in his readers towards literary abstracts rendered a new perspective that underscored the similarities of constitution that all human beings share. Unlike the other literary products of the time, Rousseau's works made the reading experience an exemplar of the point that what defines human beings is not their distinct place in any class system, nor is it their capacity to grasp some abstract philosophical system, but it is the similarity of their inner worlds. Once readers developed feelings towards savage man, Julie, and the others, they had to acknowledge that they shared the same constitution not merely with their family and members of their class, but with the rest of mankind. Thus, Rousseau's works served as a mode of

communication that opened a way for the reading public to cut across all existing social hierarchies and embrace a new type of egalitarian subjectivity.[119]

Rousseau, of course, was not the only writer in his time who made use of the literary market to convey his private world. Habermas notes that the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere was due, to a large extent, to the numerous authors working in the eighteenth century who utilized their growing independence and the up-and-coming literary markets to communicate their private views on a variety of topics to the reading public.[120] Nonetheless, the analysis offered here illuminates the novelty of Rousseau's making use of the direct channel between authors and readers that had opened up to turn the subjective emotional world of his readers into the building block of society.

Nonetheless, the discussion here has indicated that the direct channel between authors and the reading public also opened up new ways for authors to use it deceptively. The readings of *Julie* and the *Second Discourse* offered here show that, at the root of Rousseau's *soi-disant* genuine use of print language, lies an act of deception. When Rousseau's readers fall in love with Julie, they in fact fall in love with him; when they are mesmerized by the pre-historic state of nature, they are actually enthralled by the forests of Saint-Germain, just outside of Paris. Hiding behind his pen, Rousseau pulls the strings of savage man, Julie, and the others and floods his readers with emotions. His purpose in doing so appears not merely to engender a genuine emotive experience in his readers but also to lure them into *his* fabricated world. Thus,

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[119] Lynn Hunt points to the reading experience of *Julie* and other epistolary novels of the time as the basis of the idea of human rights that first developed in that period. See Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights a History*, Norton, 2007.

[120] Jürgen, Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1989), 50.

Rousseau's egalitarian subjectivity came with the price of entangling his readers in his self-centered world. In that respect, whether the self-proclaimed authentic reading experience Rousseau generated with his works was geared towards empowering his readers to, as he said, "speak to absent people" or constructed to imprinting his worldview on their hearts and minds remains very much an open question.

This chapter has put forward the first case that demonstrates the importance of looking at the general media culture surrounding political ideas. The discussion has brought to light the complex relations between Rousseau's message, i.e., egalitarian subjectivity, and the medium that conveyed it, i.e., print language. While it is clear that the literary market opened the way for Rousseau to convey new ways of thinking about equality, it was his novel use of the literary market that was the basis of his egalitarianism. Hence, in the final analysis, the chapter shows Rousseau's egalitarianism to be a product of *and* a response to the emerging Enlightenment literary market of his time. The next chapter will examine whether it is possible to identify the same pattern of relationship between media and message in the very different German media culture of the mid-nineteenth century and the ideas of the young Marx and Engels.

Chapter Two

The "industrialists of Philosophy"[121]: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and the 'Discourse Network of 1840'

Less than thirty years had passed since Rousseau laid down for the last time his pen and his groundbreaking approach to print-language was already no longer a work of a lonely man. By 1800, Rousseau's revolt against the Enlightenment literary market turned into the foundation of one of the most influential movements in European cultural and intellectual life – the Romantic Movement. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, Europe was filled with artists, writers, and thinkers who produced all sorts of creations designed to speak to and of the emotional faculties of the reading public.

The Romantic Movement was especially influential in German-speaking lands, where in the Age of Goethe (i.e. the period of classicism [*Klassik*] or romanticism [*Romantik*]) it took a distinctive form. Friedrich Kittler uses the term 'discourse network of 1800' to conceptualize the network of technologies and institutions that sprang from Rousseau's emotive use of print-language in Germany of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.[122] The term 'discourse network' ('*Aufschreibesystem*') refers to the particular system of media technologies that select, store, and produce knowledge that over time turn into institutions that dominate social and political life. According to Kittler, around 1800 the sentimental attitude to print-language

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[121] Marx and Engels use this term (*Die philosophischen Industriellen*) to mock the Young Hegelians in the first pages of *The German Ideology*. Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 27.

[122] Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), 369.

developed into a 'discourse network of 1800' which dominated life in German-speaking countries from the time of Goethe (born in 1749) to the death of Hegel (1831).[123]

The romantic attitude to the printed word in German-speaking lands was, according to Kittler, the result of the changes taking place in the pedagogy of reading in Germany of the time. Whereas previous pedagogies of reading were based on the mechanical memorization of biblical passages, the new methods adopted in the latter part of the eighteenth century taught children to read by associating letters with sounds. While the old pedagogies forged an arbitrary link between written language and its biblical references, the new methods established a phonetic connection between alphabetic signs and sound frequencies. Thanks to the new pedagogies, written language was no longer perceived as a haphazard system of signs forced on the minds of students, but came to be held as an organic system acoustically linked with the natural world. Kittler further notes that since teaching children how to read became primarily the responsibility of mothers and female teachers in that period, written language came to be associated with erotic pleasure. He contends that the association of written language with sound frequencies uttered by women explains the romantic fascination with primal passions and Mother Nature. For Kittler, romanticism was a discursive production of the Mother.[124]

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[123] In his work *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* Kittler divides modern German history to three periods each governed by a particular discourse network: The first is the pre-modern 'Republic of Scholars' of the eighteenth century; the second is the 'discourse network of 1800'; and the third is the 'discourse network of 1900'. It is the second discourse network, of the romantic period, which interests us here.

[124] Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), 27-53.

Yet, to fully understand the nature of German romanticism, Kittler argues, we have to take into account the dominance of handwriting. Before the invention of the steam press handwriting was the most widespread mean of processing and storing knowledge. This rendered handwriting a universal character encompassing everything that was beyond the human senses.[125] Kittler argues that the phonetic link assumed between alphabetic signs and sound frequencies in Germany coupled by the dominance of handwritten language changed the attitude to the latter. Handwriting became thought of as an organic extension of man which carries esoteric knowledge. Kittler points to the domination of handwriting and its wildly held view as embodying intangible erotic knowledge to be the basis of all German cultural creations during the romantic period.[126] Whether it was Schelling's *Natur*, Herder's *Volk*, or Hegel's *Geist*, they all manifested the widely held outlook on alphabetic systems as intangible streams of meaning that combine shapes, sounds, and erotic pleasure. The dominant notions of the romantic period reflected the pre-industrialized perception of written language as a medium conveying intangible 'truths' that no technology could yet encapsulate. Thus, Kittler holds that the network of technologies and institutions that dominated German culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the source of the esoteric and metaphysical character of German arts and letters during the romantic period. He calls this network the 'discourse network of 1800'.[127]

Yet, Kittler goes beyond the realm of media and contends that over time the 'discourse network of 1800' became the basis of the authoritative social and political order in Germany. According to Kittler, the authority of social institutions such as the nuclear family, the state

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[125] Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), 70.

[126] Ibid., 163.

[127] Ibid., 108.

bureaucracy, and the church was a product of the particular type of masculine subjectivity produced and maintained by the 'discourse network of 1800'. Over time, the impalpable notions characterizing the 'discourse network of 1800' turned into the crude material forces informing the conservative establishments that controlled Germany in that era. For Kittler, the 'discourse network of 1800' was not merely a mode of communication but an all-encompassing system of domination aimed at programming people.[128]

The Industrialization of Print

Despite the dominance of 'discourse network of 1800' in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the technological advancements introduced to the printing industry at that time opened the way for new modes of communication which very soon challenged the basis of Romantic culture. Just like the Enlightenment literary market undermined the privilege system, censorship, and patronage fifty years earlier in France, the industrialization of print undercut the 'discourse network of 1800'.

The mechanical production of paper was the precondition for the industrialization of print language. Without the mechanization of papermaking, increase in printing output would not have been possible.[129] The paper machine invented by Nicolas Louis Robert (1761-1828) in 1798 increased the average output of paper production ten-fold. Thanks to the new papermaking machines, paper factories were able to produce in a day more than they could produce by hand in

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[128] Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), 173-183.

[129] Rob Banham, "The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970", in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds), *The Companion to the Histroy of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 273,

a week.[130] By the 1830s, mechanically produced paper was commonly used by most printing houses across Western Europe.[131]Henry Steinberg notes that following the arrival of Robert's new invention in England (1803), the price of paper fell by twenty-five percent by the early 1820s, and by half by the early 1840s.[132]

Yet, the most significant technological improvement in the industrialization of print was the mechanization of the press itself. Around 1800 Earl Stanhope (1753-1816) set up the first metal press. Compared to the old wooden press, the new metal press could print significantly larger editions, since it enabled large forms to be printed in one pull.[133] The first steam-driven press, built by Friedrich Koenig around 1810, soon followed. This new press could print more than a thousand sheets an hour, compared to around three hundred sheets an hour on the standard hand press. On November 29, 1814 the first issue of the *Times* of London was printed on a steam-powered press.

Later a number of improvements introduced to the steam-driven press significantly improved its operation. One improvement was the flat bed of type invented by Augustus Applegath in the late 1840s that allowed printers to increase the speed of production. Another was the horizontal rotary presses, first introduced in the United States, which mechanized the

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[130] Rob Banham, "The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970", in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds), *The Companion to the Histroy of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 275.

[131] Robert Clapperton, *The Papermaking Machine: Its Invention, Evolution and Development*, (Pergamon, 1967), 292.

[132] Henry Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, (The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 1996), 138.

[133] Rob Banham, "The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970", in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds), *The Companion to the Histroy of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 275.

time-consuming and labor intensive task of feeding paper to the press. All in all, all those inventions lowered the price of printing, and allowed printers to produce increasing quantities of print materials. This, in turn, opened the way for the commodification of print language which took the form of books and newspapers affordable to every pocket.

Despite the methodological challenges of measuring the precise literacy rates in Europe in the nineteenth century, it is clear that all of these technological developments were the result of a steady growth in literacy rates all over Western Europe. We saw in the last chapter that literacy rates in France increased significantly in the latter half of the eighteenth century. By 1850 already around seventy percent of the French adult male population and fifty-five percent of the adult female population were literate.[134] In 1800, an estimated sixty percent of the male population in England and Wales could read. By the mid-nineteenth century, about two-thirds of the population in England could read, and Richard Altick notes that around 1870 an estimated two-thirds of the British working class could read.[135] By the early 1890s more than ninety percent of the British male population was literate.[136] It has been estimated that in the 1760s fifteen percent of the German population could read. By the turn of the century the figure grew to

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[134] Martin Lyons, 'New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children,Workers', in Cavallo Guglielmo and Roger Charrtier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 313.

[135] Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 49.

[136] Simon Eliot, "From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890", In Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, (Blackwell, 2007), 293.

about twenty-five percent, and in the early 1830s it reached about forty percent.[137] By the end of the nineteenth century most Western European countries achieved mass literacy.

The growing literacy rates reflected the changing face of the European reading public. While reading was still very much an activity of scholars and 'gentlemen' at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the decline of Latin, the use of local vernacular languages, the stark reduction in prices of books, and the establishment of lending library systems all made literary commodities accessible to a wider audience. The decline of printing costs enabled the production of cheap novels, penny magazines, and chapbooks devoured by the middle class and the more educated among the working class. The gradual shortening of the working day in most European countries in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the establishment of workers' libraries and reading societies further expanded the availability of printed products for the working class. In the first decades of the nineteenth century publishers began focusing on women as a distinct reading group. Magazines such as *La Mode Illustrèe* and the *Illustrated London News* combined light news, fashion, and useful household tips for the typical bourgeois female reader. By the mid-nineteenth century the dissemination of print-language to wider audiences turned reading into a widespread activity and an integral part of everyday life.

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[137] Daniel Moran, *Toward the Century of Words: Johann Cotta and the Politics of the Public Realm in Germany, 1795-1832*, (University of Calfornia Press, 1990), 4. For more raw data see Rolf Engelsing, *Analphabetentum Und Lektüre: Sozialgeschichte Des Lesens in Deutschland Zwischen Feudaler Und Industrieller Gesellschaft*, (J.B. Metzlersche Verlag, 1973), 53-100.

Reproducing Reality

Following these technological advancements, in the 1830s and 1840s the attitude to print-language shifted starkly. Growing literacy rates and the mechanization of printing detached print-language from esoteric knowledge and fastened it to concrete reality as experienced by the growing number of readers. Mid-nineteenth-century men of letters were no longer 'showing', 'creating', or 'expressing', but 'telling', 'observing', and 'recording'. In Walter Benjamin's terms, while the cult-value of print-language declined, it attained a new epistemological status as a genuine mechanical reproduction of concrete reality.[138] The capacity of the new technologies to reproduce and disseminate information through print-language was instrumental to the renewed faith at the time in the aptitude of the human senses to grasp objective reality.

If the Enlightenment book market opened the way for Rousseau to charge the printed word with sentimental content, the industrialization of print had the opposite effect of showing authors the way to engage with the material conditions surrounding them. As a result of the general shift in attitude toward print-language, authors turned their pens from historical and mythical themes to the grimy streets of the big industrialized cities and the beggars, prostitutes, and factory workers who occupied them. In the late 1840s some of the most renowned English social novels were published, among them: *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848)*, Wuthering Heights* (1847), *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Mary Barton* (1848), and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). A few years earlier, in France, Eugèn Sue (1804-1857) shocked the French public when he chose to center his novel *The Mysteries of Paris* (serialized in the *Journal des*

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[138] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Hanah Arend (ed), *Illuminations*, (Random House, 2007), 226-228.

dèbats between June 1842 and October 1843) on the lives of the criminals and dregs filling up the Paris of the day. He was followed by the great naturalist novelists Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), Gustav Flaubert (1801-1887), and Émile Zola (1840-1902) whose works all provided true-to-life accounts of French society in all its complexity.

This changing attitude to the printed word explains why, when in the late 1810s fast steam-driven presses first arrived in Germany, they immediately engendered social and political unrest. The new presses were used primarily to produce newspapers and periodicals, which detached print-language from the ideals of the 'discourse network of 1800' and associated it with the social and political happenings of the day.[139] The number of newspapers and periodicals in Germany rose from 780 in 1833, to 1,836 in 1846.[140] By the 1840s Germany had already developed one of the most extensive networks of subversive publications in Europe. A new generation of writers employed many of these publications as a channel to bypass the existing orthodox German institutions. It was through these increasingly popular print products that Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), Ludwig Börne (1786-1837), and Wolfgang Manzel (1798-1873) were able to tear print-language from the idealist discourse and use it to deliver a sharp critique of existing social and political realities.

After the defeat of Napoleon in the Battle of Leipzig (1813) and the return of the traditional monarchies, emergent German censorship and the up-and-coming network of subversive publications were bound for collision. First in 1816, and later in 1819 the Confederal

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[139] Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution: German Literature and Society 1830-1890, (Basic Books, 1971), 128.

[140] Robert Magill "The German Author and His Public in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", Modern Language Review, 43/4 (1948), 494.

Assembly in Frankfurt am Main, which maintained a lose control of the three dozen German-speaking states, issued highly restrictive press laws aimed at imposing control over all publications in Germany. Following the spread of republican ideas all over Europe after 1830, German censorship, headed by Clemens von Metternich, became increasingly oppressive. Nonetheless, the various newspapers and periodicals circulating in Germany at the time were turning into an alternative and subversive public sphere that undermined the existing social and political order. The steam-driven press was utilized by opposition groups to shape a new phenomenon – public opinion (*öffentliche Meinung*) – against German religious and political orthodoxy.[141] Whereas Metternich's censorship served as the gatekeeper of the idealist 'discourse network of 1800', the new publications introduced to Germany what could be termed the industrialized 'discourse network of 1840' then spreading across Europe.

Early on, it was a small group of poets, *Young Germany* (*Junges Deutschland*), that took the lead in the struggle against German orthodoxy. They did so by making a conscious use of mechanically duplicated print-language to challenge existing social and political hierarchies. Inspired by the events in France in 1830, Karl Gutzkow (1811-1878), Heinrich Laube (1806-1884), Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876), Georg Herwegh (1817-1875), and others made novel use of print-language to attack the absolutist German political establishment. In his poetry of the 1820s, Ferdinand Freiligrath, for instance, provided a down-to-earth portrait of the wretched conditions of the German working class. In his early and highly controversial novel *Wally, the Skeptic* (*Wally, die Zweiflerin*) (1835) Karl Gutzkow took a stand on women's rights, even

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[141] Frederik Ohles, Germany's Rude Awakening: Censorship in the Land of the Brothers Grimm, (Kent State University Press, 1992), 4-5.

suggesting his support for women's sexual liberation. Another Young German, Georg Herwegh, put into practice the ambitious role he set for German poets, "Princes dream, let poets act", when he led six hundred German volunteers into battle against the Prussian army in Baden in 1848.[142]

A decade before Marx allied philosophy with socio-economic realities, the Young Germans were already employing mechanically duplicated words to challenge the demarcation line between 'living' and 'writing'. As early as 1836, nine years before Marx formulated his initial materialism, Heine noted: "The peculiarity, this unity, also appears among the writers of Young Germany, in our day, who likewise draw no sharp distinction between living and writing – who never separate politics from scholarship, art from science – and who are at once artists, tribunes and apostles."[143] Fifty years after the passionate and dream-like Werther became one of the symbols of the idealist 'discourse network of 1800', the Young Germans went to the opposite pole by bringing literature into the everyday life of the reader in hope of engendering widespread political agitation.

Despite their pioneering approach to literature, by the mid-1840s the Young Germans came under harsh criticism for holding back from engaging in actual politics. They were accused of favoring aestheticizing politics rather than politicizing literature. This view was articulated by Heine, who with more than a hint of cynicism, called the journals and newspapers of the time "the fortresses of the Young Germans".[144] Compared to Young Italy, Young Ireland, and even

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[142] Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution: German Literature and Society 1830-1890, (Basic Books, 1971), 143-144.

[143] Heinrich Heine, The Poetry and Prose of Heinrich Heine, Frederic Ewen (ed.), (The Citadel Press, 1959), 720.

[144] Eda Sagarra, *Tradition and Revolution: German Literature and Society 1830-1890*, (Basic Books, 1971), 128.

the later Young Ottomans, the Young Germans found it hard to leave their mark on German politics because of the harsh measures taken by the German censors. Moreover, since political authority in Germany at the time was entrenched in the alliance between idealist philosophy and Protestant theology, the capacity for provoking political change was not so much in the hands of poets as it was in the hands of philosophers.

And indeed, from the late 1830s a jumbled brew of theologians, philosophers, and ex-academics, that came under the name the *Young Hegelians*, became the most vocal group in the German printing underground. The term *Young Hegelians* was first used by the philosopher David Strauss (1808-1874) when he was mapping the state of German philosophy after the death of Hegel. While he called philosophers such as Karl Friedrich Göschel (1784-1861) and Georg Andreas Gabler (1786-1853), who were committed to preserving the Hegelian doctrine in its original form, the *Old Hegelians* (or the *Right Hegelians*), he called Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), Max Stirner (1806-1856), Arnold Ruge (1802-1880), and others who were questioning the wholeness of the Hegelian system as was formulated by the master, the *Young Hegelians* (or the *Left Hegelians*).[145]

Like the other cultural creations of the early industrialized age, the essence of the Young Hegelians' *Kritik* was its rejection of the conventions that guided German philosophy in the preceding generations. Ruge, for example, called attention early on to the discrepancies between Hegel's notion of the Prussian state as the culmination of human freedom, and the realities of the authoritative Prussian government. In the same vein, in his radical theology, Feuerbach asserted

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[145] Robert Nola, "The Young Hegelians, Feuerbach and Marx", In Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins (eds.), *The Age of German Idealism*, (Routledge, 1993), 290-291.

that God as posited by Hegel and Protestant theology is nothing but a mirror-image of man. God did not create man but it was man who created God, Feuerbach famously argues in *The Essence of Christianity* (*Das Wesen des Christentums*).[146] By the same token, in *The Ego and its Own* (*Dir Einzige und sein Eigentum*) (1845) Stirner claimed that the essence of existence is not found in the totality of metaphysical notions, but in the unbound freedom of the unique individual, or 'ego' (*einzige*) (1995).

The Young Hegelians' works were seditious not only in their content, but also in their form. Since most of the Young Hegelians either lost their academic positions or never managed to obtain one because of their unorthodox ideas, they turned to the new, industrialized publications to spread their ideas. Thus, unlike the thick German philosophical books designed for the academic reader typical to the 'discourse network of 1800', the Young Hegelian's ideas came in the form of short essays, treatises, and pamphlets appealing to a wider circle of readers. Soon, Ruge, Feuerbach, Bauer, and the others made use of the new newspapers and journals, which sprang up following the industrialization of German print, to propagate their "earthly philosophy" to a wider audience and challenge the twin sources of German autocracy: idealist philosophy and Protestant theology. Sure enough, the Young Hegelians produced lengthy works. Most notable were: David Strauss's *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (*Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*) (1835), Bruno Bauer's *Critical Exhibition of the Religion of the Old Testament* (*Kritische Darstellung der Religion des Alten Testaments*) (1838), and Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (*Das Wesen des Christentums*) (1841). Nevertheless, it was through publications such as Ruge's and Echtermeyer's *The Halle Yearbooks for German*

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[146] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, (Harper Books, 1957), 12.

Art and Science (*Hallische Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*), Bauer's monthly journal *General Literary Magazine* (*Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*) (published from December 1843 to October 1844), the *Rheinische Zeitung*, (published from January 1842 to March 1843) and the *Französische-Deutsche Jahrbücher* (published in February 1844) that the Young Hegelians hoped to spread their *Kritik*.

Marx's and Engels's Early Journalism

It was in this media environment that in the early 1840s, Marx and Engels took the first steps in their intellectual careers. They were among the new generation of freelance writers who, because of their unorthodox views, made their living by working as hired pens for the Young German and Young Hegelian publications.

From a letter to his friend Friedrich Graeber on April 8, 1839, we learn about Engels's commitment to the Young Germans' subversive use of print against the Prussian censorship:

> I must become a Young German, or rather, I am one already, body and soul, I cannot sleep at night, all because of the ideas of the century. When I am at the post office and look at the Prussian coat of arms, I am seized with the spirit of freedom. Every time I look at a newspaper I hunt for advances of freedom.[147]

As a self-identified Young German, Engels wrote more than twenty reports, poems, and epigrams between November 1839 and April 1841 for Karl Gutzkow's underground newspaper, the *Telegraph*. In one of the earliest pieces, *Book Wisdom*, Engels – still using the pseudonym

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[147] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 420.

Friedrich Oswald – critiques the 'old school' intellectuals still steeped in the 'discourse network of 1800':

> He is not wise who from his reading draws
>
> Nothing but floods of useless erudition
>
> For all his learning, life's mysterious laws
>
> Are a closed book beyond his comprehension.
>
> He who acquires a thorough textbook grounding
>
> In botany, won't hear the grass that grows.
>
> Nor will he ever teach true understanding
>
> Who tells you all the dogma that he knows.
>
> Oh, no! The germ lies hid in man's own heart.
>
> Who seeks the art of life must look within.[148]

In a piece entitled *Popular Book* (*Volksbücher*) published in the same month, Engels exhibits a keen understanding of the change of guard taking place in the German media. Clearly influenced by the Young Germans, Engels calls for the use of literature as a vehicle to address the burning social and political issues of the day:

> If we take a look in particular at the present time, at the struggle for freedom
>
> which produces all its manifestations – the development of constitutionalism, the
>
> resistance to the pressure, the pressure of the aristocracy, the fight of the intellect

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[148] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 6. The poem was first published in the *Der Bremer Stadtbote* on March 24, 1839.

against pietism and of gaiety against the remnant of gloomy asceticism – I fail to see how it can be wrong to demand that the popular book should help the uneducated person and show him the truth and reasonableness of these trends . . .[149]

Soon after, Engels took on a more active role in the German print underground and smuggled copies of works by Ludwig Börne – the 'Robespierre of German literary criticism' – on his way back to from Bremen to Prussia. In a letter from that time Engels boasts: "I have now a colossal carrier of getting forbidden books into Prussian lands."[150]

In light of the context discussed above, it comes as no surprise that the first piece Engels published under his real name was his translation of the poem *On the Invention of Printing* (*La Invención de la Imprenta*) (1803) by the Spanish poet Manuel Josè Quintana. The piece first appeared in the *Gutenbergs-Album* in June 1840 as part of the quadricentennial of the invention of print, which was widely celebrated in Germany. In a tone that brings to mind the opening lines of the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels translates the following lines: "He spoke. And there was print. And lo! All Europe, /Astounded, moved, forthwith herself bestirs with thunderous sound. As if by storm winds fanned/ Swift-rushing onwards roars."[151]

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[149] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 33.

[150] Peter Demetz, *Marx, Engels and the Poets: Origins of Marxist Literary Criticism*, (Chicago University Press, 1967), 21.

[151] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 56.

After giving up hope of getting an academic position, in early 1842 Marx began working for the anti-goverment newspaper, the *Rheinische Zeitung für Politik, Handel und Gewerbe* (henceforth, *Rheinische Zeitung*). The historical context discussed above allows us to appreciate that Marx's move from the academic world, still governed by the anachronistic norms and practices of the 'discourse network of 1800', to the bustling world of industrial newspapers, was not merely a career change, but a move between two modes of communication.

In his early journalistc writings Marx contemplated the stark difference between these two media realms. In May of 1842 Marx chose to center his first series of articles on the struggle for freedom of the press. The opening piece published in May 5, 1842 is a Kittlerian-like critique of the 'discourse network of 1800'. In a sarcastic tone Marx derides German readers and writers who still hold bulky and arcane German books in high esteem while looking down at newspapers:

> You Germans can only express yourselves at great length! Write really voluminous books on the organization of the state, books of solid learning, which no one reads except the Herr Author and the Herr Reviewer, but bear in mind that your newspapers are not books. Think how many printed sheets go to make a solid work of three volumes! Therefore do not seek the spirit of our day or time in newspapers, which offer you statistical tables, but seek it in books, whose size guarantees their solidity.[152]

Marx continues by equating the old German book with a Gothic cathedral. Just like Kittler, he points to its oppressive nature not merely as a print product but as a social institution:

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[152] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 (International Publishers, 1975), 134.

You do not need to read the books; their exciting aspect suffices to touch your heart and strike your senses, something like a Gothic cathedral. These primitive gigantic works materially affect the mind; it feels oppressed under their mass, and the feeling of oppression is the beginning of awe. You do not master the books, they master you. You are an unimportant appendage to them ...[153]

The experience of making a living as a journalist seemed to strengthen Marx's faith in newspapers while sharpening his critique of German philosophy. This is clearly seen in an article published in the *Rheinische Zeitung* two months later, in July of 1842, in which Marx writes the following:

Philosophy, especially German philosophy, has an urge for isolation, for systematic seclusion, for dispassionate self-examination which from the start places it in estranged contrast to the quick-witted and alive-to-events newspapers, whose only delight is in information … True to its nature, philosophy has never taken the first step towards exchanging the ascetic frock of the priest for the light, conventional garb of the newspapers.[154]

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[153] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 (International Publishers, 1975), 135.

[154] Ibid., Vol. 2, 184.

Marx's sharpened perspective on the two media realms he worked in led him to go a step further and offer a view of German philosophy that finally detaches it from the 'discourse network of 1800' and aligns it with the existing realties:

> … philosophers do not spring up like mushrooms out of the ground; they are products of their time, of their nation, whose most subtle, valuable and invisible juices flow in the ideas of philosophy. The same spirit that constructs railways with the hands of workers, constructs philosophical systems in the brains of philosophers. Philosophy does not exist outside the world, any more than the brain exists outside man …[155]

This view of the intellectual work of philosophers as a form of industrialized labor intrinsically linked to concrete reality, led Marx (like in so many of his later writings) to call for philosophers to bring philosophy down to earth. Yet, Marx appears not simply to refer to the contents of philosophy but to its form:

> Since every true philosophy is the intellectual quintessence of its time, the time must come when philosophy not only internally by its content, but also externally through its form, comes into contact and interaction with the real world of its day. Philosophy then ceases to be a particular system in relation to other particular

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[155] Quoted by Paul Paolucci, *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction*, (Brill, 2011) 130.

systems, it becomes philosophy in general in relation to the world, it becomes the philosophy of the contemporary world.[156]

And indeed, by the end of 1842 Marx was already one of the key figures in the network of subversive publications developing in Germany at the time. From his days in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (October 1842 – March 1843), through his time in the short-lived *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* (February 1844), the *Vorwärts!* (1844 – 1845), and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (1848 – 1853), Marx became a major force in the new German industrialized discourse network. Some of his most famous pieces were first published as articles in these short-lived publications. "On the Jewish Question", "The Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights: Introduction", as well as "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing" all appeared in the only issue published of the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher,* which came out in February of 1843, before it was shut down by the censors. The "Critical Marginal Notes on the Article 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform'" was published in the *Vorwärts!* in June of 1844. Later, "The Eighteenth of Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" was published in the monthly magazine *Die Revolution* in March of 1852. A caricature from the time of the *Rheinische Zeitung's* closure (March 1843) leaves little doubt as to the key role Marx played in the up-and-coming industrialized 'discourse network of 1840'. The caricature shows Marx as Prometheus, bound to a printing press while an eagle symbolizing the Prussian censorship eats away at his liver (See Figure 4 below).

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[156] Quoted by Andrew Fiala, *The Philosopher's Voice: Philosophy, Politics, and Language in the Nineteenth Century*, (State University of New York Press, 2002), 194.

Even later in his life, when Marx was writing lengthy works such as *Capital* he still made sure to make them available to the newspaper reading public. In the preface to the French edition of *Capital Volume I* – which was published in a serial form in a French newspaper between March, 1872 to April, 1875 – Marx turns directly to the French reading public and apologizes for the lengthy and dense nature of his work:

> Dear Citizen,
>
> I applaud your idea of publishing the translation of *Das Kapital* as a serial. In this form the book will be more accessible to the working class, a consideration which to me outweighs everything else.
>
> That is the good side of your suggestion, but here is the reverse of the medal: the method of analysis which I have employed, and which had not previously been applied to economic subjects, makes the reading of the first chapters rather arduous, and it is to be feared that the French public, always impatient to come to a conclusion, eager to know the connection between general principles and the immediate questions that have aroused their passions, may be disheartened because they will be unable to move on at once.
>
> That is a disadvantage I am powerless to overcome, unless it be by forewarning and forearming those readers who zealously seek the truth. There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.
>
> Believe me,
> dear citizen,
> Your devoted,
>
> Karl Marx[157]

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[157] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, (International Publishers, 1975), 23.

Figure 4: A political cartoon published in March 1843 at the time of the closure of the Reinische Zeitung.[158]
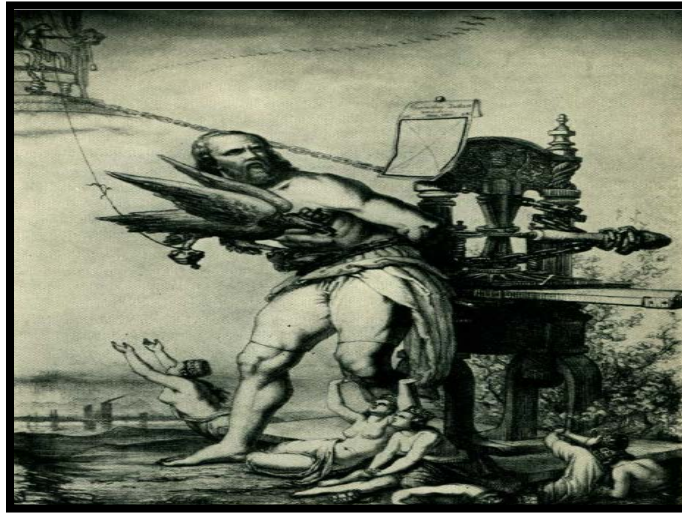
Industrializing Philosophy

In the opening section, "I. Feuerbach" of *The German Ideology* (1845-6) – Marx's and Engels's first joint mature work – they outline the initial principles of historical materialism, which was to serve as the epistemological basis of all subsequent Marxist thought. Marx and Engels begin with an assault on the idealist nature of German philosophy of the day: "It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the connection of their criticism with their own material surroundings."[159] In contrast to the detached nature of German philosophy, Marx and Engels put forward a reversed epistemology which upends the relationship between 'being' and 'thought' presumed in German idealist philosophy: "It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines

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[158] Source: Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 375.

[159] Ibid., 31.

consciousness."[160] This reversal allowed Marx and Engels to pull into philosophy all the aspects of *German reality* (*deutschen Wirklichkeit*) that were either left out or marginalized by previous philosophers.[161] It provided them with a theoretical tool through which they could consider real individuals, their economic activities, and the social conditions in which they live as the focal point of philosophy: "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions of their life …"[162]

Coming from the emerging newspaper industry, Marx and Engels became aware early on of the anachronistic state of German philosophy, which was still caught up in the 'discourse network of 1800'. Seeing print-language as a mechanical reproduction of concrete reality, they set out to bring German philosophy in line with the nascent 'discourse network of 1840'. At the same historical moment that Dickens, Flaubert, and Sue were deploying mechanically duplicated print-language to detach literature from its place in tradition and align it with their industrial surroundings, Marx and Engels took on the task of pulling down German print-language from the realm of idealist thought and using it to address early capitalist society.

Placing Marx's and Engels's early historical materialism in the context of the media culture of the time suggests that the philosophical move from Hegelian idealism to Marxist materialism did not merely take place in the realm of thought but was rather a manifestation of a shift in the medium conveying philosophy – print-language. It indicates that the 'decomposition' – as Engels put it – of Hegelian thought was in fact an outcome of the ebb of the 'discourse

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[160] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 37.

[161] Ibid., 30.

[162] Ibid, 31.

network of 1800'. Whereas for Hegel print-language was still an arcane medium connecting the human mind and intangible abstractions, for Marx and Engels it was already a mechanical reproduction of their immediate socio-economic surroundings. One may argue that *the difference between Hegelian thought and Marxist materialism was not merely that between two philosophical systems but between two modes of communication*. Although both systems of thought came under the label 'philosophy' one still belonged to a pre-industrial 'discourse network of 1800', while the other was already an expression of what could be termed the 'industrialized discourse network of 1840'.

As discussed above, since in the 'discourse network of 1800' written language was still seen as a portal to an intangible world beyond human senses, philosophers of the time were less inclined to think and write about 'real' human beings as the ontological starting point of philosophy. The medium they were working in – written language – did not favor this sort of essentialist outlook. In contrast, the straight line between the sign and the signifier drawn by the mechanically duplicated word opened the way for Marx and Engels to question idealist epistemology. The new position of print-language, in 1845 opened the way for Marx and Engels to argue for a materialist understanding of the concrete world . Thanks to this position they were able to bring the existing socio-economic conditions in which people live into philosophy; they were able to treat the tangible factories, forces of production, and the emerging capitalist system as part of the intangible world of ideas.

The broader theoretical view of early Marxism provided here that takes into account the media culture Marx and Engels were working in allows us to look over the disciplinary divide and consider it as an expression of a larger media culture that ushered in new ways in which authors could relate to the world and to their readers. Following the industrialization of print,

writers in all fields created typographical accounts of the everyday life of mid-nineteenth century Europe. Thus, one could argue that Marx and Engels were no more Marxists than Flaubert and Balzac were realists or naturalists. These movements were each different expressions of the same industrialized media culture. In the same manner that the mechanically duplicated word allowed the realist novelists to transform literature into a mirror-image of prevailing social realities, it opened the way for Marx and Engels to intellectualize social relations under capitalism.

Beyond the uniform influence of the industrialization of print across European arts and letters, it seemed to have had a distinct effect in the case of Marx and Engels. Marx's and Engels's writings from the period clearly indicate that they did not view their works as merely a means of communicating their ideas but as *praxis*. In the *Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach*, which Marx scribbled in one of his notebooks in the spring of 1845, he famously states that: "while philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is, however, to change it."[163] The same reasoning appears to guide Marx in the *"Contribution of the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights: Introduction"*, (1843) where he writes:

> As philosophy finds its **material** weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its **spiritual** weapons in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people the emancipation of the **Germans** into **human beings** will take place (Emphasis original).[164]

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[163] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 8.

[164] Ibid.,187 (Vol. 3).

Reading these passages in conjunction with Marx's treatment of philosophy in his early journalistic articles suggests that his experience as a journalist facilitated his understanding of print-language as a *material object* carrying social relations. While Dickens' novels remained essentially works of art, no matter how closely they depicted concrete reality, the unconditional faith in the power of the mechanically duplicated word to reproduce concrete reality opened the way for Marx to think of his works as material means by which he could bridge the existential gap between 'being' and 'thought'. As could be seen in the passages above, Marx (as well as many of his later followers) saw his works no longer as one-dimensional typographical objects made of ink and paper, but viewed them as concrete weapons which could be utilized to transform existing social and political realities. Thus, the new position of print-language as a genuine representation of concrete reality charged Marx's and Engels's philosophical works with unprecedented epistemological authority reserved in the past only for religious texts. While this authority opened the way for Marx and Engels to engage the burning social and political questions of the day in their philosophy, it also turned their writings into powerful ideological tools.

The discussion in this chapter presents the second case that demonstrates the merits of looking at the media culture in which political thinkers operate. As in the previous chapter, placing Marx's and Engels' early thought in the broader industrialization of print illuminates the complex relations between their message, i.e. historical materialism, and the medium that conveyed it, i.e. mechanically duplicated print language. The industrialization of print opened the way for Marx and Engels to convey a new materialist outlook, it was their novel use of the new steam-driven press that was the basis of their materialist philosophy. Thus, as in the case of

Rousseau, this chapter demonstrated that Marx's and Engels' historical materialism was a product *of as well as* a response to the industrialization of European print.

Chapter Three

Herzlism: Jewish Political Messianism[165]

Why Herzl? This is the question I often encounter when people learn that I chose Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) – the "father of Zionism" – as the third case in a study that includes Rousseau and Marx. As important as Herzl may be to modern Jewish thought, he could hardly be held among the greatest political thinkers of modern times. Even among Zionist thinkers, one can think of better candidates for such a research project – Moses Hess, Ahad Ha'am, and Martin Buber are just three who come to mind. This chapter strays from the main discussion in order to clarify the choice to include Herzl in this dissertation.

One of the major unsolved issues in nineteenth-century Jewish thought is the nature of Herzl's Zionist vision. Two opposing views of Herzl's Zionism dominating Herzl scholarship are currently in circulation. Scholars belonging to the first camp treat Herzl's Zionism as a continuation of the age-old messianic idea found in Judaism throughout history. According to scholars such as Ben-Zion Dinur, David Hartman and Tzvi Zehavi, Herzl's Zionist idea is nothing but a modern incarnation of the long line of Jewish rebellions against the destiny of exile. For them, the Zionist Movement is the Jews' latest attempt to return to the Promised Land.[166]

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[165] The term *Herzlism* was used by the Zionist activist Jacob de Hass (1872-1937). who. in a letter to Herzl in early 1896. invited him to attend a conference on Herzlism. In the reply letter from January 12, 1897, Herzl firmly objected the use of the term, arguing that the Zionist Movement must remain an impersonal enterprise in nature. Herzl's letter to Hass is found in: Theodor Herzl, "Letter to Jacob Hass," in Raphael Patai (ed), *Herzl Year Book*, Vol. 3, (Herzl Press, 1960). 314-15.

[166] Tzvi Zehavi, *Me Hata'am Sofer le Herzl*, (The Zionist Library, 1965), 264-302 [Hebrew]. David Hartman, "Hilun, Shlila, ve-Shiluv shel Tfisot shel Hayahdut Hamesoratit u-musageia b-tzionut Ha-socialistit", *Kivunim*, Vol.

At the opposite pole we find scholars who show Herzl's Zionism to be a typical turn-of-the-century European movement. William McGrath, for example, traces Herzl's Zionism to his early involvement in the pan-German student movements of his day which were influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche and Wagner.[167] Carl Schorske goes even further and argues that the motive underlying Herzl's Zionist plan was not Jewish nationhood but assimilation. What was guiding Herzl's Zionist enterprise, according to Schorske, was his belief that: "The dreams of assimilation which could not be realized in Europe would be realized in Zion."[168] More recently, Jacques Kornberg argued that Herzl's Zionism was an ambitious plan to revolutionize European Jewry driven by his contempt for the Diaspora Jew and his admiration of the European aristocracy.[169]

So, was Herzl's Zionist Movement a modern-day Jewish messianic movement, or was it a typical turn-of-the-century European movement? In what follows I will attempt to show that at the heart of Herzlian Zionism was a unique synthesis between fin-de-siècle social criticism and traditional Jewish messianic themes. I will contend that these two aspects characterizing Herzl's Zionist enterprise were not in opposition to one another, but, on the contrary, they endowed each

8, (August, 1980), 29-46 [Hebrew]. Ben-Zion Dinur, *Benyamin Ze'ev Herzl, Al-Haish, Darcho, ve-Demuto, Hazono ve-Poalo*, (Masaada, 1968). [Hebrew]. For more on messianic themes in Zionism see, Israel Kolat, "Zionism and Messianisn," in Zvi Baras (ed.), *Meshikhiyut Ve'eskhatologia*, (Zalman Shazar, 1983), 410-430 [Hebrew]; Anita Shapira, "Zionism and Political Messianism," in Shmuel Almog et al. (eds.), *Tmurot Bahistoria Hayehudit Hakhadasha* (Zalman Shazar, 1987): 140-158 [Hebrew]; Arthur Hertzberg "Introduction" in Arthur Hertzberg (ed), *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 15-100.

[167] William McGrath, "Student Radicalism in Vienna," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2/3, (1967), 183-201.

[168] Carl Shorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna Politics and Culture*, (Vintage Books, 1979), 172.

[169] Jacques Kronberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, (Indiana University Press, 1993).

other with a new and fresh meaning. I will attempt to show that, at the heart of Herzl's Zionist vision, rested a special kind of dialectical relationship between the Jewish messianic tradition Herzl grew up on and the ideas and values he was exposed to later in his life in Vienna and Paris. This will lead me to contend that fin-de-siècle social criticism and traditional Jewish messianism came together in Herzl's thought to form the new type of Jewish political messianism that is Herzlism.

Fin de Siècle Vienna

The first step I would like to take to understand the compound relations between fin-de-siècle ideas and Jewish messianism in Herzl's thought will be to trace Herzl's unusual path to Zionism. What is so interesting in the case of Herzl is that, as late as the age of thirty two, he had little to no interest in politics and had never publically engaged with Jewish affairs. So, what led the Viennese playwright to become a champion of Jewish nationalism? The first three sections of this chapter will be dedicated to answering this question.

Since assimilation in Austria was best pursued through culture, liberal bourgeois culture became a vehicle through which a large number of Jews gained access to Austrian society. By the turn of the century, Arthur Schnitzler, Sigmund Freud, Karl Kraus, Victor Adler, and Gustav Mahler as well as many others came to play a key role in Austrian bourgeois liberal culture. Whether those assimilated Viennese Jews saw themselves first as bourgeois citizens or as Jews is still a matter of scholarly debate, and is beyond the scope of this project.[170] Suffice it to say that,

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[170] Among the major works which contend that the Jewish background of Viennese Jewish individuals had an insignificant or no role in shaping their ideas are Carl Shorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna Politics and Culture*, (Vintage

since bourgeois liberal culture served as a vehicle through which Viennese Jews entered into Austrian society, by the end of the nineteenth century many of them came to see it as the primary source of identity. The intense identification Viennese Jews felt towards liberal bourgeois culture led them to place unconditional faith in it, as both a moral creed they strongly believed in and a political force that secured their social position.

Despite Jewish faith in its culture, by the early 1890s the Austrian liberal middle class entered into deep crisis. The vast literature on turn-of-the-century Vienna describes the city as a sinking ship on which Gustav Klimt, Karl Lueger, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Sigmund Freud were begetting the demise of modernist liberal culture.[171] By and by, the Austrian liberals were also removed from the helm of power by new political movements which gained force in the Habsburg Empire. It turned out that the masses in Austria-Hungary no longer supported the liberal parities but turned to those parties' arch rivals – the anti-Semitic Christian Socialists.

The crisis of the Austrian liberal middle class during the 1890s led many of its members to question the entire value system which had guided them for decades. This was especially true

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Books, 1979); William McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria,* (Yale University Press, 1974); Mark Francis, *The Viennese Enlightenment,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1985). Among the major works which stress the Jewish nature of the cultural productions of Viennese Jews are: Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews Vienna 1867-1914*, (State University of New York Press, 1983); Steven Beller, *Herzl*, (Halban, 1991); Robert Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Frnz Joseph*, (Oxford University Press, 1990).

[171] See Carl Schorske, "Politics and the Psyche in fin-de-siècle Vienna: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal", *The American Historical* Review, 66/4 (1961), 930-946. Also Frank Field, *The Last Days of Mankind*, (Macmillan, 1967). William Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: an Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938*, (University of California Press, 1972); Kirk Varnedoe, *Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture and Design*, (Museum of Modern Art, 1986).

of Viennese Jews. The increasing popular support of the anti-Semitic Christian Socialists led many Viennese Jews to question their own assimilated identity. For many of them, this triggered a deep personal crisis.

In was in this climate that Herzl first entered the political stage. Up to l891, when he was already thirty-two years old, Herzl was a typical Viennese liberal who had little interest in politics. Yet, the crisis of liberalism came in Herzl's case in the shape of a chain of personal tragedies that led him to question the merits of the liberal bourgeois culture he grew up in and the place Jews occupied in it.

In February 1891, only a few months after marrying Julie Naschauer, the daughter of a wealthy Viennese Jewish businessman, Herzl realized that he was trapped in a loveless marriage. Although he informed his father-in-law about his wish to file for divorce, he never followed through on this declaration. Herzl's concern about his financial security and the wellbeing of his children stopped him from doing so. Around the same time Herzl's best friend Heinrich Kana committed suicide in Berlin following his failure to become a successful playwright. In hindsight, the unfortunate fate of Herzl's marriage and that of his two best friend set Herzl on a personal and intellectual journey that lasted four-and-a-half years. The journey ended with Herzl's transformation from a Viennese aesthete to the visionary of the Jewish State.

Fin de Siècle Paris

The next step in Herzl's path to Zionism was his move to Paris – then the political capital of the world. In late 1891, while still recovering from the tragic news about the death of Kana, Herzl received an offer from the *Neue Freie Presse* – one of the most prestigious liberal

publications in Europe at the time – to serve as its Paris correspondent. Herzl, who failed to achieve the success he had hoped for as a playwright in Vienna, was delighted to take the job. Once he moved to Paris in October of 1891, in a matter of a few weeks Herzl gained a whole new perspective, which later proved to be instrumental in his formulation of political Zionism. Herzl's previous thoughts about storylines and dramatic scenes made way for ideas about class struggle, the ills of parliamentary politics, and the other burning social and political issues of the day.

In his early days in Paris, Herzl was instructed by his editors to reflect in his reports the sympathies of the *Neue Freie Presse* with the Opportunists-Republicans, whose agenda of allying the peasants and the petty bourgeois against the royalists was in accordance with the views of the Jewish liberal editors of the paper. Yet, as time went by, Herzl found the task harder, given the harsh realities of French politics of the time. Instead of the land of the Enlightenment, the cradle of bourgeois liberalism, Herzl found in Paris the chaotic political scene of the torn Third Republic. Herzl's early reports from Paris reflect his bafflement and at times fascination with the anarchist violence, the parliamentary corruption, and the aristocratic decadence that were all creating havoc in French society at the time. The firsthand experience with the dark side of liberal politics in Paris led Herzl for the first time to consider the crisis of Austrian bourgeois liberalism as part of the larger crisis of European liberalism.

Just as Herzl arrived in Paris, political anti-Semitism blasted onto the French political scene. From June 1892 onwards Herzl's reports concerning French anti-Semitism became more frequent. Herzl's coverage of the Burdeau-Drumont Trial,[172] the Morès-Mayer Duel,[173] and the

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[172] Theodor Herzl, "The Burdeau-Drumont Trial," in Alex Bein and Moshe Schaerf (eds.), *From Boulanger to Dreyfus 1891-1895: Reports and Articles from Paris*, Vol. 1, (Jerusalem Post, 1974), 108-10.

Panama Scandal[174] along with other events provide a clear portrayal of the increasing presence of anti-Semitism in French politics at the time. Yet, the anti-Semitism Herzl encountered in Paris was not directed against individual Jews as it was in Austria-Hungary. It came in the shape of a popular movement that was targeting Jews as a community while tolerating assimilated Jews who were already integrated into French society. In his diary, Herzl elaborates on the impact that his encounter with anti-Semitism in French had on him:

> In Paris . . . I reached a higher, more disinterested view of anti-Semitism from which at least I did not have to suffer directly. In Austria and Germany I must constantly fear that someone will shout "Hep, Hep!"after me, but here I pass through the crowd unrecognized . . . In Paris I gained a freer attitude toward anti-Semitism . . .[175]

As this passage shows, Herzl found French popular yet impersonal anti-Semitism less offensive than the anti-Semitism in Austria and Germany and thus felt more comfortable to confront it openly.

The encounter with anti-Semitism as a popular movement positioned at the center of France's supposedly liberal politics, appealing to Socialists from the Left as well as to Nationalists from the Right, led Herzl to begin drawing possible connections between the crisis of liberalism which he witnessed in Vienna and Paris and the Jewish Question.

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[173] Theodor Herzl, "The Morès-Mayer Duel," in *From Boulanger to Dreyfus*, 119-24.

[174] Ibid., 259-324.

[175] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, (Herzl Press, 1960), 5-6.

In a report Herzl writes about the Burdeau-Drumont Trial dated June 15, 1892, he focuses his attention on the commotion taking place in the courtroom that day.[176] Herzl, who was on the scene, describes in wonder the inability of the court security guards to control Drumont's supporters who despite their champion's conviction were chanting in the courtroom "*Out with the Jews! Out with the Jews!*" ("*A-bas les Juifs! Abas les Juifs!*").[177] This early piece reflects Herzl's growing awareness at the time of the failure of the legal liberal system of the Third Republic to contain anti-Semitism. This report seems to be the first instance in which Herzl draws a connection between the weakness of the liberal legal system and the increasingly precarious conditions of Jews in Europe.

Around the same time the Panama Scandal – the major affair in French politics in the early 1890s – drew Herzl's attention also to the ills of the laissez-faire economy. To understand the impact that the Panama Scandal had on Herzl, it is necessary to go back to the early 1870s when the young Herzl – attending the Technical School of the City of Pest – was dreaming of becoming a world-renowned engineer one day. In the short autobiography Herzl wrote in 1898, he recalls his fascination as a boy with the technological advancements of the time.[178] The steam-engine, the railroad systems, and grand engineering enterprises ignited young Herzl's

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[176] August-Laurent Burdeau (1851-1894), who was at the time the President of the Chamber of Deputies, sued Edourad Drumont (1844-1917), a famous author and journalist who was known for his radical anti-Semitism, for slander after he published a piece in his anti-Semitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* claiming that Burdeau received money from Alphonse Rothschild to pass laws that would favor the banking industry.

[177] Theodor Herzl, "The Burdeau-Drumont Trial," in Alex Bein and Moshe Schaerf (eds.), *From Boulanger to Dreyfus 1891-1895: Reports and Articles from Paris*, Vol. 1, (Jerusalem Post, 1974), 109.

[178] See, Chaim Bloch, "Herzl's First Years of Struggle," in *Herzl Year Book*, Raphael Patai (ed.), (Herzl Press, 1960).

imagination. Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805-1894) – the French engineer who built the Suez Canal – became his childhood hero.[179]

In 1889 the Panama Society, founded by Lesseps, collapsed long before it finished digging the Canal due to continuing mismanagement. Great sums of public money went down the drain. The savings of thousands of middle-class French people, who for years were encouraged by the government to invest in the project, were wiped-out in a blink of an eye. It turned out that thousands of workers had died in vain. The affair became a full-blown political scandal that caught the headlines of newspapers all across Europe, when it turned out that for years the Panama Canal Company had been bribing members of parliament to cover-up the financial difficulties into which it had stumbled.

The typical liberal faith Herzl held early on in technology as the ultimate expression of progress explains why the Panama Scandal was a decisive moment in his disenchantment with bourgeois liberal culture. Herzl's reports on the Panama Trials convey his bewilderment, as the technological marvel carried out in the name of the liberal Third Republic turned into a farce in which greed and deceit took over what was supposed to be the most advanced technological enterprise in decades. Panama signaled for Herzl the precarious relationship between private capital and the public good that characterized the laissez-faire economy. Instead of a symbol of liberal progress that was supposed to bring to new heights the human capacity to overcome the forces of nature, Panama became a symbol of liberal corruption.

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[179] On the role of technology in Herzl's Zionist vision see, Derek Penslar, "Herzl, Zionism and the Origins of Jewish Social Policy," in Gideon Shimoni and Robert Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, (The Hebrew University Magness Press, 1999), 215-17.

The Panama Scandal also led Herzl to further draw the connection between the flaws of liberal politics and the Jewish Question. The Scandal drew Herzl's attention to the distinctive role Jews came to play in the French economy of the time. Ever since the emancipation of Jews following the French Revolution, French Jews gradually blended into French society. Nonetheless, they did not, as most proponents of emancipation had hoped, become indistinguishable from their gentile surroundings. Many of them did not join the ranks of the peasants or the working class but continued to make their living from trade and commerce. Whereas a small fraction of French Jews made a fortune from banking, most transformed from peddlers into small time traders. Thus, during the nineteenth century, the Jews of France did not fully assimilate into French society but maintained their distinctive economic profile in between the French working and middle classes and the political and financial elites.[180]

Ever since the early 1880s, the particular position Jews occupied in French society played into the hands of the growing French anti-Semitic movements, which portrayed them as a secret society conspiring to take advantage of hardworking Frenchmen. In the bestselling book in France of the 1880s, *Jewish France* (*France Juive*), Edward Drumont recounted modern European history as a series of struggles between so-called Aryans and Semites. Drumont traced the current instability and corruption of the French Third Republic to the emancipation of Jews, whom he presented as a predatory race devouring the Third Republic from within.

Although no Jews were among the givers or receivers of the bribers in the Panama Scandal, two Jews – Jacques Reinach and Cornelius Herz – were responsible for transferring the

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[180] On the Jews in France in nineteenth century see, Paula Hyman, "The French Jewish Community from Emancipation to the Dreyfus Affair," in Norman Kleeblatt (ed), *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth and Justice*, (University of California Press, 1987), 26-27.

bribe-money from the Panama Canal Company to members of Parliament. When this became public, Reinach (who shortly after committed suicide) sent a list of parliament members who received bribe money to *La Libre Parole*, Drumont's anti-Semitic newspaper. The list *La Libre Parole* published in installments in 1892-3 transformed the newspaper from a marginal publication into one of the most influential publications in France. Drumont presented the whole scandal as a Jewish affair and blamed the Jews for using their position as middlemen between the parliament and the Panama Canal Company to make a fortune for themselves.

In his reports on the Panama Trials, Herzl agrees with Drumont about the thorny position Jews came to occupy in France.[181] He points to the Jews' awkward position in French society as a reason why they became convenient scapegoats for the rising nationalists on the Right and socialists on the Left, who were both blaming them for abusing the French laissez-faire economy. In a piece published in the *Neue Freie Presse* on August 31, 1892, Herzl writes sarcastically: "In France anti-Semitism is a free meeting place . . . It is a meeting of the discontent, like a saloon of the deprived."[182] Herzl's reports on the Panama Scandal indicate that by the end of 1893 he already was also drawing a direct connection between the failures of European laissez-faire economy and the rising tide of anti-Semitism.

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[181] Herzl's reports from January 20, 1893, and February 6, 1893, focus exclusively on the involvement of Cornelius Herz in the Scandal.

[182] Herzl, "French Anti-Semites," in Alex Bein and Moshe Schaerf (eds.) *From Boulanger to Dreyfus 1891-1895: Reports and Articles from Paris*, (Jerusalem Post, 1974), 140.

Jewish Awakening

Despite formulating his mature approach to anti-Semitism – as a symptom of the particular position Jews came to occupy in Europe in the wake of the weakness of the liberal mechanisms – it wasn't before the end of 1894 that Herzl developed a distinctive Jewish perspective. In his diary Herzl recalls that in October of 1894, while he was making his way back home after paying a visit to his friend, the sculptor Samuel Friedrich Beer, he felt an immense flow of inspiration.[183] In the next three weeks Herzl closed himself in his hotel room and completed a play he entitled *The Ghetto* [*Das Ghetto*], later renamed *The New Ghetto* [*Das Neue Ghetto*].

The play tells the story of Dr. Jacob Samuel, a Jewish idealistic lawyer, who marries Hermine Hellman – the shallow and spoiled daughter of a wealthy Jewish merchant. Following the marriage, Samuel becomes involved in a business partnership with his new brother-in-law, Rheinberger, and Rheinberger's associate, a man called Wasserstein. When the two take over a coal mine owned by an aristocrat, Rittmeister von Schramm, Samuel is assigned the task of drawing up the contract. Yet, when Samuel learns from a group of miners that the conditions in the mine are poor and that they endanger their lives, he resigns, takes up the cause of the miners and leads them on strike. Unfortunately, when the strike collapses and the miners return to work, the mine is in even worse shape than it was before. Soon enough the mine collapses and a number of miners are killed. Following the accident, the value of the shares held by Schramm plunge and he loses his fortune. Toward the end of the play, Schramm falsely accuses Samuel of

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[183] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, (Herzl Press, 1960), 60-61.

conspiring with Rheinberger and Wasserstein to ruin him financially. In a duel between the two men that takes place in the final scene of the play Schramm stabs Samuel who soon after dies.

The play dramatizes the connection Herzl came to draw between the Liberal Question and the Jewish Question. Schramm represents the declining European liberal middle class, Rheinberger and Wasserstein the self-interested Jewish financiers, and Samuel (whom Herzl probably modeled after himself and his late friend Kanna) is a social crusader willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of social justice and Jewish dignity. The failure of the business agreement between the parties represents the weakening of the liberal mechanisms. In the play Herzl dramatizes the awkward position which the Jews occupied between private capital and public ventures as he witnessed it in the Panama Scandal. Nonetheless, the tragedy of the play revolves around the inability of Schramm to make the distinction between the high-minded Samuel and his greedy partners. Just like the European liberal middle class of the time, which turned to political anti-Semitism – Schramm blames all three for his financial demise.

Herzl ends the dialogue between Schramm and Jacob where he accuses him of conspiring with Rheinberger and Wasserstein with the following lines:

> **Jacob**: . . . No thought was wasted on safety measures, until the inevitable collapse came. And you really have the audacity to complain that the ground water washed away your ill-gotten wealth too!
>
> **Schramm**: … Your fine brother-in-law told me you were a fool. He said he was at odds with you . . . But now I understand it all. You were hand in glove with him . . . You're just another dirty Jew!.[184]

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[184] Theodor Herzl, *The New Ghetto*, (The Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1955), 68-69.

The New Ghetto was the first time Herzl managed to break out from his Viennese bourgeois perspective. It was the first time he viewed his European surroundings from an external point of view. It was the first time he saw the Europe of his day through Jewish eyes.

In the following six months two major events took place in Paris and Vienna that led Herzl to complete the transformation he had been experiencing since late 1892. The first was the Dreyfus Affair, which became public on October of 1894. In his early reports on the affair from October and November 1894, Herzl neglects to mention altogether the Jewish background of the French Captain. Nonetheless, the dramatic piece Herzl writes about the public degradation of Dreyfus following his conviction on January 5, 1895, clearly conveyed his sympathies toward Dreyfus and his outrage following his humiliation. His newly-acquired Jewish perspective is evident in his depictions of Dreyfus calling out, "I am innocent!" while the crowd shouts back "death to the traitor!".[185]

From Herzl's diary we also learn that at the same time he was also concerned with events in Vienna. In the elections for the Viennese Gemeinderat, which took place in May of 1895, the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party headed by Karl Lueger (1844-1910) took power from the liberals. Although Lueger only entered the Rathaus two years later, after a prolonged political struggle, what alarmed Herzl was the fact that a party with an outright anti-Semitic platform took the reins of power through the polls.[186] For Herzl, the election of Lueger marked the spread of popular anti-Semitism to Vienna – his own hometown.

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[185] Theodor Herzl, "Dreyfus Degradation Ceremony," in Alex Bein and Moshe Schaerf (eds.), *From Boulanger to Dreyfus 1891-1895: Reports and Articles from Paris,* Vol. 3, (Jerusalem Post, 1974), 937-38.

[186] The first time Herzl mentions the election of Lueger is in his diary in an entry dated June 8, 1895, a few weeks after the elections. Herzl writes that, while he was dining with some of his Jewish bourgeois Viennese friends, the

Notwithstanding the debate about which of the two events had a greater influence on Herzl, both confirmed his view of anti-Semitism as a byproduct of the crisis of European liberal politics.[187] From mid-1895 Herzl came to believe that the liberal public sphere in Paris and Vienna did not resolve the Jewish Question as many Jews had hoped but facilitated a new type of Jewish hatred grounded in the growing discontent of the liberal order. The public humiliation of Dreyfus and the sweeping victory of the Christian Social Party were the last straws that proved that what Herzl came to see as the impasse confronting Jews in Europe had become real. Consequently, Herzl came to believe that Jews could no longer remain safe by lingering in the shadows of the European liberal parties. On May 20, 1895, Herzl sent a letter to Baron Hirsch (1831-1896) in which he requested his assistance in founding a movement that would transfer the Jews out of Europe and establish a Jewish state. The letter marks the beginning of Herzl's Zionist career.

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conversation drifted to the recent elections. Herzl describes in a mocking tone what he saw as his friend's disingenuous concern about the future of the Jews following the elections results. Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1 (Herzl Press, 1960), 46.

[187] Among the major works which stress the influence of the Dreyfus Affair on Herzl are Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, (Basic Books, 1981); Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997) 45-51. Among the works which underscore the influence of the victory of the Christian Social Party in Vienna are Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl*, (Zalman Shazar, 2007) [Hebrew]; Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, (Indiana University Press, 1993) ; Henry Cohen, "Theodor Herzl's Conversion to Zionism", *Jewish Social Studies*, 32/2 (1970), 101-110.

Herzl's Zionist Plan

It is now possible to move to discuss Herzl's Zionist ideas per se. What was Herzl's initial Zionist plan and how did he intend to execute it?

As just mentioned, Herzl's view of anti-Semitism as a byproduct of the awkward position which the Jews came to occupy in Europe following the increasing weakness of the liberal order led him to believe that the Jewish Question would be solved only when the Jews would physically leave Europe and establish a state of their own. Herzl states this reasoning clearly in the *Jewish State* when he asks: "Can we hope for better days, can we possess our souls in patience, can we wait in pious resignation till the princes and peoples of this earth are more mercifully disposed towards us?".[188] His answer is unequivocal: "I say that we cannot hope for change in the current feeling … we are certain to suffer very severely in the struggle between classes, because we stand in the most exposed position in the camps of both Socialists and capitalists".[189]

In light of the grievous conditions of Jews in Europe, Herzl calls for turning the source of Jewish misery into Jewish strength:

> We are one people – our enemies have made us one without our consent …
> Distress binds us together, and, thus, united, we suddenly discover our strength.
> Yes, we are strong enough to form a State, and, a model state … Let the

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[188] Thedoer Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 43.

[189] Ibid., Ibid.

sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation; the rest we shall manage for ourselves.[190]

Herzl thought that the best way to bring about a Jewish state was to obtain the consent of the world powers. Herzl's trust in diplomacy was the basis of his *political* brand of Zionism. He believed that world politics were both the end as well as the means for solving the Jewish Question. Paradoxically, he pinned his hopes of solving the Jewish Question on the European powers he asked to leave behind. Commenting on the Jewish Question, Herzl writes: "It is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council".[191] And, indeed, once Herzl established the Zionist Movement, he concentrated most of his time in convincing world leaders to support his plan.

Herzl's thoughts about how to carry out his plan were a strange muddle of ideas he picked up from his immediate surroundings in Paris and Vienna. First, Herzl's long-time faith in technology led him to allocate to it a central role in his enterprise. In the early entries in his diary, Herzl describes himself as an engineer of a massive transportation enterprise that will make use of the steam-engine, electricity, and print technology to move the Jews out of Europe. Herzl thought of himself as a Jewish Lesseps and of the Zionist movement as a Jewish Suez. In a letter Herzl sent to Baron Hirsch on June 3, 1895, he writes: "The exodus to the Promised Land constitutes in practical terms an enormous job of transportation unprecedented in the modern

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[190] Thedoer Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 46-47.

[191] Ibid., 38.

world. Did I say "transportation"? It is a complex of all kinds of human enterprises which will be geared one into the other like cog-wheels".[192]

In the opening section of *The Jewish State*, Herzl explains that, thanks to the technological advancements of the time, the Jewish Question could be finally solved:

The world possesses slaves of extraordinary capacity for work, whose appearance has been fatal to the production of handmade goods; these slaves are the machines . . .This century has given the world wonderful renaissance by means of its technological achievements . . . I believe that electric light was not invented for the purpose of illuminating drawing-rooms of a few snobs, but rather for the purpose of throwing light on some of the dark problems of humanity. One of these problems, and not the least of them, is the Jewish Question.[193]

However, Herzl's plan to use technology to solve the Jewish Question had one obvious shortcoming he was well-aware of – his lack of resources to carry it out. The solution Herzl came up with was to turn to the big Jewish philanthropists in order to secure their financial support of his transportation enterprise. In May 1895 Herzl decided to approach Baron Maurice de Hirsch, who was known for his big fortune, generous heart, and commitment to the Jewish cause.[194]

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[192] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. I (Herzl Press, 1960), 28.

[193] Thedor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 37.

[194] Hirsch's grandfather was known to be the first Jewish landowner in Bavaria. Hirsch's father was the personal banker of the Bavarian king, a position which granted him the title of 'Baron.' By the 1860s, Hirsch expanded the

The first meeting between the two men became awkward when Herzl decided to voice his opinion on Hirsch's philanthropic enterprises:

Now, with regard to education, I propose to employ, from the outset, methods quite different from those which you are using. First of all, there is the principle of philanthropy, which I consider erroneous. You are breeding shnorrers. It is symptomatic that no other people show such a great incident of philanthropy and beggary as the Jews. It strikes one that there must be a correlation between these two phenomena meaning that philanthropy debased our national character.[195]

In a letter Herzl later writes to Hirsch following their meeting on June 3, 1895, he uses even stronger language to express his disapproval of Hirsch's philanthropic enterprises:

Will you understand me if I tell you that the entire process of mankind's development gives the lie to your methods? Do you want to hold a large group of people on a certain level, in fact, press them down?[196]

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banking business of the family and turned it into an international venture with branches in Brussels, London and Paris. Hirsch's remarkable wealth led him to get involved in various philanthropist projects most of them providing relief to poor Jews in Eastern Europe.

[195] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1 (Herzl Press, 1960), 20.

[196] Ibid., 26.

Herzl continues: "Do you realize that you are pursuing a terribly reactionary policy –

worse than that of the most absolute autocracy?"[197]

As Herzl's remarks make clear, his antagonism toward Hirsch was not merely out of

personal spite; it expressed his rejection of philanthropy altogether. Herzl saw philanthropy as an

expression of the traditional dependency on the nations within which they lived that the Jews had

developed over the generations. He thought that philanthropy robbed Jews of their freedom, even

if it was practiced by Jewish people. His Zionist Movement was to change all this by setting up a

grand transportation enterprise that would utilize the financial power of the Jewish

philanthropists to liberate the Jewish masses from their old-age dependency on European

societies. Herzl writes the following in his diary:

> Many latent political forces lie in our financial power, that power which our
>
> enemies assert to be so effective. It might be so, but actually it is not. Poor Jews
>
> feel only the hatred which this financial power provokes; its use in alleviating
>
> their lot as a body, they have not yet felt. The credit of our great Jewish financiers
>
> would have to be placed at the service of the National Idea.[198]

As to the actual bodies that would handle the transportation of Jews from Europe, Herzl

envisioned two main organs comprising the Zionist Movement: The Society of Jews and the

Jewish Company. The Society of Jews was to be the first and most important organ of the Zionist

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[197] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1 (Herzl Press, 1960), 27.

[198] Ibid., 61.

Movement. Herzl thought about the Society of Jews as the executive branch of his enterprise. It was to function as the sovereign. Herzl imagined that every Jewish community around the world would send a representative to the Society and together those delegates would form the representative body of the Jewish people. The first, and most important, task of the Society would be to negotiate the terms for the establishment of the Jewish state with the world powers. Later on, the Society of Jews would turn into: "… the nucleus out of which the public institutions of the Jewish State will later on be developed."[199]

The Jewish Company, on the other hand, would operate as a joint stock company that would manage all the financial issues involved in the relocation of Jews. The Company would be in charge of selling Jewish property in Europe and buying lands in Palestine (or Argentina). Once the Jewish state had been established, the company was to regulate all commerce in the new state.

Herzl based relations between the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company on the lessons he learned from the Panama Scandal.[200] In attempt to maintain a clear separation between private funding and the public good, Herzl attributed the utmost importance to maintaining an operational division between the financial aspect handled by the Jewish Company and the political aspect handled by the Jewish Society. When explaining why the two agencies should be kept apart he writes: "The latter will see to it that the enterprise does not become a Panama but a Suez."[201]

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[199] Thedor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 74.

[200] Ibid., Ibid

[201] Ibid., 51.

Yet, early on Herzl was still a leader without followers. Since this was the case, he searched for a moral principle that would ground his right to speak on behalf of the Jewish people. The principles Herzl came up with was *negotiorum gestio*. As in the case of the other components of his plan, *negotiorum gestio* had little to do with Jewish tradition. It had its origins, in fact, in Roman law. *Negotiorum gestio* codified the duty of every Roman citizen to protect his fellow citizen's interests without his consent in the event that he were prevented from doing so himself. If a house was in flames, for instance, and the owner was away, Roman law fixed responsibility on the neighbors to put out the fire.

Negotiorum gestio appears first in Herzl writings not in any Jewish context but as a constitutional principle Herzl thought might save the struggling Third Republic. In a piece Herzl published in the *Neue Freie Presse* in July 1895 he argues that, given the chaotic state of French parliamentary politics, the French people could no longer manage their common affairs and therefore need a *gestio* (or *gestiones*) who should be granted the authority to act on their behalf without their explicit constant.[202]

In the *Jewish State* Herzl transforms *negotiorum gestio* into the moral principle that grants him the right to represent the Jewish people without their explicit consent. Herzl writes:

> The Jewish people are at present prevented by the Diaspora from conducting their political affairs themselves. Besides, they are in a condition of more or less severe distress in many parts of the world. They need, above all things a gestor. This gestor cannot, of course, be a single individual. Such a one would either make himself ridiculous, or – seeing that he would appear to be working for his own

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[202] Theodor Herzl, *Collected Works*, (Neumann Publishing, 1960), 150-1. [Hebrew]

interests – contemptible. The **gestor** of the Jews must therefore be a body corporate. And that is the Society of Jews .[203][Emphasis added]

Once the Society of Jews, as the gestor of the Jews, embarked on the task of re-settling Jews in their new homeland, Herzl entrusted the building of the Jewish State to the hands of another body, based on an idea popular in Paris and Vienna at the time – a *Work Relief Plan* (*Assistance par le Travail*). The plan was a typical product of the Austrian School of Economic Theory of Anton Menger (1841-1906) and Loernz von Stein (1815-1890) – both of whom were among Herzl's teachers at the University of Vienna.[204] Nachum Gross points out that in Herzl's study-list there are no less than four courses he took with Stein. Stein's economic theory advocated for the protection of the lower classes from the ills of the capitalist system by tightening state regulation on the labor market.[205] The hallmark of his theory was a Work Relief Plan which provided jobs in public programs for the unemployed. Forty years before the New Deal, Stein's Work Relief Plan was already implemented in France, Belgium, and Germany. Herzl first mentions the program in a letter he wrote in July 1893 to Baron Chlumecky. In the letter, Herzl urges the Baron – who was at the time the Speaker of the Austrian Reichstag – to

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[203] Thedor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 73.

[204] For more on the Austrian School of Economic Theory see John Hicks and Wilhelm Weber, *Carl Menger and the Austrian school of economics*, (Clarendon Press, 1973).

[205] Nachum Gross, "Herzl's Economic Vision," in Robert Wistrich and Giedoen Shimoni (eds.) *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, (The Hebrew University Magness Press, 1999), 229.

immediately put into action the new plan in order to attenuate the social gaps that he thought were tearing apart Austria-Hungary.

In the Herzl's Zionist version of the plan, the building of the new state would take the shape of a national work relief plan. The plan would be directed by the Jewish Company that would operate as a Platonic human resources agency allocating jobs to the new immigrants according to their training and based on the Jewish national interest as prescribed by the Jewish Society. Herzl believed that through a work relief plan the Jewish Society would be able to insure that the labor market in the new state operated in accordance with the common good of the Jewish people.

The final stage of Herzl's plan was, of course, the Jewish state. Just like the other parts of his plan, Herzl drew the inspiration for his Jewish utopia not from the Jewish tradition but from his European surroundings as well as from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, Theodor Hertzka's *Freiland*, and Goethe's poems. The urban landscapes and architecture of Herzl's Jewish state were based on Vienna, Paris, and Prague; the language to be used in the Jewish state was to be German;[206] the form of government was to be an aristocratic republic.[207] Herzl insisted that the Jewish religion would be kept at bay and play only a ceremonial role.[208]

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[206] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. I, (Herzl Press, 1960), 171.

[207] Thedor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 77.

[208] Herzl's instrumental approach to the Jewish religious establishment is clearly seen in the following passage he writes down in his diary on June 15, 1895:

. . . the rabbis will be pillars of my organization . . . They will arouse the people, instruct them on the boats, and enlighten them on the other side. As a reward they will be formed into a fine, proud hierarchy which, to be sure, will **always remain subordinated to the state**.

Yet, from Herzl's writings it is also clear that he thought of the Jewish state neither as a simple return to a lost Jewish heritage nor as a way for Jews to entirely disengage from Europe. Since Herzl saw anti-Semitism as a result of the waning of the liberal order, the answer he devised for the former also addressed the latter. This seems to be the reason why Herzl's Jewish state looks very much like an upside-down picture of turn-of-the-century Paris and Vienna: The social gaps found in Europe at the time were to be replaced by social equality; corruption would give way to honesty; private interests would yield to the common good. Herzl's future Jewish state was not merely a parochial solution to anti-Semitism but a model for restoring the European liberal order: "The Jewish State is a world necessity" he comments in his diary.[209]

The Zionist Rabbis & the Herzl Family

The discussion so far seems to confirm Schorske's and McGrath's view of Herzl's plan as a thoroughly assimilationist project. His view of anti-Semitism as a product of the crisis of European liberalism, his attempt to emulate the grand European engineering projects of the time, and his vision of the Jewish state as a model of liberal restoration all indicate that Herzl's Zionist plan was unambiguously European.

Yet, sticking to the nuts and bolts of Herzl's plan can be misleading. Doing so leads to overlook a whole layer underlying his Zionist thought. Unveiling this layer requires moving back to the history of the Herzl family.

Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. I, (Herzl Press, 1960), 103-104.[Emphasis added]

[209] Ibid., 106.

The Herzl family was not the typical Viennese assimilated family. When the family was still living in Semlin – a small Austro-Hungarian frontier town near Belgrade – Jacob Herzl used to take his son Theodor to the town's reform synagogue where they prayed in Hebrew for *Shivat Zion* (*Return to Zion*).[210] The chief rabbi of Semlin in the 1830s and 1840s was Yehuda Alkalai, one of the first precursors of religious Zionism. Theodor's paternal grandfather, Simon Loeb Herzl (1805-1879), (who remained a strictly Orthodox Jew to the end of his days) was a follower of both Rabbi Natunk and Rabbi Alkalai. Tzvi Zehavi notes that, as a young boy, Theodor must have known both rabbis personally, as they were frequent guests in the Herzl household.[211] After making a fortune in the early 1860s, Jacob was known to give donations to both Rabbi Alkalai's and Rabbi Natunk's activities. Even after the Herzl family left Semlin, Simon Loeb continued to visit the Herzl family in Budapest and tell them about Rabbi Alkalai's and Rabbi Natunk's various enterprises.[212]

Alkalai and Natung were heading a group of rabbis, among whom were Rabbi Moses Sofer (1762-1839) and Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874), working in south-east Europe at the time, who offered a novel take on traditional Jewish messianism. In the traditional account, exile is a Godly punishment that will continue to prevail as long as there is still a rift between the Jewish people and God. Redemption in this tradition typically follows a cosmic, often catastrophic, event which evokes the saving grace of God. The Messiah would appear, according to the traditional account, when the Jews would sink to their lowest point. Yet, once they do, the

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[210] Tzvi Zehavi, *Me'ha-Hatam Sofer v'ad Herzl*, (The Zionist Library, 1965), 264. [Hebrew]

[211] Zehavi also notes that Rabbi Natunk's daughter recalled that her father was also a frequent guest in the Herzl household. Ibid., 214.

[212] Robert Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, (Oxford University Press, 1990), 423.

apocalypse becomes a gateway to utopia. In the End of Days exile comes to an end, and the Jewish people return to the Promised Land. The reinstatement of the Kingdom of David brings about the return of the Edenic condition not only for the Jewish people but for all of humankind.[213]

Opposing this traditional messianic account, the Zionist rabbis believed that Jews should not continue to wait for a cosmic event that would bring about their salvation but should work towards redeeming themselves. Closely watching the national liberation movements in Serbia, Hungary, and Romania and the rising tides of anti-Semitism, the Zionist rabbis came to believe that the best way to achieve spiritual redemption would be the resettlement of the Holy Land. In arguing so, Sofer, Alkalai, and the others transformed redemption from a cosmic event that would take place at an unknown point in the future, into a feasible occurrence launched by the active pursuit of the Return to the Promised Land.

Early on, Rabbi Sofer called his followers to establish Jewish colonies in Palestine.[214] Rabbi Alkalai laid out in his many writings a plan for self-redemption which was founded on his view of cultivating the Promised Land as means for *Repentance* (*Teshuva*). In his essay, *The Godly Revelation by Moses*, first published in 1850, Rabbi Tatunk writes the following:

We cannot wait anymore. We cannot wait until God will release his people by miracles. The ages of miracles have long past. We have to begin with the labor,

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[213] Gershom Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, (Schocken Books, 1971), 13.

[214]Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 104.

and surely God will help us ... our new building of the House of Israel is founded on the natural foundations of nationalism and language; it must come, and it will come.[215]

And, indeed, since the 1840s small groups of Jews answered the calls of the precursors of religious Zionism and traveled to Palestine to establish the first Jewish colonies with the hope of begetting salvation.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

A close look at the specifics of Natunk's and Alkalai's endeavors reveals similarities to Herzl's Zionist enterprise that are unmistakable. Fifty years before Herzl approached Hirsch and the Rothschilds, Natunk and Alkalai chose to center their pleadings on the Jewish philanthropists. Alkalai opens his essay, *Minchat Yehuda* (1843), by bringing to his readers a reply-letter written to him by the English philanthropist Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) in which Montefiore congratulated him on his projects of founding agricultural collectives in Palestine. Later, Alkalai also attempted to secure funds for his projects from Isaac Adolphe Crémieux (1796-1880) and even from the Rothschilds.[216]

Herzl's trust of diplomacy also seems to build on Rabbi Natunk's and Rabbi Alkalai's early activities. From the early 1840s, both rabbis went on diplomatic missions to convince world leaders about the possible advantages of a Jewish state. Up to his final settlement in Palestine in the early 1870s, Alkalai traveled across Europe and met statesmen, diplomats, and

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[215] Tzvi Zehavi, *Me Hata'am Sofer le-Herzl*, (The Zionist Library, 1965), 198. [Hebrew]

[216] Yitzhak Goldberg, "Shnei Mevasrei Hazionut", in Arie Strikovski (ed.), *Mevasrei Ha-Zionut: Harav Tzvi Kalisher Ve Harav Yehuda hai Alkalai*,(The Israeli Education Ministry, 2013), 8. [Hebrew]

other officials in hope of striking a deal that would facilitate the establishment of a Jewish state.[217] In 1867 Rabbi Natunk travelled to Kushta, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, to convince the Sultan to sell Palestine to a conglomerate of Jewish organizations. Natunk's letters from Kushta look very much like Herzl's descriptions of his visit to Constantinople exactly thirty years later (1897).

The personal connection between the Herzl family and Natunk and Alkali and the striking similarities between the rabbis' enterprises and Herzl's leave little doubt as to the influence they had on his Zionist thought. Yet, if this is indeed so, is it possible to identify messianic elements in Herzl's European-tinged enterprise?

Herzl's Political Messianism

Looking at Herzl's Zionist plan in the context provided above brings the messianic impulse into the light. First, in accordance with traditional Jewish messianism, Herzl's Zionism is based on his understanding of the Jewish existence in the Diaspora as a great misfortune. Yet, as noted above, his experience in turn-of-the-century Vienna and Paris led Herzl to consider the harsh realities of Jews in modern times not as the result of a God-given punishment, but as an outcome of the very real and concrete socio-economic position Jews came to occupy in Europe.

It is also evident that, just like the Jewish messianic tradition, Herzl's Zionism was essentially a theory of catastrophe. Yet, while in the Jewish tradition the catastrophe takes the shape of a cosmic event, Herzl's experience in Vienna and Paris led him to identify it as the popular anti-Semitic movements of his time. Herzl's focus on the concrete social and political

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[217] Tzvi Zehavi, Me Hata'am Sofer to Herzl, (The Zionist Library, 1965), 268. [Hebrew]

circumstances that underlay the Jewish existence in Europe led him to call out anti-Semitism as the catastrophe destined to prompt the End of Days.

> Everything tends, in fact, to one and the same conclusion, which is clearly enunciated in that classic Berlin phrase: "Juden Raus!" … The nations in whose midst Jews live are all either covertly or openly anti-Semitic … Anti-Semitism increases day by day and hour by hour among the nations; indeed, it is bound to increase ….[218]

Yet, very much like traditional Jewish messianism, Herzl also believed that the calamity of anti-Semitism also carried the prospect for redemption. In accordance with the Jewish messianic tradition, Herzl thought that once anti-Semitism would sink the Jews to their lowest level, it would become the source of their salvation. This is evident from the passage quoted above (page 105), which is worth repeating, in which Herzl stated: "We are one people – our enemies have made us one without our consent, as repeatedly happens in history. Distress binds us together, and, thus united, we suddenly discover our strength."[219]

Like Alkalai and Natunk, Herzl believed that redemption would not be a natural occurrence but should be actively pursued by working towards the restoration of Jewish nationhood. Yet, whereas for the Zionist rabbis redemption still remained a miraculous event involving a godly undoing of the laws of nature, Herzl viewed it as the making of modern-day

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[218] Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, (Dover Publications, 2008), 43, 45.

[219] Ibid., 46.

technology. Herzl's typical bourgeois faith in the capacity of technology to facilitate material and moral progress led him to believe that Jews no longer needed to pray for a cosmic event, since they could redeem themselves by using railways, steam engines, and electricity to turn the age-old dream of the Return to the Promised Land into a living reality. This reasoning was at the root of Herzl's view of the Zionist Movement as a grand transportation enterprise that would utilize technological progress to bring back the Jews to their homeland.

Nonetheless, unlike all forms of religious messianism, the central drama in Herzl's thought was not between the Jewish people and the Almighty but between the Jewish people and the nations of the world. And, indeed, Herzl's future Jewish state was to address exactly that. *Tikkun* (*repairing*) for Herzl did not engender a harmony between the Jewish people and God but between the Jews and the non-Jewish world. The Jewish state, Herzl believed, would bring to an end the tension between the Jews and mankind: "The Promised Land … where at last we can live as free men on our own soil and die in peace in our own homeland … where we shell live at peace with the world."[220]

What's more, just like the biblical prophets, Herzl thought that the Jewish state would not be limited to the restoration of the House of David but would bring about salvation to all mankind. Yet, while for religious messianism universal redemption comes in the form of a spiritual unification between the Jews and God, in Herzl's Zionism it took the shape of a model Jewish state that salvages the Jewish people and restores the European liberal order. The messianic arrival of the Zionist Movement marks the first step in harmonizing Jews and gentiles and spreading justice across the world.

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[220] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. I, (Herzl Press, 1960), 101.

In sum, it is evident that, behind the European façade of Herzl's Zionist plan, were the key themes guiding the Jewish messianic thought that had been developing in Central Europe of his time: The view of exile as punishment, the anticipation of an apocalyptic catastrophe that would bring about redemption, the belief that redemption of the Jewish people would bring about the salvation of all humankind – all these messianic themes were found, in some shape or form, at the heart of Herzl's Zionist plan.

Michelangelo's Moses

About a year before his death, in 1903 Herzl spoke with his biographer, Reuben Brainin, about the influence the idea of the messiah had on him. Herzl recalled that in 1873 he had received as a Bar-Mitzvah gift a book about the legend of the Exodus from Egypt that had a profound effect on him. Herzl did not remember the name of the book. Yet, in light of the close relationship between Herzl's grandfather and the Zionist rabbis and the fact that both rabbis wrote in German, it stands to reason that it was one of their many writings calling for messianic national liberation of the Jewish people. Herzl's account captures the special relationship between fin-de-siècle social criticism and Jewish messianism found in his Zionist thought:

> I read in it [the book] about the coming of the Messiah whose arrival is awaited daily by many Jews even in this generation. And he comes as a pauper riding on an ass … those fragments of the Messiah legend kindled my imagination. My heart filled with pain and vague longing … One night, as I was going to sleep, I suddenly remembered the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The story of the

historical exodus and the legend of the future redemption which will be brought about by King Messiah became confused in my mind. The past and the future, all became for me one beautiful, magic legend, a kind of exalted and wondrous song. And in my mind the idea took shape of writing a poem about King Messiah. For several nights this thought kept me awake … The days of examinations in the school arrived: also new books came … and diverted my thoughts from the suffering of the Messiah. But in the depth of my soul, it seems, the legend continued to expand, though I was unaware of it. One night I had a wonderful dream: King Messiah came, and he was old and glorious. He lifted me in his arms, and he soared with me on the wings of the wind. On one of the clouds, full of splendor, we met the figure of Moses (his appearance was like that of Moses hewn in marble by Michelangelo; from my early childhood I liked to look at the photograph of that statue), and the Messiah called to Moses: "For this child I have prayed!" Then he turned to me: "Go and announce to the Jews that I will soon come and perform great miracles for my people and for the whole world!" I woke up, and it was a dream. I kept this dream a secret and did not dare to tell it to anybody.[221]

The passage demonstrates the spell the messianic idea had over Herzl. Herzl's account touches on some of the major elements of Jewish messianism – the spiritual experience; the temporal flux; the universal nature. Yet, the passage also brings to light the secular and non-

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[221] Quoted by Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, (Wayne State University, 1979), 272-273.

Jewish nature characterizing Herzl's outlook. The final destination of the King Messiah and Herzl was not God, but Moses – the symbol of Jewish national liberation. The partnership between the King Messiah and Moses seems to point to a straight link Herzl drew between spiritual salvation and national liberation – one that does not pass through established Jewish religion. One figure, who, in fact, does not have any role in Herzl's dream, is God.

Furthermore, the way Herzl describes the King Messiah and Moses has little to do with their common depictions in the Jewish tradition. Herzl's King Messiah seems to take up both the role of the messenger and of God. When introducing Herzl to Moses, he refers to him as the one who will carry *his* message. Also, the King Messiah asserts that it is he – and not God – who will perform great miracles for *his* people. No less important is the fact that Herzl's Messiah is a king. This seems to indicate that, in contrast to the Jewish tradition, the messiah enjoys not only divine inspiration but political authority and social stature.

As for Moses, from Herzl's account we learn that while the young man may have been inspired by the biblical story of the exodus from Egypt, the image of Moses he had in mind was based on Michelangelo's statue (see Figure 5 below). The statue, commissioned by Pope Julius II in 1505 AD resembles, however, more a Greek god or a mighty prince than anything Jewish. Michelangelo's figure of Moses, with its long glossy beard, muscular arms, and aristocratic posture all carved out of white shiny marble – was one of the seminal icons of the High Renaissance – not of Jewish culture.

Figure 5: Moses by Michelangelo, San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome

While it is tempting to assume that Herzl's admiration of Michelangelo's statue as well as the other secular and non-Jewish elements in his thought point to the assimilationist nature of his whole Zionist enterprise, the account above indicates otherwise. It seems that Michelangelo's statue in fact provided Herzl with a way to *recover* the Jewish messianic themes of his childhood. It is as if Herzl could come to terms with his Jewish heritage only through a non-Jewish European form. While early on it was Michelangelo's Moses, later it was the Roman *gestor*, Stein's Work Relief Plan, and above all the overly European Jewish state that enabled Herzl to return to his Jewish heritage. All these European forms did not strip Herzl's messianic ideas of their Jewish nature. On the contrary, they endowed them with a new and fresh meaning. Herzl's liberal bourgeois fear of anti-Semitism led him to transform the traditional Jewish dread from an apocalyptic catastrophe into a modern-day ideology warning Jews of the grim future awaiting them in Europe. His liberal faith in technology as the bearer of human progress showed him the way to bring down to earth the miraculous appearance of the messiah and give it the

shape of a grand transportation enterprise. The Roman *gestor* endowed him with the authority to take the role of a Jewish messiah who would redeem the Jewish people and salvage the crumbling liberal order. It is as if the ideas and values to which Herzl was exposed in Vienna and Paris got attached to the Jewish messianic themes he grew up on and infused them with new meaning. This peculiar blend of Jewish messianism and turn-of-the-twentieth-century European ideas is what made Herzl's Zionism a unique kind of political messianism that could be termed Herzlism.

While the literature on Herzl typically highlights either the Jewish messianic or the thoroughly European dimensions of his Zionist plan, in this chapter I argued that both are in fact found in his ideas. In the discussion I attempted to shed light on the singular nature of Herzl's Zionist thought with hopes of clarifying the choice of including Herzl in a study side-by-side with Rousseau and Marx. In the next chapter we will return to the main theme guiding this project and explore the role that turn-of-the-century mass media played in the formation of Herzlism.

Chapter Four

The Journalist as Messiah: Journalism, Mass Circulation and Theodor Herzl's Zionist Vision

More than forty years had passed since Marx and Engels used industrialized print language to conjure up their revolutionary materialist outlook. By the 1890s political writers in Europe were already working in a very different media culture in which the telegraph, the stereotype, and offset printing were spreading written language in unprecedented scale across all social classes which by then were already overwhelmingly literate. The 1890s were the early days of mass media.

Much of the research literature on Herzl tends to downplay the influence of his career as a journalist on his Zionism. The common assumption is that Herzl's post in the *Neue Freie Presse* was unrelated to his Zionist vision, and that once Herzl embraced the Zionist cause he operated in two separated channels: one, as a journalist, and the other, as the visionary of the Jewish state.[222] Nevertheless, placing Herzl in the mass media culture of the time shows him to

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[222] See for example, Robert Wistrich's account of Herzl's path to Zionism in *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Frnz Joseph*, (Oxford University Press, 1990), 433-436. More recent examples are Isaiah Friedman's account of Herzl's political activities in "Theodor Herzl: Political Activities", *Israel Studies*, 9/3 (2004), 46-79, and Shlomo Avineri's treatment of the early days of Herzl's Zionism in *Herzl*, (Zalman Shazar, 2007). 78-102 [Hebrew]. All three works presuppose that Herzl's Zionist awakening had little to do with his daily activities as a journalist. Edward Timms, however, shows that Herzl used his post in the *Neue Freie Presse* as a power-base to promote his Zionist plan. See, Edward Timms, "The Literary Editor of the Neue Freie Presse", in Gideon Shimoni and Robert Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: The Visionary of the Jewish State*, (Herzl Press, 1999), 52-67. Nonetheless, Timms' exclusive focus

be an exceptional case of a man of letters who made use of his position in the industry of word production to evolve into a leader of an international movement.

The first section of the chapter will sketch in broad strokes the emergence of European mass-circulation newspapers in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The second section will narrow the discussion to the media culture in Vienna and Paris of the 1890s. This section will focus particularly on the transformation of the *Neue Freie Presse* into one of the most respected publications in Europe as well as on the French anti-Semitic gutter press which was gaining immense popularity – especially during the time Herzl worked for the newspaper in Paris. Next, the spotlight will shift to the role Herzl's daily routine as a journalist in Paris had in politicizing his views and leading him to take up the Zionist cause. The next two sections will trace Herzl's sophisticated use of mass-circulation and his personal connections as a journalist to advance his Zionist enterprise.

Mass Media Technologies

I would like to begin by briefly discussing the changing nature of reading in Western and Central Europe in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Unlike the two cases we previously discussed, since the 1870s reading was spreading across all social classes in most Western and Central European countries. Thanks to the establishment of compulsory primary education systems (following the Elementary Education Act in England (1870) and the Jule Ferry Laws

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on Herzl's visit to Constantinopole leads him to overlook the role his post in the *Neue Freie Presse* played in his initial decision to take up the Zionist cause. See more on Timm's argument in pages 152 to 156 aobve.

(1882) in France), by the end of the century literacy rates in Western Europe reached eighty to ninety percent.[223] Also, during that period the shortening of the working day led to the creation of leisure time which more and more people were using to read. Whereas in the mid-nineteenth century the average working day extended up to fifteen hours, by 1880s it did not exceed ten. In Germany, for example, a ten-hour working day became the norm after 1880. By the same time, a nine-hour working day became the rule in England.[224] Following the shortening of the working day, in the last two decades of the century, reading became a widespread social practice engrained in the everyday life of the public at large. This, in turn, prepared the ground for the transformation of the newspaper industry into a "preëminent institution", as Jürgen Habermas puts it.[225]

Yet, by the end of the century there still remained significant gaps all across Europe between literacy rates in the big industrial urban centers and the rural peripheries. This was most clearly seen in the Austro-Hungarian Empire which is of particular importance in the context of our discussion here. Whereas in the industrialized Western regions of the Habsburg Empire such as Tyrol, Bohemia and in the capital of Vienna literacy rates in the 1880s ranged from seventy to ninety percent, in the rural Eastern regions of Galicia, Transylvania and Bukovina they remained

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[223] Robert Byrnes, "The French Publishing Industry and Its Crisis in the 1890's", *The Journal of Modern History,* 23/3 (1951), 232-42.

[224] Martin Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children,Workers", in Cavallo Guglielmo and Roger Charrtier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 313.

[225] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1989), 181.

in the low thirties.[226] In light of these significant gaps in literacy rates the Austrian printing industry served a small reading elite rather than the public at large. As we will see later on, those gaps were clearly reflected in the rather 'closed' and elitist nature of Austrian newspapers.

Literacy rates in Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe are of special interest in the context of the discussion in this chapter since it was these communities which turned out to be Herzl's greatest supporters. According to a census carried out in Russia in 1897 the literacy rates among male Jews was forty-nine percent and it was twenty-nine percent among Jewish females. Stephen Corrsin notes, however, that these rates must actually have been much higher than the census would suggest given the text-based nature of Jewish culture.[227] A clue regarding why the real literacy rates among Jews were not reflected in the official numbers is found in another census done in Austria in 1880 which listed Jews who wrote in Yiddish and Hebrew as illiterate since these languages were not official ones.[228] With the two dominant languages Jews were using at the time excluded, the census still showed that the literacy rates among Jews were around sixty percent, which was on par with the literacy rates in the general population. Given the unreliable nature of the official data about Jewish literacy rates, most scholars agree that around the turn-of-the-century Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe were thoroughly literate.[229] As we will see later on, this fact explains the political power Herzl was

[226] An extensive treatment of literacy in the Austro-Hungarian Empire could be found in, István György Tóth, *Literacy and written culture in early modern central Europe*, (Central European Press, 2000).

[227] Michael Corrsin, "Literacy Rates and Questions of Language, Faith, and Ethnic Identity in Popoulation Censuses in the Partitioned Polish Lands and Interwar Poland", *The Polish Review*, XLIII/2, (1998), 132.

[228] Ibid., 140.

[229] See for example, Shaul Stampfer, "Literacy among East European Jews in the Modern Era: Context, Sources, and Implications", in *Transition and Change in Modern Jewish History: Essays Presented in Honor of Shmuel Ettinger*,

able to garner among those communities as a senior journalist working in the early days of mass-circulation.

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The growing literacy rates and the changing nature of reading led, in turn, to a set of technological advancements introduced in the printing industry which aimed at satisfying the mass demand for reading materials. One such advancement was the stereotype – a cast-metal plate which allowed printers to cast a whole page of type in a single mold.[230] Although the stereotype was invented as early as the 1730s, it entered into commercial use only in the mid-nineteenth century following the inventions of the stereotype printer (1803) and later the Papier Mache (1828). Whereas before the invention of stereotypes reprints required setting the type each time from scratch, the stereotype metal plates allowed printers to make consecutive print runs without having to change the type standing. The repetitive use of a single printing plate increased the number of copies which could be reproduced and lowered their cost. Stereotypes also mobilized printing by allowing printers to send stereotypes to other print shops. The mobility of stereotypes especially contributed to the development of mass-circulation newspapers as it allowed to format them according to a single stereotype plait and to produce from it numerous copies.

(Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1987), 460-480 [Hebrew]; Joel Perlman, "Russian-Jewish Literacy in 1897: A Reanalysis of Census Data", *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, (Jerusalem, 1987); Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World 1700-1900*, (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), 20-34.

[230] Rob Banham, "The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970", Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *The Companion to the Histroy of the Book* , (Blackwell, 2007), 278-79.

Another invention that was changing the face of printing was lithography. Although the technique was already developed in the early nineteenth century, it entered commercial use only in the 1850s thanks to the introduction of offset printing. Basically, lithography involves transferring either text or image from a flat surface onto a sheet of paper. Since the surface is covered by a greasy substance which repels water while retaining ink, the ink applied to the paper adheres only to the sketched parts while keeping the blank ones clear. Until the commercial use of lithography, printers used metal types which were expensive to produce, depleted fast and limited the fonts and images which could be printed. Offset printing, which incorporated the technique of lithography into mass printers, solved all these shortcomings. First, because the lithographic plate underwent only minimal wear, a single text or image could be used to create almost an almost unlimited number of copies. In addition, contrary to the metal types which were based on an extremely limited type of variety of fonts and images, offset printing enabled printers to use the technique of lithography to print any image that was drawn on the lithographic plate.

The mechanization of lithography proved to be a milestone in the history of graphic representation. It revolutionized the production and dissemination of images. When Walter Benjamin noted that in the age of mechanical reproduction the work of art is detached from its place in tradition and loses its authenticity, he most probably had in mind Transfer Lithography and Offset Printing which were wiping out any clear distinction between the original image and it reproduction as they allowed lithographs to reproduce unlimited number of copies from any

single image drawn on paper.[231] The mechanization of lithography allowed the technical reproduction and mass circulation of illustrated images of people, places and events of the day. Consequently, the new technology opened a whole new range of possibilities of using graphic art for *political* purposes.

Thanks to the commercial use of lithography, the reproduced image in newspapers, postcards and posters became a widespread medium through which people from all walks of life could relate to their political surroundings. It allowed graphic artists to produce and propagate satirical sketches of events of the day. Early on in Britain, James Gillray (1756-1815) produced satirical cartoons directed against British mores as well as figures such as King George the III, Prime Minister William Pitt and Napoleon. Among Gillray's best satirical sketches was *The First Kiss these Ten Years!* (1803) which conveyed a cynical take on the peace agreement just signed between England and France. The image shows a tall and thin French soldier bending to kiss a short, fat and extravagantly dressed Britannia (See, Figure I, page 117). The soldier is saying "Madame, permittez me to pay my profound esteem to your engaging person! – and to seal on your divine lips my everlasting attachment!!!" Britannica replies: "Monsieur, you are truly a well-bred Gentleman! – Tho' you make me blush, yet, you kiss so delicately, that I cannot refuse you tho' I was sure you would deceive me again!!!"

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[231] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed.), (Schocken Books, 1969), 220-225. The best account of these technological advancements in the printing press in the latter half of the nineteenth century could be found in: James Moran, *Printing presses; history and development from the fifteenth century to modern times*, (University of California Press, 1973), 143-211.

In France, Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) used mechanized lithography to deliver a devastating critique of the French society and the corruption of the French legal and political systems. Charles Baudelaire recalled that: "Each morning (Daumier) keeps the population of our city amused . . . the bourgeoisie, the businessman, the urchin and the housewife all laugh and pass on their way".[232] Daumier's popularity did not stop Louis Philippe (1773-1850), the "Citizen King", from imprisoning him for six months after he published a caricature of him as a monster eating his subjects a life (See Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: James Gillray, *The First Kiss in Ten Years*!, January 1803, Library of Congress.

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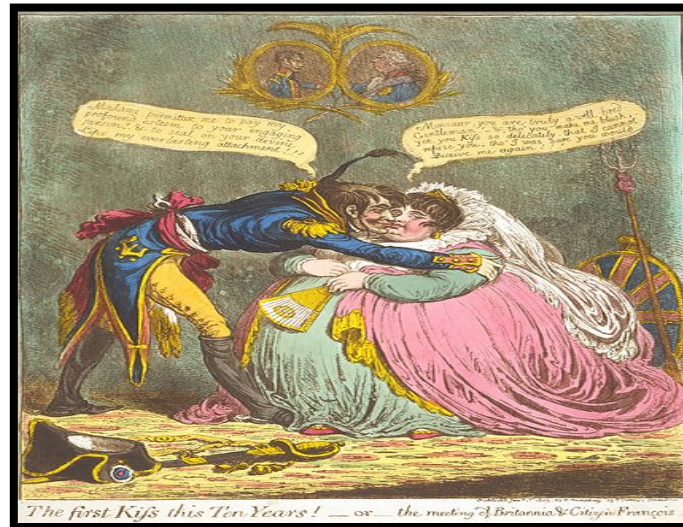
[232] Quoted by Peter Beck, "Pages of History: Daumier's Political Eye", *History Today*, 59/2 (2008), 34.

Figure 7: Honoré Daumier, *Gargantua*, "La Caricature", 1831, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Whereas stereotypes and the industrialized use of lithography were improving the human ability to reproduce the visible world onto paper, the telegraph, developed in the 1830s, revolutionized the spread of written language over time and space. Called by one historian the Victorian Internet, the telegraph was the first technology harnessing electricity to transmit written language without an object-bearing message.[233] During the 1830s Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855), David Alter (1807-1881) and Samuel Morse (1791-1872) used various devices to transmit electronic signals sent through long-distance wires. The first commercial telegraph was developed by William Fothergill Cooke (1806-1879) and Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875). By the 1860s the telegraph became a widespread medium too expensive for the use of private individuals but widely used by governments, businesses and newspapers.[234] The big revolution

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[233] See, Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's on-Line Pioneers*, (Walker and Co., 1998).

[234] Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*, (Basic Books, 2004), 177.

came with the invention of the wireless telegraph in the 1880s and 1890s thanks to the findings of Heinrich Hertz (1857-1894), Édouard Branly (1844-1940) and others which allowed the transmitting of electronic signals without wires using radio waves and electromagnetic inductions.[235] As we will see later on, the wireless telegraph proved to be instrumental in Herzl's ability to use his position as a journalist to become a statesman.

Mass-Circulation Newspapers

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century all these technological advancements were channeled to the production of mass-circulation newspapers. Stereotype plates were used by newspapers to produce numerous copies from a single mold at a low cost. Offset printing enabled newspapers to reproduce and circulate, on a mass scale, images of people, places, and events of the day. Thanks to the wireless telegraph, journalists could transmit their reports in a matter of minutes from almost every location around the globe.

Mass-circulation newspapers were revolutionizing the relationship between society and print language. The enhanced ability of mass-circulation newspapers to serve as true-to-life representations of the visible world turned them into a major medium through which people met their physical, social and political surroundings. Thanks to mass-circulation newspapers, distant lands moved from the endless point beyond the horizon to the confines of the spreadsheet; reading the newspaper was gradually replacing face-to-face encounter as the main venue for

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[235] Another groundbreaking telecommunication device which was invented in that period was the telephone, patented by Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) in 1876.

social interaction; politics was moving from behind closed doors to the front headlines of the morning newspaper.

Yet, whereas print was gulping the concrete world, it was also spreading more and more across it. Gideon Reuveni notes that the new mass media technologies and the improvements made in the distribution and marketing techniques of printed products in the last decades of the nineteenth century led to the creation of new urban "reading sites". Reading was now moving from the private salons and fashionable coffee houses to railways stations, kiosks and street corners which were bringing together readers from all social classes. Those sites were making print a permanent feature of the modern urban landscape. The printing industry filled these new reading sites with highbrow literature as well as cheap novels, maps, timetables and, of course, newspapers. By offering a diverse range of printed products, the new reading sites were embedding newspapers in the daily activities of the 'traveling', 'eating' and 'chatting' public thereby, turning newspaper-reading into a common social practice.[236]

The blurring of the traditional distinctions between the 'global' and the 'local' and between 'high' and 'low' by mass-circulation newspapers, was closely related to the widespread feeling in fin-de-siècle Europe which the Viennese writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929) described as the "slipping away" ("das Gleitende") of the world.[237] One of the first to notice that was Max Nordau (1849-1923) (who later became Herzl's right hand in the Zionist Movement)

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[236] Gideon Reuveni, "Reading Sites as Sights for Reading: The Sale of Newspapers in Germany before 1933: Bookshops in railway Stations, Kiosks and Street Vendors," *Social History*, 27/3 (2009), 275.

[237] As quoted by, Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (Vintage Books, 1979), 9.

who pointed the finger of blame to the French mass-circulation newspapers as the chief reason for the moral "degeneration" ("entartung") of fin-de-siècle liberal Europe.[238]

Towards the end of the century the print-dazed public turned more and more to journalists as opinion leaders who in turn were producing simplified and accessible accounts of the increasingly complex social and political realities. The newspaper industry became a public realm unto itself where journalists were producing sense-stimulating and thought-provoking typographical accounts of the social and political world. Whereas in the days of Rousseau the 'author' still could not reach the vast majority of people, and in the days of Marx and Engels he managed to reach only particular – mostly intellectual groups – by the end of the century mass-circulation newspapers became a vehicle through which Émile Zola, Georges Clemenceau, Williams Thomas Stead, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Felix Vallotton, Mark Twain and many others managed to reach the public at large.

The Neue Freie Presse & The French Anti-Semitic "Gutter Press"

Before the 1848 Revolution, only three daily newspapers operated in Vienna.[239] Following the departure of Metternich the number of newspapers in Austro-Hungarian empire grew from seventy nine in 1848 to over eight hundred in 1873.[240] Nonetheless, in light of the vast gaps in literacy rates between the Eastern rural areas and the Western industrialized parts of

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[238] Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, (D. Appleton and Company, 1895), 39.

[239] Richard Grunberger, "Jews in Austrian Journalism", in Josef Fraenkel (ed.), *The Jews of Austria: Essays on Their Life, History and Destruction*, (Vallentine & Mitchell, 1967), 83.

[240] Robin Okey, "The Neue Freie Presse and the South Slavs of the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85/1 (January, 2007), 80.

the Empire, the circulation of Austrian newspapers in the latter part of the nineteenth century remained relatively low and they continued to target mostly the Viennese cultural and financial elite.

From the 1870s on, two Viennese daily newspapers were above all the rest in terms of circulation and prestige: The *Wiener Tagblatt* and the *Neue Freie Presse*. The history of the *Neue Freie Presse* is of particular interest to our discussion here. Called early on *Die Presse*, the newspaper first appeared immediately after the 1848 Revolution (See Figure 8 below). Contrary to most of the other publications which appeared at the time, that were closed soon after, *Die Presse* managed to stay afloat thanks to the high quality of journalism mainly by the two men who were running it: August Zang (1807-1888) and Hieronymus Lorm (1821-1902). In the early 1860s a new editorial team took over the newspaper, changed its name to the *Neue Freie Presse* and gave it a liberal bent intended to appeal to the Viennese bourgeois elite. This proved to be a smart tactic when two years later the Austrian liberals took control of government. In the nine years that followed, the circulation of the *Neue Freie Presse* increased nearly nine-fold from four thousand in 1864 to thirty-five thousand in 1873.[241] In 1872 Eduard Bacher (1846-1908) and Moritz Benedikt (1835-1920) – two Germanized Jews – took over the *Neue Freie Presse*. In the following years, the two talented publishers/editors further increased the circulation and reputation of the *Neue Freie Presse* which by the 1880s became widely known as one of the most respected publications in Europe. By the end of the century, the circulation of the *Neue Freie Presse* reached a hundred and fourteen thousand.[242]

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[241] Robin Okey, "The Neue Freie Presse and the South Slavs of the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85/1 (January, 2007), 81.

[242] Ibid., Ibid.

Figure 8: The front page of the first issue of the "Die Presse", July 1848, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

From the 1880s up to the First World War, the *Neue Freie Presse* became one of the most powerful establishments in the Habsburg Empire. During that time, Bacher and Benedikt became so influential that it was said that the Emperor nominated candidates for ministerial posts only after consulting with them.[243] The Viennese bourgeois readers of the newspaper held it in such high esteem that some of them added "Subscriber to the Neue Freie Presse" to their visiting cards.[244] The newspaper attained such a prominent status that on various occasions it allowed itself even to openly criticize the Austrian government in the name of the liberal Viennese bourgeois values it stood for.

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[243] Richard Grunberger, "Jews in Austrian Journalism", in Josef Fraenkel (ed.), *The Jews of Austria: Essays on Their Life, History and Destruction*, (Vallentine & Mitchell, 1967), 89.

[244] Robin Okey, "The Neue Freie Presse and the South Slavs of the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85/1 (January, 2007), 81.

In 1891 Bacher and Benedikt made a bold move and hired a not so well-known Viennese playwright – Theodor Herzl – to serve in the important post of the Paris correspondent of the newspaper. Soon it turned out that Herzl's elegant writing style and sharp reports were a perfect fit for the *Neue Freie Presse*. In the years that followed Herzl became one of the most valuable assets of the newspaper and his reports and feuilletons helped to further boost its circulation and prestige.

<div align="center">*******</div>

Unlike in Austria-Hungary, where the leading newspapers were closely affiliated with the Viennese liberal elite in power, from the time of the French Revolution, the French newspapers were known for their biting critique of government. This was more so since the 1870s when French newspapers began to enjoy high circulation rates which served as a solid financial basis allowing them to operate in relative independence from pressures exerted by government.[245]

As the century progressed, French newspapers became more and more popular. James Smith Allen notes that between 1820 and 1936 the number of newspapers in Paris increased more than sixty times.[246] Whereas the circulation of *Le Figaro* was a little over sixty thousand in 1870, ten years later it reached nearly a hundred and five thousand.[247] The circulation of *Le Petit Journal* more than doubled from three hundred and twenty thousand in 1870, to over five

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[245] Lenore O'Boyle,"The Image of the Journalist in France, Germany and England 1815-1848", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10/3 (1968), 291.

[246] Allen Smith, *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France: 1800-1940*, (Princeton University Press, 1991), 42.

[247] Ibid.,323.

hundred and eighty thousand in 1880.[248] By 1880, the overall circulation of Parisian daily newspapers had risen from around two hundred thousand in 1858 to over two million in 1880, and by 1910 it rose to over five million.[249] Compared to the limited circulation of the leading Viennese newspapers, by the end of the century the French newspaper became a true mass medium.

The golden age of French mass-circulation newspapers came in the period of time leading up to the Dreyfus Affair (which first became public in October of 1894). Whereas in Jewish history the Dreyfus Affair is considered to be a defining moment in the rise of European anti-Semitism, in media history it is known as the first true modern media-hype generated most of all by mass-circulation newspapers. During the time of the Affair the *La Revue Blanche*, the *L'Aurore*, the *La Libre Parole*, and many other smaller publications turned into battlegrounds in which the new media technologies were put to use to produce storylines and political imagery which were tearing apart the Third Republic.[250]

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[248] Allen Smith, *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France: 1800-1940*, (Princeton University Press, 1991), 323.

[249] Theodor Zelden, *France 1848-1945: Taste, and Corruption*, (Oxford University Press, 1980), 192.

[250] It is important to note in the context of this discussion the ongoing debate about the impact of French newspapers on French society during the time of the *Dreyfus Affair*. Key works which stress the decisive impact French newspapers had on French society during the Affair include: Michael Burns, *Rural Society and French Politics: Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, 1886-1900*, (Princeton University Press, 1984); Eugen Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle*, (Belknap Press, 1986); Edward Berneson, "Politics and the French Peasantry: The Debate Continues", *Social History*, 12 (1987), 213-29. Other scholars question the actual influence of French newspapers during the time of the Affair. See, for example, Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France", *The American Historical Review*, 97/1 (1992), 55-95.

The power of French newspapers during the Dreyfus Affair is captured by the cover of the weekly journal *Le Cri de Paris* published in January 13 1898 (see figure 9 below). The cover displaying a woodcut by the painter Fèlix Valloton (1865-1925) under the title *L'Age du Papaier* (*The Age of Paper*) was published ten days after the *L'Aurore* published Zola's famous article *J'accuse*. The image shows newspapers as turn-of-the-century tablets in which the print-hungry Parisians burry their faces while completely breaking off from the actual setting of the café. The image was a parody of the growing capacity of the French press to overshadow actual social realities.

Figure 9 : Fèlix Vallotton, *L'age du papier*, "Le cri de Paris", January 23, 1898. The Jewish Museum, New York.

Yet, unlike the earlier cases of Rousseau and Marx, during the time of the Dreyfus Affair most French mass-circulation newspapers did not utilize their popularity to promote progressive political views, rather, they breathed new life into an old prejudice. During the time of the Affair the new media technologies mentioned earlier led to the creation of the notorious French anti-

Semitic gutter press. These publications were making use of the enhanced capacity of the

printing industry to produce unlimited number of copies at a low cost to conjure up grotesque

portrayals of Jews as a biologically inferior group and spread them throughout French society.

Robert Byrnes points out that whereas the annual average of anti-Semitic publications in the first

half of the 1880s was less than one, by 1889 it reached twenty.[251] Michael Marrus notes that by

October of 1894 (when Alfred Dreyfus was first arrested) the circulation of Edouard Drumount's

(1844-1917) notorious *La Libre Parole* reached a peak circulation of two-hundred thousand.[252]

This was a large circulation even compared to mainstream newspapers. By the mid-1890s

publications such as the *La Croix* and *La Libre Parole* began publishing anti-Semitic materials in

almost every edition.[253]

During the time of the Dreyfus Affair the French gutter press utilized the new mass

media technologies to shape the loads of electronic signals transmitted through the telegraph

lines into oversimplified storylines and monstrous images of Jews. The widespread use of

mechanical stereotypes produced beastly *social* stereotypes. The ability of printers to cast a

whole page of type in a single mold and produce from it unlimited numbers of copies allowed

the anti-Semitic press to gloss over the compound social realities of the Third Republic and to

produce and spread accounts depicting Jews as an anti-social predatory group which was using

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[251] Robert Byrnes, "The French Publishing Industry and Its Crisis in the 1890's", *The Journal of Modern History*,

23/3 (1951), 206.

[252] Micahel Marrus, "Popular Anti-Semitism" in Noram kleeblatt (ed.), *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth and Justice*,

(The Jewish Museum, 1987), 54.

[253] Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in

Rural France", *The American Historical Review*, 97/1 (1992), 62.

the French laissez faire economy to take control of French society. Thanks to offset printing, which enabled the immediate reproduction of any image drawn on a piece of paper, the anti-Semitic gutter press produced twisted images of Jews at a low cost and propagated across all social classes.[254] The commercialization of lithography led to the explosion of a new iconography of hatred against Jews which was permeating throughout French society.

Drumont's *La Libre Parole Illustrée* made the most sophisticated use of the reproduced image to put forward an anti-Semitic worldview. It was thanks to this publication – which came as an illustrated supplement with the daily *La Libre Parole* – that Jews were 'profiled' on a mass scale as having hunched backs, enlarged noses, and deceitful eyes peaking behind bushy eye-brows (See figures 10 and 11 below).

Figure 10 : Emile Courtet, *Les qualities du Juif d'aprés la method de Gall*, "La Libre Parole", December 23, 1893. The Jewish Museum, New York.

Figure 11: Bayard Chanteclair, "La Libre Parole", October 1893. Public Domain

LA LIBRE PAROLE

ILLUSTRÉE

LEUR PATRIE.

Since at that time newspapers became a main medium through which people from all walks of life learned about their social and political surroundings, anti-Semitic newspapers were highly successful in disseminating the popular image of the Jew as the ultimate villain who is to blame for the widespread fin-de-siècle malaise. Unfortunately, the still very much naïve French reading public, suffering as it did from fin-de-siècle vertigo, was taking these crude accounts of Jews at face value.

Journalism & Zionism

In the previous chapter we saw that Herzl's Zionist plan rested on a unique fusion between fin-de-Siécle social criticism and Jewish messianism. What we did not discuss, however, was the role the media culture surrounding Herzl played in leading him to this unique synthesis.

Herzl arrived in Paris as the foreign correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* in October of 1891 – just before the Dreyfus Affair exploded – when the impact of mass-circulation newspapers was already felt across French society. As we saw in the last section, the foreign correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* in Paris was not just another journalist. In the case of Herzl, this was more so in light of the popularity of his reports and feuilletons which soon enough made him a household name among European journalists and a familiar face among top European officials and politicians.

A piece Herzl writes for the *Neue Freie Presse* in July of 1895 gives us a clue about the changes he was going through while following his daily routine as a journalist reporting from the political capital of Europe:

> When a man sits here for four years, up there, in the place reserved for foreign reporters, in the stand between the last two poles, one learns some important things and many insignificant ones – like in any school. There is value not to every piece of news but to adapting. One learns here to listen and see.[255]

As we can see, once Herzl began working for the *Neue Freie Presse*, his writing tools began also working on his thoughts, as Nietzsche would have it.[256] As a journalist, Herzl was learning to relate to his surroundings in ways which served his craft of reporting about the political happenings of the day to the *Neue Freie Presse's* readers. Thanks to his new post Herzl

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[255] Theodor Herzl, "School of the Journalist", Alex Bein and Moshe Schaerf (eds.), *From Boulanger to Dreyfus*, (Jerusalem Post, 1974), 1109 [Hebrew]. Herzl's major articles from Paris published in the Neue Freie Presse are found in the three volumes of this publication. Unless indicated otherwise, translations are mine.

[256] As quoted by Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, (Stanford University Press, 1999). xxix.

was developing sharp political senses that had remained dormant as long as he was a playwright back in Vienna.

One cannot imagine how without the new politicized senses Herzl developed as a journalist he could have arrived at his political-messianic vision. If it was not for the weeks and months he spent listening to the endless debates in the French parliament about the Jewish Question, Herzl probably would not have been able to learn about the deep socio-political causes underling the Jewish existence in Europe; if he did not get to hear in his own ears the crowd calling out to the innocent Dreyfus "Death to the traitor!, Death to the traitor!", he would probably not have come to think of modern anti-Semitism as the apocalyptic catastrophe of modern times; how else could he think of redemption as a political act of establishing a modern Jewish state if it was not for the front row seat from where he watched world politics? In a letter to his friend Heinrich Teweles (1856-1927) from May 19, 1895 Herzl writes: ". . . in Spain I had before me the plan of a Jewish novel . . . The Paris correspondence interrupted me. Here I got involved in politics and learned unintentionally to look differently at the things of this world." We can learn from this passage that it was Herzl's work as a journalist that led him to look at the Jewish Question from a political perspective to which he has been oblivious as long as he was a playwright.

Yet, just like in the earlier cases of Rousseau, Marx, and Engels once Herzl's "writing tools began working in his thoughts" in Nietzsche's language he also began to work on them. As early as mid-1892, Herzl began to contemplate ways to utilize his newly-acquired power to fight anti-Semitism – all of which involved in some shape or other either mass-circulation newspapers or Herzl's own post in the *Neue Freie Presse*. In July of 1892 – three years before he began his Zionist activities, Herzl presented to Barron Leitenberger (1837-1899), a leading Viennese

industrialist, a plan for a newspaper dedicated exclusively to the fight against Austrian anti-Semitism. The plan came to nothing. About a year later in July of 1893 Herzl approaches Moritz Benedikt, one of the two publishers/editors of the *Neue Freie Presse*, and asked for his assistance in presenting to the pope his plan for mass conversion of Jews which Herzl thought would put to rest the Jewish Question. Benedikt refused to hear of it. A few months later Herzl approaches the other publisher/editor of the newspaper Eduard Bacher and offers to write an article in which he would call for instituting universal suffrage in Austria-Hungary in an attempt to strengthen the liberals against the rising Austrian anti-Semitic party. As in the case of Benedikt, Bacher rejected Herzl's idea.

Publishing the Jewish State

Like in all the above cases, when in May of 1895 Herzl first came up with the idea of establishing a Jewish national movement he saved a special role for mass-circulation newspapers and for himself as a senior journalist in his new and groundbreaking plan. We can learn about that role from the publishing record of his pamphlet the *Jewish State*.

Herzl finished writing the *Jewish State* (based on the *Address to the Rothschilds* he prepared earlier) between December 25 1895 and January 17 1896. The pamphlet was published in a slim twenty-two pages volume bearing the title: *The Jewish State: Proposal for a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question* (*Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*) (see, figure 12 below). Herzl first tried to interest two fairly-sizable German-based publishers in his work: *Siegfried Cronbach* based in Berlin and *Duncker & Humbolt* based in Leipzig (who had just published Herzl's *Bourbon Palace* (October, 1895)). They both rejected

the manuscript. Yet, less than a month later on January 19 1896 Herzl signed a contract with the small Viennese publisher Max Breitenstein (1855-1926). Since Breitenstein and Herzl did not expect the publication to be a commercial success, the two agreed that Herzl would not receive any royalties and that the first edition would consist of only three thousand copies. Just for the sake of comparison, ten years earlier the bulky two volumes of Drumont's *France's Jews* (*La France Juive*) sold about a hundred thousand copies in the first year of its publication alone.[257] From the exchange between Herzl and Breitenstein found in the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem we also learn that despite the small number of copies printed of the *Jewish State* not all of them were sold.[258] In March 31 1896, Breitenstein informs Herzl that many copies of the *Jewish State* were returned and therefore for the time being he would not prepare another edition. Nonetheless, during 1896 Breitenstein printed four more editions. Although we do not know the sizes of those editions, there is no indication that they were significantly larger than the first one. In July 23 1896 Breitenstein informs Herzl that just enough copies were sold of the text to cover the publication expenses.[259]

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[257] Micahel Marrus, "Popular Anti-Semitism" in Noram Kleeblatt (ed.), *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth and Justice*, (The Jewish Museum, 1987), 52.

[258] The correspondences between Herzl and Breitenstein are found in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, file number HVIII-115.

[259] Between 1896 and 1897 the *Jewish State* was published also in English, French, Russian and Bulgarian, among other languages. Since in most cases the pamphlet was published by small-time local Jewish publishers, it seems safe to assume that it was printed mostly in small editions. In my research I did not find any evidences suggesting otherwise.

Figure 12: The Cover of the first edition of the "Jewish State" published by Breitenstein's Verlag Vienna, February 1896.[260]

Herzl's plans for publishing the *Jewish State* raise the question: Did Herzl intend to spread the word of his international Jewish enterprise by a few thousand copies of a slim, low-budget pamphlet? The publication date of the *Jewish State* provides us with a clue to the answer. It shows us that Herzl's Zionist plan did not in fact make its public debut in Breitenstein's edition. Two weeks before the pamphlet was sent to print and about a month before it appeared in Breitenstein's bookstore in Vienna, Herzl's Zionist plan appeared in an article in the London-based newspaper the *Jewish Chronicle*. The article, published on January 17 1896, entitled "A Solution to the Jewish Question" gave a synopsis of Herzl's forthcoming work. Thus, contrary to what one may think, Herzl's Zionist plan did not make its first appearance in a German-written pamphlet published in Vienna, but in an English newspaper published in London. The first readers of Herzl's Zionist plan were not Viennese book readers, but English newspaper readers.

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[260] Source, Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish Cause: Diaries 1895-1904*, (Bialik Publishing, 1997), 422 [Hebrew].

The piece in the *Jewish Chronically* explains why the public stir Herzl's plan caused began around three weeks *before* the *Jewish State* was published. From the reactions Herzl began to receive at the end of January, we learn that most people learned about his plan not by reading the *Jewish State*, but from reading about it in the newspaper. The first reaction Herzl received came from Theodor Lieben (1843-1917) who was one of the leading figures in the Viennese Jewish community. Lieben came to see Herzl in the offices of the *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna on January 25 1896, about three weeks before the *Jewish State* was published following inquiries he began to receive after the appearance of the article in the *Jewish Chronicle*. Five days later the journal of the Viennese branch of the *Lovers of Zion* (*Hovevei Zion*) ran a piece on Herzl's plan based on the article in the *Jewish Chronicle*. About two weeks before the *Jewish State* was published, Herzl begins to receive word about the negative reactions to his plan from his colleagues in the *Neue Freie Presse*. On February 1 1896, he learns that one of his colleagues Joseph Oppenheim (1839-1900) who read the piece in the *Jewish Chronicle* was mocking him by calling him the "The Jewish Jules Verne".[261] In his diary Herzl mentions another unnamed colleague who read the article in the *Jewish Chronicle* and found his plan absurd.[262] Herzl's reaction once he learns about his colleagues' unfavorable reception of his plan indicates the importance he attributed to newspapers and journalists in his plan: "Journalists making fun of the whole thing are the most immediate danger now."[263]

Two weeks before the *Jewish State* was published, Herzl's Zionist public relations campaign was already in full gear. On February 2 1896, Joseph Samuel Bloch (1850-1923), a

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[261] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 287.

[262] Ibid., Ibid.

[263] Ibid., 288.

Viennese Jewish journalist, asks Herzl for a few copies of the *Jewish State* so he could write about it in the Viennese newspaper the *Oesterreichische Wochenshrift*.[264] Four days later Alexander Scharf (1834-1904), the publisher of the Viennese monthly journal *Wiener Sonn und Montagszeitung* who heard from Bloch about Herzl's treatise, asks him for a copy so he could publish an article about it before the daily newspapers.[265] Herzl was more than happy to provide him with one. A day before the *Jewish State* appeared in Breitenstein's bookshop Herzl himself approaches Juluis Gans von Ludassy (1858-1922), another journalist who was working at the time for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* – one of the leading liberal daily newspapers in Germany at the time – and tried to convince him to publish a piece on his treatise. In his diary Herzl explains that he decided to approach Ludassy since he considers it of the utmost importance that the *Allgemeine Zeitung* will bring his plan to the German newspaper reading public.[266]

Once the *Jewish State* was published the public debate between among anti-Semites, liberals and Zionists continued to range over the pages of the leading European newspapers. Four days after the *Jewish State* was published, the leading editorial in the German anti-Semitic newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung* was dedicated to Herzl's plan. Although the writer of the article viewed favorably the fact that a Jew of Herzl's rank admits that there is a Jewish Question, he questioned the ability of the Jews to establish a state. Once Herzl hears about the article, his reaction reveals once again the importance he attributed to the debate over his plan in newspapers: "In the evening, however, I heard at the office that the 'Deutsche Zeitung' (anti-

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[264] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 288.

[265] Ibid., 294.

[266] Two weeks later Ludassy publishes a piece about Herzl's plan yet contrary to Herzl's hopes, the piece was highly critical of it.

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Semitic) is going to publish an editorial on the subject tomorrow. Presumable abuse. But important in any case, because of the attitude the other papers will take in reply."[267] The public debate about Herzl's plan shifted gears when in the end of February the English *Daily Chronicle* published an interview with a Member of Parliament Samuel Montagu (1832-1911) about Herzl's plan. In the interview Montagu expresses his view that offering the Ottomans two million pounds for Palestine is a feasible course of action. The interview was a milestone in the development of Herzl's Zionist idea. It marks its move from the realm of ink and paper to that of actual politics. With its publication Herzl blasted out from the pages of the *Neue Freie Presse* and landed in the midst of international politics.

From Journalism to Statesmanship

Herzl's ability to capture the attention of politicians and the newspaper reading public alike demonstrates the power journalists had gained in Europe by the end of the nineteenth century. Thanks to mass-circulation newspapers Herzl was able to use his position in the "Gutenberg Galaxy" to enter the world of international politics. And indeed, when Herzl first appeared on the stage of world politics he did so not as the would-be leader of the Zionist movement but as the ambassador of the *Neue Freie Presse*. When Herzl begins meeting with prominent individuals to discuss his Zionist plan in mid-1895, he presents himself as a senior journalist working for the *Neue Freie Presse*. The reason Barron Maurice Hirsch (1831-1896) agreed to meet Herzl on May 1895, a meeting which launched Herzl's Zionist career, was most probably that Herzl made sure to sign the letter to Hirsch – "Reporter, Neue Freie Presse". By

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[267] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 302.

the same token, Herzl opens his letter to Bismarck on June 19 1895, not by introducing his Zionist plan, but by presenting his journalistic persona:

> Your Highness,
>
> Perhaps one or another of my writings has had the good fortune to come to your highness' attention, possibly my essays about French Parliamentarianism which appeared in the literary section of the Neue Freie Presse under the title 'Election Sketches from France' and The Palais Bourbon'. On basis of this questionable and meager authority I am asking Your Highness to receive me for a political discourse.[268]

> Bismarck never got back to Herzl.

In numerous occasions later on, Herzl uses his title first as the 'Paris Correspondent' and later as a 'Literary Editor' of the *Neue Freie Presse* when introducing himself to individuals he thought might help him to carry out his Zionist plan. This was the case with Max Nordau (1849-1923), Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) and Count Badeni (1846-1909).[269] Herzl describes in his diary the first meeting he managed to get with a high profile public figure, Ernst Ludwig the Grossherzog of Hessen (1868-1937), whom he tried to convince to arrange for him an interview with the German Kaiser, in the following manner: "In response to the first polite questions about

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[268] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 117.

[269] This point was made by Timms. See Edward Timms, "The Literary Editor of the Neue Freie Presse", in Gideon Shimoni and Robert Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: The Visionary of the Jewish State*, (Herzl Press, 1999), 57.

what kind of a trip I had had and where I lived, I told him what my profession was and also mentioned my former position in Paris. The Grand Duke said: 'I get the Neue Freie Presse'."[270]

Yet, the *Neue Freie Presse* did not only serve Herzl as a 'visiting card' granting him access to world leaders, but also served him as a power-base which he attempted to use in order to bring about his envisioned Jewish state. Herzl's eleven day visit to Constantinople in June of 1896 illustrates how in the early days of mass-circulation newspapers, ink and paper could be used as bargaining chips in high international politics.[271]

In June of 1896 Herzl travelled to Constantinople in hope of meeting with the Sultan Abdul Hamid and convincing him to grant his approval for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Like in previous cases, Herzl requested to meet the Sultan not as a private person but as the Literary Editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*. Herzl's initial plan was to offer the Sultan the assistance of the Jewish bankers in alleviating the financial difficulties of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Yet, early on in his visit Herzl learned that the Ottoman officials were not so much interested in his financial offer as they were in what he could offer them as a journalist. Since at the time the Ottomans were concerned with the unfavorable coverage they had been receiving in European newspapers (following their policies in Armenia), Herzl realized early on that the most powerful tool he had in his hands was not the backing of the Jewish bankers (which he did not actually have), but his pen.

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[270] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 354.

[271] Timms provides an extensive discussion of Herzl's use of his post in the *Neue Freie Presse* in his negotiations with the Ottomans during his visit in Constantinople. See This point was made by Timms. See Edward Timms, "The Literary Editor of the Neue Freie Presse", in Gideon Shimoni and Robert Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: The Visionary of the Jewish State*, (Herzl Press, 1999), 59-62.

When Herzl meets Hir A-din Bei, the chief of staff of the Grand Vizier (the Ottoman Prime Minister), he immediately lays his cards on the table: "The Neue Freie Presse had always had friendly sentiments toward Turkey and would always be happy when it could report something favorable about the Empire."[272] Shortly after, Herzl was informed that the Sultan himself would not meet with him. Herzl eventually learned that the reason for that was not the Sultan's unfavorable view of his plan, but the critical tone of an interview with the Sultan published earlier in the *Neue Freie Presse*. Upon learning this, Herzl contacted one of the Ottoman top officials he had been in touch with and stressed how his position in the *Neue Freie Presse* could be of use to the Sultan: "I should be very pleased if I succeeded through my newspaper, in imparting to others the favorable impressions I was carrying away from Constantinople ."[273] Two days later, on June 24 1896, Herzl follows on his word and telegraphs to Vienna an article which he described as "friendly to the Ottoman government."[274] Sure enough, a day after Herzl received word from the Sultan that the latter was reconsidering his decision not to grant him an interview. The interview did not take place. However, the only positive signals Herzl did manage to get from the Sultan were after the publication of his 'friendly' article.[275]

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[272] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 375.

[273] Ibid., 385.

[274] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 392.

[275] This argument is further supported by Timms. See Edward Timms, "The Literary Editor of the Neue Freie Presse", in Gideon Shimoni and Robert Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: The Visionary of the Jewish State*, (Herzl Press, 1999), 60.

In Constantinople Herzl became a double-agent of sorts. He was working for the *Neue Freie Presse* – a symbol of Jewish assimilationist culture – yet using his position to promote of all things, a Jewish state. From this point onward, Herzl continued to feed the Viennese readership of the *Neue Freie Presse* elegant pieces attending their high-brow taste, while using his position in the newspaper to strike a deal to establish a Jewish state. Since the editors of the *Neue Freie Presse* wanted nothing to do with Herzl's Zionist plan, he had to navigate carefully between his two careers. Despite the many frictions along the way, through the years Herzl managed to juggle between his commitments to the *Neue Freie Presse* and to the Zionist Movement. It seems that the mutual need underpinning this ironic relationship was stronger than the obvious conflict of interest between the two sides. Whereas Benedikt and Bacher were interested very much in continuing and benefiting from Herzl's skillful reporting, Herzl knew that as long as he could cling to his post, he would have a chance to bring about his envisioned Jewish state.

The episode in Constantinople shows us that the position Herzl occupied in the industry of mass news production allowed him to turn himself from a private man of letters into a leader of an international movement. Thanks to the spread and speed of mass media technologies – as they were put to use in mass-circulation newspapers – Herzl was able to use his post in the *Neue Freie Presse* to break out from the confines of the typographical realm of the newspaper, and enter the front stage of international politics.

Conclusion

In his work *People of the Book* Moshe Halbertal identifies the Jewish tradition as a text-based tradition in the sense that it is founded on the shared commitment to certain texts.[276] Building on the literature considering Judaism as a 'Book Religion', Halbertal points out that throughout history, texts had a key role in wielding political power as well as setting the boundaries of Jewish communities.[277] This leads Halbertal to argue: "Text is thus more than a shared matrix for a diverse tradition – it is one of the tradition's central operative concepts, like "God" or "Israel.*"*[278]

Given their text-based nature, Jewish communities have always formed around *canonical* texts which enjoyed a special status. The Torah, for instance, traditionally serves as the main source of spiritual authority that gave Judaism its essence that still persists today. For the observant Jew the Torah is a sacred object with metaphysical properties that conveys ontological truths about the world.[279] As a print object the Torah is closed within the ark to which ordinary

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[276] Halbertal builds on the literature that identifies Judaism as a 'book religions'. Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, (Harvard University Press, 2009), 2. On the development of the concept of 'book religion' See S. W. Wilford, "Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World", in Miriam Levering (ed.), *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective* (SUNY Press, 1987).

[277] Ibid.,3-4 .

[278] Ibid., 2.

[279] Eyal Chowers, *The Political Philosophy of Zionism: Trading Jewish Words for a Hebraic Land*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 160-161.

people do not have access.[280] The Talmud is an example of a different kind of canon that prescribes the norms of behavior of the community as well as serves as the Jewish curriculum.

Halbertal concludes his study by arguing that the rise of modern national Jewish identity signals the loss of centrality of the Jewish text. According to him, once Jews were able to obtain a piece of land and call it their own, Jewish identity was no longer contingent on texts.[281] The discussion in this chapter suggests that Halbertal overlooked the crucial role print language had in Herzl's Zionist enterprise. While Herzl's Zionism indeed broke off from the traditional canonical Jewish texts, it did so not by discarding the textual basis of Judaism but by offering a Jewish textuality of a new kind. Herzl's Zionism was based on mass-circulation as much as past Jewish identities were based on Jewish canonical texts. Placing Herzl's ideas in the original media culture surrounding them allows us to see that his brand of Zionism was not merely a revolution in Jewish consciousness, but a revolution in Jewish textuality. For Jews who always saw texts as a source of both spirituality and collective identity, Herzl utilized mass-circulation newspapers and his position as an influential journalist to conjure up a novel political-messianic vision that offered redemption not by divine will but by a political deed. Thanks to his sophisticated use of turn-of-the-century mass-circulation newspapers and of his post as an influential journalist working in Paris and Vienna, Herzl was able to detach the Jewish communal identity from the traditional Jewish canonical texts and land it in the midst of international politics. In so doing, Herzl was able to trade the textual "mobile homeland", in Heine's terms, which Jews had lived in for centuries, for a solid nation-state.

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[280] Robert Bonfil, "Reading in the Jewish Communities of Western Europe in the Middle Ages", In Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo (eds.) *A History of Reading in the West*, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 150.

[281] Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, (Harvard University Press, 2009), 9.

Just like the electronic signals, stereotypes and offset printers which it was made of, the new form of Jewish textuality Herzl put forward was not fixed by the Jewish tradition nor was it shackled by the financial power of the Jewish philanthropists, but it oscillated according to the shifts of power in international politics. Herzl's use of mass-circulation did to Jewish identity what the floating exchange rates did to currency. It detached it from its base in tradition and freed it to fluctuate according to the power shifts in international politics.

Yet, although this new Jewish identity Herzl put forward was removed from the traditional bases of power of Jewish society, it nevertheless, was fastened, at least initially, to the prominent position Herzl held as a leading journalist operating in the up-and-coming world of mass media. Herzl was aware of that from early on. Playing with the idea of resigning from the *Neue Freie Presse* after another one of his ideas to solve the Jewish Question was rejected by Benedikt, Herzl writes: "Naturally, I could not do anything without my newspaper. Where would I have got the authority from? What would I have been able to offer in exchange."[282]Realizing this, Herzl continued to hold his post in the *Neue Freie Presse* long after he took up the Zionist cause – when the conflict between his two endeavors was more than obvious. This created a rather ironic situation in which Herzl owed his initial leadership of the Zionist Movement very much to the *Neue Freie Presse* – one of the major symbols of Jewish assimilation.

The discussion in this chapter highlights two key roles Herzl had in mind for mass circulation in his Zionist enterprise. The first was to counter-balance the anti-Semitic press. Although the extent in which the Dreyfus Affair influenced Herzl's Zionism continues to be a matter of scholarly debate, the discussion in this chapter indicates that when considering this issue one must also take into account the possible influence the coverage of the Affair by the

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[282] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 9.

French anti-Semitic press had on Herzl.[283] On June 12 1895, Herzl writes in his diary the puzzling remark: "I owe to Drumont a great deal of the present freedom of my concepts, because he is an artist."[284] Obviously, Herzl did not admire Drumont's politics. Nonetheless, the discussion here suggests that Herzl saw Drumont as an artist of sorts since he appreciated his ability to use mass media, first in his book and later in his newspaper, to mold the confusing realities of the Third Republic into a coherent political worldview which was gripping the hearts and minds of ordinary Frenchmen. It seems that what Herzl found liberating in Drumont's 'art' was his use of the newspaper industry to create a typographical representation of Jews which was overriding the actual social realities. Herzl seems to thank Drumont for leading him to realize the potential of using mass-circulation and his position as an influential journalist to turn his Zionist vision into a practical political program. Thus, the analysis here suggests that what Herzl did take from the Dreyfus Affair, among other things, was the capacity of the French gutter press to brand a political movement aimed at solving the Jewish Question.

A second key role Herzl had in mind for his new form of Jewish textuality was to overturn the power structure of the materialist Jewish assimilated society he was critical of. Since Herzl knew very-well that he could not match the resources or the influence of the Jewish philanthropists, such as Barron Hirsch or the Rothschild family, he thought to use mass-

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[283] Among the major works which stress the influence of the 'Dreyfus Affair' on Herzl are: Shlomo Avineri, *The making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, (Basic Books, 1981); Arthur Hertzberg *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 45-51; Among the works that underplay the impact of the 'Dreyfus Affair' on Herzl see, Avineri, *Herzl*, (Zalman Shazar, 2007); Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, (Indiana University Press, 1993); and Henry Cohen, "Theodor Herzl's Conversion to Zionism", *Jewish Social Studies*, 32/2 (1970), 101-110.

[284] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 99.

circulation newspapers and his position as an influential journalist to reach over their heads and establish his leadership among the Jewish masses. In the third letter Herzl sends Hirsch on June 3 1895 he clearly states this intention:

> True, for the sake of speed I would have liked to use you as an available force and a known quantity. But you would have been only the power I would have started with. There are others. There are, ultimately and above all, the Jewish masses, and I shall know how to get across to them. This pen is a power. You will be convinced of it if I stay alive and healthy . . . You are the Jew of money, I am the Jew of the spirit.[285]

In the age of mass-circulation newspapers, Herzl managed to do what Rousseau, Marx, and Engels could only dream about – he translated his typographical authority as a writer into political authority as a statesman. In the age when the "people of the book became the people of newspapers" as one author had put it, Herzl was able to use his position as a well-known journalist to forge his leadership of a Jewish political-messianic movement.[286] As the episode in Constantinople shows us, Herzl's novelty was in realizing that thanks to the speed, immediacy and spread of newspapers of his time, ink and paper were equal in power to territory and gunpowder. In that respect, Herzl's political Zionism was very much a child of mass-circulation.

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[285] Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, (Herzl Press, 1960), 25-6.

[286] Quoted by Mitchel Cohen, *Zion and State: Nation, Class and the Shaping of Modern Israel*, (Basil Blackwell, 1987), 4.

The chapter presented a third and final case that demonstrates the importance of looking at the material factors underlying the production of political ideas. As in the other two cases, the discussion brought to light the complex relations between Herzl's message, i.e. Herzlism and the medium that conveyed it, i.e. mass-circulation. While it is clear that mass-circulation showed Herzl the way to think in novel ways about the Jewish question, it was his highly sophisticated use of the media culture he was operating in that served as the basis of his Zionism. In the third and last instance we see once again that the political idea under discussion was a product of *and* a response to the media culture in which it was produced.

Conclusion

The Political Text: What's Next?

What are the merits of media culture as a theoretical tool in studying political ideas? First, media culture calls into the question the Political Text as a uniform category of analysis. It enables us to consider political texts as changing media technologies that manifest historical relations between political thinkers and the reading public. Treating political texts as a changing technology opens up a new vein of research which investigates the relationship between historical modes of textual production and political ideas. The three cases discussed here demonstrate that the particular position of authors, the prevailing attitude to the written word, and the existing media technologies surrounding political texts in each period have a substantial impact on their subject matter. In the case of Rousseau, my research shows that the direct channel that had been opened between authors and the reading public in France by the Enlightenment literary market facilitated Rousseau's unique brand of egalitarianism . Similarly, the industrialization of European print opened the way for Marx and Engels to treat the socio-economic realities of the time in their works. By the same token, thanks to the immediacy and global reach of turn-of-the-twentieth-century mass-circulation newspapers, Herzl was able to recast Jewish messianism as a modern-day national movement.

In all these cases the conceptual framework of media culture facilitates uncovering the machinery behind political thought. Whereas studies in political theory often center on the logic of political ideas or on their historical context, media culture enables us to look at their often neglected material aspect. Once this has been done, considering political ideas in abstract is no longer possible. Media culture aids seeing those ideas as hybrids of sorts comprised of an

ideational-normative as well as a typographical-mechanical aspect. This treatment of political ideas allows a consideration of them as part of the larger flow of information that flows between authors and readers in every historical period.

However, the study also shows that the relations between political thinkers and the media cultures in which they work are far from being a one-way street. In all three cases it is evident that, while the historical mode of textual production determined the political thinker's outlook, it was the thinker who made unique use of the media culture of the time to put forward a novel political vision: Rousseau's egalitarianism was as much a product of his eccentric personality as it was of the Enlightenment literary market. Historical materialism was as much a function of Marx's and Engels's dissident temperament as it was of the industrialization of print, and political Zionism was as much a manifestation of Herzl's messianic mindset as it was of mass-circulation publications. Thus, the three cases discussed above indicate that it would be wrong to discount human agency when determining the relations between political ideas and the media cultures in which they were produced.

In fact, if the three cases demonstrate anything, it is the extent to which revolutionary ideas depend on original thinkers making innovative use of their contemporary media cultures. Rousseau's egalitarianism was very much a product of the reading experience he carefully constructed for his readers. Marx's and Engels's historical materialism was based on their savvy use of the new ontological value of print language following the industrialization of print. Perhaps the best example of this is Herzl, who made a highly sophisticated use of mass media to revive the two millennia-old idea of the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land in the shape of a modern-day ideology.

In sum, the analysis here offers a view of political texts as ideographs of sorts that exist both in the material as well as in the ideational realms, that adhere both to the forces of textual production as well as to the social and intellectual trends of their day. As ideographs, political texts are part of a larger system of communication through which ideas are produced and circulated. The architecture of each media culture favors certain political subject matters while it negates others. The Enlightenment literary market favored republican ideas while undercutting hierarchical social structures. The industrialization of print privileged essentialist outlooks, such as historical materialism and realism while calling into question intangible and idealistic worldviews. Turn-of-the-twentieth-century mass media had the capacity to empower men of letters while it undermined the authority of traditional canons. Nevertheless, while Innis, Kittler, and McLuhan may be correct in arguing that every medium carries its own bias or message, the findings of this study indicate that it is still up to flesh-and-blood writers to make original use of their writing instruments to conjure up novel political visions. The three cases discussed in this study clearly demonstrate that novel political ideas are born in historical moments when new media technologies and radical minds converge.

The Digital Media Culture

The technological advances of the last twenty years have generated a new globalized digital media culture which is rapidly replacing the print-based media cultures Rousseau, Marx, Engels, and Herzl were operating. As with the instances discussed so far, it is necessary first to demarcate its tenants to explore the impact this new media culture has on political ideas.

When people opened one of Rousseau's books in the eighteenth century, they became part of the reading public. Nowadays, when people open a web browser, they become users. The user who goes online finds out soon enough that the global, computer-based network allows the transcendence of many of the limitations that confront a member of the reading public. In the online world, users become empowered readers who can copy, paste, post, save, and browse endless streams of texts. With only a few slight movements of their hands, they can buy, sell, chat, and even find love.

The user owes this new power to digital technology. In his now classic work, *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte points to the difference between atoms and bits as what turns digital media into an unprecedented form of human interaction. If the basic unit of matter in the physical world is an atom, the basic unit of information in the digital world is a bit. A bit is shorthand for 'binary digit' that can hold only one of two numerical values at any one time. A combination of consecutive bits forms a byte which can be used to represent any graphic image – including written language.[287] All paper-based media discussed so far were made out of atoms. Rousseau's *Julie*, Marx's and Engels's journalistic and philosophic writings, and Herzl's articles were different amalgamations of atoms. Today, more and more written language (as well as human knowledge in general) is converted from paper-based objects into digital bytes comprised of sets of binary bits. One such project is Google's massive digitizing projects, *Google Book Library Project* and *Google Books*, launched in 2004 in which the company took upon itself digitizing the collections of some of the biggest libraries in the world including Columbia

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[287] Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital*, (Vintage Books, 1995), 11-12.

University's Library, the Austrian National Library, Harvard University's Library, and Ghent University Library.[288]

Considering texts as changing media technologies leads to the fact that, once written language leaves the physical world of atoms and joins the digital one of bits, it changes. Digital technology substitutes a single digital existence for a plurality of mechanically reproduced copies. In doing so, it reactivates print language as digital language. Based on the findings of my research so far, it is clear that digital language is not merely a digitized representation of print language – it is written language of a different kind. A book digitally scanned is not merely a digital duplication of its print version; it is a new medium altogether. One main reason for this is that digital language loses its materiality. Written language now changes from a material object into a series of commands found nowhere and everywhere. Thanks to its non-material nature, the digital book can be accessed, processed, stored, and mobilized in unlimited quantities.[289]

Digital texts are often referred to as hypertexts. Daniel Rosenberg describes hypertexts in the following way: "The term ('hypertext') refers simply to text that is interconnected in nonlinear ways. You use hypertext, for example, every time you click on a link in a Web browser

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[288] The two projects led to a class action lawsuit in 2005 in the U.S. filed by the Authors Guild. The organization argued that Google's digitizing projects involve massive copyright infringement. See, *Complaint 05 CV 8136 Author's Guild v. Google*, (2005). In March 2011 a supervising judge issued a ruling rejecting *The Google Book Search Agreement* reached by the sides earlier (October 2008) on the grounds it violates existing copyright and anti-trust laws. See, *Authors Guild et al. v. Google, Inc no. 05-8136* (2011).

[289] For more on the nonmaterial nature of digital language see, Michael Heim, *Electronic Language*, (Yale University Press, 1987). See especially the first chapter "Approaching the Phenomenon."

and travel to a different text or to a different place in the text that you are reading."[290] Hypertexts are far from being new. Any text that includes footnotes might be thought of as a hypertext. Rosenberg points to Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) – where the footnote was first used – as the first hypertext. The Talmud which allows the reader to leap through different reading paths could also be thought of as a hypertext. In fact, the field of literature in general could be considered as a web of hypertexts. Although convention views a book as an autonomous work, the work also always has a position vis-à-vis other texts. Most people would probably be able to identify Dickens' *Hard Times* as a Victorian novel, *The New York Times* as an American daily newspaper, and *Oedipus, The King* as a classic Greek tragedy. Nonetheless, digital hypertexts are different from print-based hypertexts in that their non-material nature allows key words to serve as hyperlinks which transport the reader out of the text and on to other texts. Those hyperlinks function as portals of sorts through which the reader moves from text to text. The reader jumps and leaps through texts with a single click or tap.

The immediacy of the transition between digital hypertexts produces a unique reading experience which blurs the distinctions among individual texts. The reader of digital hypertexts does not face a single and continuous text but an endless web of interlinked texts. Digital hypertexts are not linked according to any already-prescribed structure. While a text may be the starting point for one reader, it could be the end point for another. Digital hypertexts offer readers different reading paths. It is up to individual readers to find their own paths through the

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[290] Daniel Rosenberg, "Electronic Memory," in Daniel Rosenberg and Susan Harding (Eds.), *Histories of the Future*, (Duke University Press, 2005), 127.

web of digital language. Digital hypertexts turn reading from a structured activity into a nonlinear and personalized one.[291]

In the last two decades increasing numbers of digital hypertexts have found their way to the computer-based, global digital network most commonly known as the Internet. The basic architecture of the Internet has the distinctive effect of further intensifying the nonlinear nature of digital hypertexts. This is due to the decentralized structure of the Internet itself. The Internet, which was originally designed by the U.S. military to provide a solution to the vulnerability of centralized networks to a targeted nuclear attack, has developed in the past two decades into a decentralized global information network within which a growing part of human interaction takes place. Whereas the modern physical landscape is comprised of centralized nation-states and big urban centers linked together by mass communication and transportation highways, due to the increasing power of computer processors and the advancements made in wireless communication technologies, the Internet has become a single, globally distributed superhighway which lacks any clear focal point.

The Internet owes much of its ability to serve as a global network to the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web is a global, computer-based communication system through which any user can receive and send messages. The World Wide Web was first invented in the early 1990s by a British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee working for the *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire* (CERN) in Geneva. Building on earlier work by Ted Nelson, who envisioned a horizontal network of computer-generated texts (which he called *Xanadu*), Berners-Lee and his team, created a graphic design protocol called HTML that provided a universal

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[291] For a comprehensive discussion of digital hypertexts see George Landow, *Hypertexts 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

language into which every other computer language could be translated. In addition, the team also set up a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) that served as a general interface and created a standard address format through which computers could communicate with each other. Those two innovations paved the way for the creation of a literally world-wide web that could be accessed by anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.[292]

The nonlinear nature of digital hypertexts is accentuated by the World Wide Web since, once a text is posted online, it immediately takes on its decentralized architecture. Thanks to the decentralized architecture of the online world, any segment of digital language found within it – whether it is a Shakespearean play or a lawn mower manual – can either be a hub or a node depending on the path the reader chooses to take through the text. While paper-based products impelled the reader to form hierarchical relationship among them, in the online world the reader faces an endless web of texts that does not adhere to any clear structure. Instead of forging relationships between different texts, readers have to figure out where they are located in the network of texts.[293]

To illustrate the differences between print-based texts and digital hypertexts posted online, it is valuable to compare the experience of reading the Penguin paperback edition of Marx's and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* (1985) and the digital one found in the *Marxist Internet Archive*.

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[292] The discussion here of the World Wide Web is based on Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Vol. 1 (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 52-3.

[293] On the distributed architecture of the computer-based networks see Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*, (MIT Press, 2004) 29-53.

Figure 13: The Penguin Edition of Marx's and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*[294]
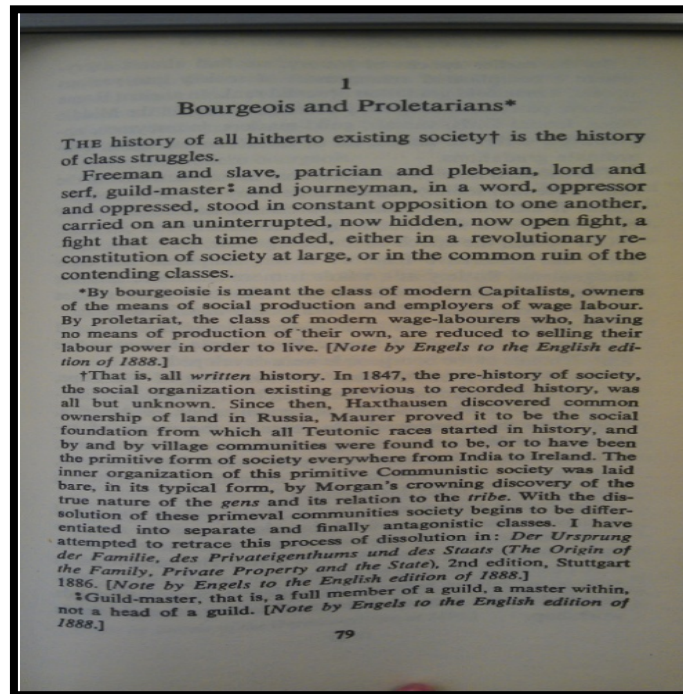
The paper version of the *Manifesto* is a definite object that occupies a particular place in the reader's lap. A reader who opens the *Manifesto* finds a set of interrelated texts: The book opens with an introduction by A. J. P. Taylor, followed by six prefaces by Marx and Engels (to the 1872, 1882, 1883, 1888, 1890, and 1893 editions). As Figure 13 above shows, when reading the *Manifesto* itself, along the text the reader finds Marx's and Engels's original footnotes as well as those added by the Penguin editors. Although these footnotes turn the *Manifesto* into a hypertext of sorts (since they allow the reader to leap between different parts of the text) what characterizes the reading experience of the Penguin edition on the whole is structure. Taylor's introduction gives the reader the historical and intellectual setting of the text; the six prefaces that follow provide a general idea of Marx's and Engels's goals and intensions; and in the final

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[294] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, (Penguin, 1985), 79.

stage the reader gets to read Marx's and Engels's original text. The properties of the paper object guide readers in every stage of the text. They are constantly conscious of where they are in the text as well as the location of the text vis-à-vis the external world.

Figure 14: Screenshot taken from the digital version of the *Communist Manifesto* found in the Marxist Internet Archive.[295]


A quick look at the digital version of the *Manifesto* indicates that it provides a rather different reading experience. First, the reader who clicks on the hyperlink, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, is transferred to a webpage that includes basic details about the text. (See Figure 14 above). Unlike the print version of the *Manifesto*, readers cannot use their naked eye or use touch to mark out the digital *Manifesto* as a distinctive object. The non-material nature of the digital version of the *Manifesto* leaves it on the same plane as all other online hypertexts. It is

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[295] http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007 (accessed on January 12, 2014).

only after reading the details provided on the webpage (such as the title, when the text was written, where it was first published, and so forth) that readers can confirm where they are located in the text.

Figure 15: Screenshot taken from the digital version of the *Communist Manifesto* found in the Marxist Internet Archive.[296]
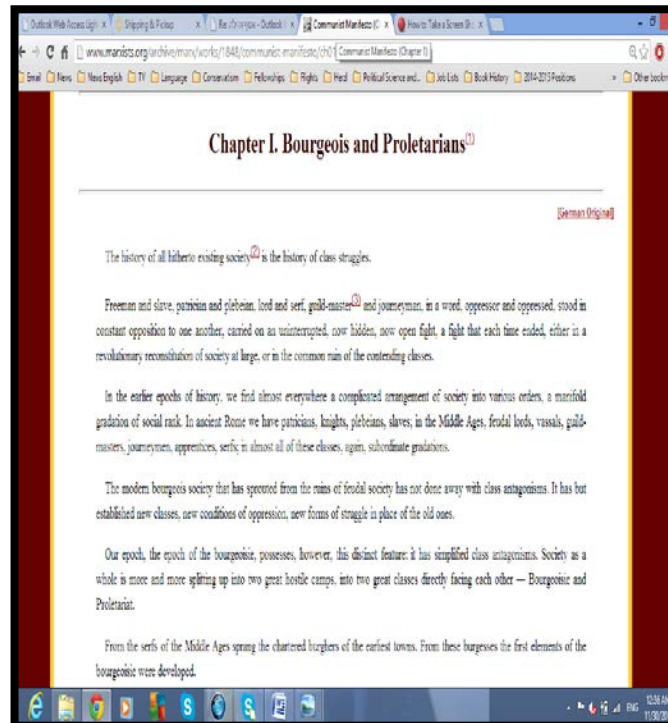

A reader who clicks or taps on the hyperlink in the first chapter of the *Manifesto Chapter I: Bourgeois and Proletariat* is transported to a new webpage (Figure 15 above). The first thing the reader notices in the new webpage is that right after the title, Chapter I: Bourgeois and Proletariat, there is a hyperlink marked 1. Clicking on the hyperlink leads the reader to Marx's and Engels's original footnote (Figure 16 below). This is not different from the print version of

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[296] http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007, (accessed on January 12, 2014).

the text beyond that, instead of using the hand to turn pages, the reader clicks or taps on a hyperlink to directly move to the footnote. Yet, as Figure 16 shows, once at Marx's and Engels's original footnote, a reader finds various other hyperlinks such as, bourgeoisie, proletariat, means of social production, wage laborers, and labor power. Unlike the paper version of the text, each one of the hyperlinks transports the reader out from the *Communist Manifesto* and onto other related hypertexts. Clicking on *bourgeoisie*, for instance, transmutes the reader to a glossary which includes passages from Marx's *Capital*, Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, and other works – all treating different aspects of the notion of *bourgeoisie*. This is true also for the other hyperlinks, each leading the reader to an endless web of interrelated digital hypertexts which are all related in some shape or form to the original text.

As a result of these connections, unlike the reader of the print version of the *Manifesto*, the reader of the digital version does not face only a definite work that begins with "A specter is haunting Europe – the specter of Communism" and ends with "Workers of the world, unite." Whereas reading of the Penguin edition is structured according to the physical properties of paper product, reading the digital version is a nonlinear experience in its very nature. In the latter case, it is up to the reader to navigate through the text, to decide at a very basic level whether to follow any hypertexts and, should a person choose to do so, which ones. Rather than simply following the text as laid out in the paper product, reading becomes a set of associative and personal decisions. While readers may choose to disregard the hyperlinks and stick to the original version of the text, they can also choose to surrender to their natural urge and get carried away in the endless ocean of hypertexts. Doing so might lead readers to center their attention on a completely different text even before they even begin reading the *Manifesto*. In this scenario the *Manifesto* turns from the center of the reading experience to its periphery.

Figure 16: Screenshot taken from the digital version of the *Communist Manifesto* found in the Marxist Internet Archive.[297]

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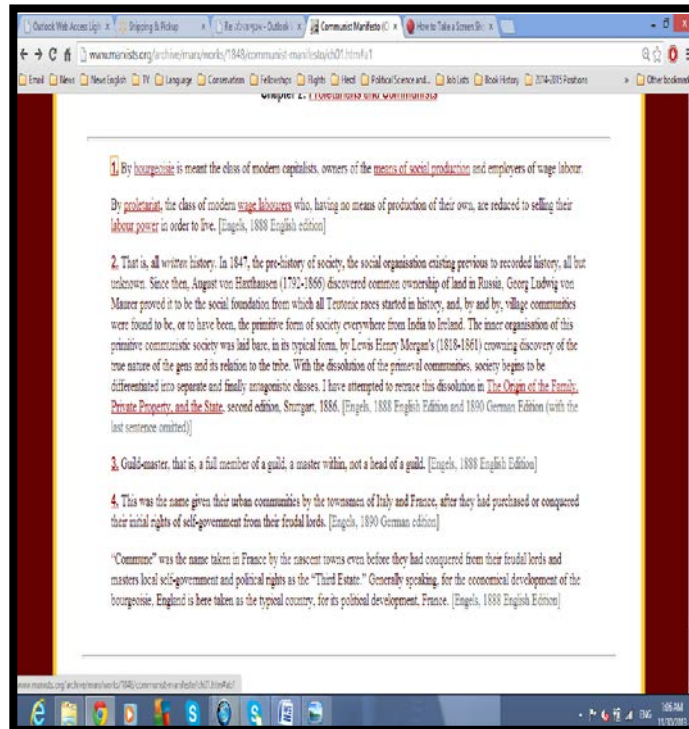
Digital hypertexts found in the World Wide Web are unique in one other sense. The global computer-based network enables users to append their thoughts to the text and share them with the public of users. The speed and immediacy of digital technologies and the ability to access their content from any computer turn the activity of consuming knowledge into an *interactive* one that potentially involves producing it.[298]

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[297] http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#a1, (accessed on January 12, 2014).

[298] Some scholars oppose the use of the term *interactive* in the context of the Internet. Espen Asresth proposes to replace *interactive* with the more nuanced term *ergotic*, derived from the Greek word *ergon* meaning *path*. Unlike *interactive*, which implies that the text is a joint venture between readers and writers, *ergotic* suggests more

Compare, for example, Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* and the most popular encyclopedia of today – *Wikipedia*. As noted in the first chapter, the twenty-eight volume *Encyclopédie*, published between 1751 and 1772, came in compact quarto format designed for reading in private. Diderot and d'Alembert recruited the best minds of the time to contribute to the publication with the aim of popularizing all human knowledge. Yet, as Rousseau was early to point out, the *Encyclopédie* remained very much limited by the clear-cut dichotomy between producers and consumers of written language. Reading the *Encyclopédie* remained, to a large extent, a passive activity of following the tree of knowledge as sketched by a small group of authoritative experts.

Wikipedia, however, presents a completely different form of textuality that generates a different kind of knowledge. *Wikipedia* is a digital encyclopedia with over 30 million articles in 287 languages, free and accessible to any user through any digital device with an Internet connection. More importantly, its content is produced not by a limited circle of authors but by 4.3 billion users. *Wikipedia* demonstrates how in digital hypertexts the role of the author and that of the reader merge. Digital-based networks enable *every* user to produce, circulate, and consume written language. Contrary to Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, any user can read, re-write and spread the content of *Wikipedia*.

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modestly that the reader has capacity to take part, or intervene, in the production of the text. Espen Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergotic Literature*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 48. For more on the term *ergon* see George Landow, *Hypertexts 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 42.

The discussion so far makes clear that digital hypertexts found on the World Wide Web are an expression of a new kind of media culture. First, unlike the print-based media cultures discussed in previous chapters, the redistribution of the means of textual production generates a media environment that lacks any clear division of labor. Production of written language is not limited to a small group of privileged authors, and no well-defined reading public consumes it. Second, unlike paper-based media cultures, the new digital media culture is non-material in its nature. Although digital hypertexts must pass through cables and can be accessed only through digital devices, they are independent of these media. Unlike print-based texts, digital hypertexts are not tied up to any particular physical medium. Consequently, unlike in paper-based media cultures, it is virtually impossible to control and censor digital hypertexts. No one can burn a digital hypertext. Furthermore, in the new digital media culture, reading turns into an associative and personalized activity. It is up to the reader to decide whether a particular text is a hub, or a node in the endless stream of digital hypertexts.

The discussion so far asserts that the distributed, non-material, and nonlinear nature of digital hypertexts found on the World Wide Web define anew the relationship between society and written language. Written language is no longer something readers hold in their hands; it resembles more a web in which they are entangled.

Rousseau, Marx, Engels, and Herzl in the Digital Age

Today the new digital media culture is commonly held to be a liberating force in world politics.[299] This view is supported by the use of blogs, websites, and social networks by social movements across the globe. Although solid evidence regarding the influence of computer-based digital technologies on actual political events remains elusive, these new communication platforms have been said to play a major role in organizing and spreading the activities of various grassroots protest movements all over the world. From the *Zapatista Army of International Liberation* in Mexico, to the *Occupy Wall Street* movement in New York City, to the Arab Spring in the Middle East, to the *Free Tibet Campaign* in the Far East, since the end of the twentieth century, protest movements have been making full-blown efforts to use digital media as a tool for social change. Yet, what would Rousseau, Marx, Engels, and Herzl think about the new digital media culture?

On the face of things, Rousseau's view of the ideal language as a pure expression of human sentiment suggests that he would have been thrilled about the new digital media culture. Rousseau would probably be delighted by the capacity of the World Wide Web to directly reach the public of users. He would undoubtedly also be excited by the capacity of social networks to convey pure human experiences. One can imagine Rousseau as an avid blogger or a social network user who compulsively updates his status and tweets from the state of nature.

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[299] See, Paschal Preston, *Reshaping Communications: Technology, Information and Social Change*, (Sage, 2001). For a comprehensive discussion about the pros and cons of digital technology, see Mark Bauerlein, *The Digital Divide: Arguments for and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Media*, (Penguin, 2011). A critical discussion specifically of Google's digitizing project *Google Book Search* can be found in Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books: Past, Present and Future* (Public Affairs, 2009). See especially 3-21.

Yet, Rousseau would probably be much less enthusiastic about the interactive and nonlinear nature of digital hypertexts. As the first chapter has pointed out, Rousseau's ability to touch his readers through his works was largely thanks to the complete control he exerted as an author on the reading experience of his texts. In both *Julie* and the *Second Discourse* Rousseau guided his readers in each stage of the text to the point where he left them little choice but to embrace his point of view. The nonlinear and interactive nature of digital hypertexts would not allow Rousseau to have the same control of the reading experience that he had in the paper-based media culture he originally worked in. In a digital version of the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau would no longer have an absolute control over savage man. Readers might take different reading paths within and outside the text and personalize their views of the state of nature. Since, as noted above, Rousseau's argument depends on the empathy, anger, and eventually guilt he produces through the text, the reader of the digital version of the *Second Discourse* who is tempted to diverge from its original structure risks missing out on Rousseau's whole moral argument. Thus, despite the unmediated nature of the digital media culture which Rousseau would have surely appreciated, he probably would also be suspicious of its nonlinear and interactive nature.

What would Marx and Engels think about today's digital media culture? One can imagine that Marx and Engels, who spent much of their energies fighting Prussian censorship, would be excited about the ability of computer-based networks to bypass the traditional gatekeepers. Marx would no longer have to submit every issue of the *Rheinische Zeitung* to the Prussian censor; he could start-up a news website. Engels would not have to smuggle forbidden books into Prussia; he could just post them online.

Yet, the analysis here also indicates that Marx and Engels would also be concerned by the non-material nature of digital hypertexts. While the industrialization of print granted Marx and Engels the ontological authority to represent in their works the concrete reality, the digitization of language appears to cart it off. Since digital hypertexts are made of bits rather than atoms, their relationship to what Marx and Engels considered, the material conditions, is no longer straight-forward. Given their non-material nature, digital hypertexts are not commonly held as genuine representations of concrete reality. In fact, when written language transitions from the world of atoms to the world of bits, one thing it loses is its ontological authority. It is possible to argue that the non-material nature of hypertexts moves them away from the concrete reality. While the digital nature of hypertexts makes them a perfect medium to convey personal and immediate messages, it renders them inapt for conveying essentialist arguments such as Marx's and Engels's historical materialism. The non-material and dynamic nature of digital hypertexts is in opposition to the essentialist nature of Marxist historical materialism. Since this is so, it is hard to see how the former could be used to convey the latter. Online readers, who are flooded with information, disinformation, and misinformation, tend to be much more skeptical about the realness of any subject matter they read online. As a result, when notions such as *German reality*, *real individuals*, or the *material conditions of life* make their way to the computer screen, they seem to lose much of their force. Since in the digital age the status of written language is reconfigured, so is historical materialism.

Lastly, what happens to Herzl's Zionism in the age of digital hypertexts? As in the two other cases, Herzl would have probably been pleased with the capacity of computer-based networks to convey political ideas directly to the public. If Herzl had been working in today's digital media culture of our day, his Zionist newspaper *Die Welt* would probably take the form of

a Zionist website which would have been cheaper to produce and would have reached many more readers than the original newspaper. The personal diary Herzl kept would turn into a Zionist blog. Yet, as in the two other cases, the analysis here indicates that Herzl, too, would be alarmed by other aspects of the new digital media culture. The last chapter showed that Herzl was able to establish and lead the Zionist movement thanks to his position as a senior journalist in the early days of mass circulation. As the episode in Constantinople demonstrates, Herzl owed his initial authority as the leader of the Zionist Movement very much to his typographical authority. It is hard to see how in the digital media culture – in which there is no clear division between authors and readers – Herzl could have made the transition from the digital world to the political world. In the non-material, non-linear and decentralized World Wide Web Herzl – as a man of letters – would not enjoy the same authoritative position he had in the age of mass circulation. In the digital media culture that merges the traditional roles of the author and the reader, it seems much harder for a journalist to turn into a leader of an international movement.

The discussion here suggests that Rousseau, Marx, Engels, and Herzl would probably not share the enthusiasm common today about the liberating and empowering nature of computer-based digital networks. The reason for this seems to lie in the non-material and decentralized architecture of digital networks. The three media cultures discussed here all shared the basic structure of professional men of letters who conveyed their ideas to the public of readers through paper-based products. However, as indicated above, in the digital media culture authors, readers, and texts do not adhere to the same structure. In the new media culture there is no longer a clear distinction between producers and consumers of written language, nor is there one between individual texts. As a result, instead of professional authors who produce structured and defined paper-based texts, there spreads an endless plane of digital hypertexts before the user. This

metaphysical and amorphous form of textuality does not facilitate the intimate relationship that served as the basis of Rousseau's egalitarianism; it extinguishes the ontological authority that empowered Marx and Engels to address in their philosophical works the socio-economic realities; it prevents men of letters from acquiring the authority that allowed Herzl to make the transition from the Gutenberg galaxy to world politics.

Estranged Selfies

In the last two sections of this study I would like to put forward some thoughts about the future of politics in the age of digital networks. The works of Anderson, Habermas, McLuhan, and Foucault have shown that, as a rule, modern print-based media cultures facilitated stable and fixed collective identities. The findings of this study so far seem to support this view. The first chapter illustrated that the Enlightenment literary market allowed Rousseau to invoke in his work subjective egalitarianism, which was to guide later universal outlooks on humanity. Later, in the hands of Marx and Engels, mechanically duplicated language became the ontological basis of the working class's consciousness. Similarly, a mass circulation publication enabled Herzl to fuse together traditional Jewish messianism and turn-of-the-twentieth-century political ideas to create a Jewish political messianic ideology.

Contrary to all these stable print-based collective identities, digital hypertexts seem to favor immediate and transitory social formations. The non-material, open-ended, and interactive nature of digital language make it an excellent medium to convey immediate and personal accounts. Digital networks are a perfect medium for ad hoc and interest-based relationships. However, digital networks seem much less apt in creating fixed and long-lasting collective

identities. The instant and interactive nature of digital networks seems to hinder them from conveying a genuine and enduring sense of belonging. While digital networks may well be useful in facilitating different forms of spontaneous protests revolving particular issues, it is hard to see how they could facilitate stable and long-lasting collective identities.

Yet, the impact of computer-based digital networks on the social and political world seems to be more profound than simply serving as a useful tool to coordinating political protest. In the remainder of the discussion I would like to suggest that digital networks generate, in fact, a thoroughly new social condition -- a condition I call *Selfism*.[300] *selfie* – which was chosen as the Oxford Dictionaries' Word of the Year (2013) – is a self-taken digital photograph users post online. The user creates a *selfie* by holding up a digital camera and taking a picture of himself (see Figure 17 below). This kind of digital self-portrait captures the essence of the new social condition created by digital networks. Digital networks produce not merely information; they produce individuals as information. In the online world, human beings exist first as users and second as individuals. While it is true that digital networks enable users to do wonderful things, they do so at the price of stripping the individual of basic freedoms. They endow the user with endless knowledge while atrophying the individual's intellectual faculties; they allow the user to communicate with humanity at large just as long as the individual sits in solitude in front of his digital device; they enable users to produce beautified images of themselves while, as

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[300] It should be noted that, contrary to the assumption guiding this discussion, despite the significant growth in Internet use in both the developed and developing worlds in the past twenty years, there is no empirical data that indicates that the internet use is replacing other forms of social interaction. Nevertheless, assuming a social condition in which computer-based digital networks are the sole means of communication may allow thinking critically about the social and political ramifications of the online world.

individuals, they rot in front of the computer screen. Digital freedom comes at the price of atomic slavery. Selfies are mere manifestations of a new social condition found in digital networks in which users can relate to themselves only through an alien digital self-portrait.

Figure 17: U.S. President Barack Obama, Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, and British Prime Minister David Cameron taking a Selfie during Nelson Mandela's memorial service in South Africa on December 14, 2013.[301]

The capacity of digital networks to empower the user at the expense of the individual explains why users so willingly surrender their privacy to such networks and expose themselves to government surveillance, cybercriminals, and exploitative information corporations. The more of their atomic life users convert to digital information, the more liberty they enjoy in the online world. The more they increase their online presence, the more they can transcend their limitations as individuals. Digital networks put the world literally in the palm of the user's hand. Yet, in doing so, they estrange users from their flesh-and-blood existence. The more people

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[301] Taken from http://worldofpopculture.com/2014/01/annoying-words-2013-revealed/obama-selfie/ (accessed on January 13, 2014).

digitize themselves, the more they become estranged from their individuality. Once users put their individual lives onto the network, their lives become something alien to them and confront them. Individuals become less themselves, the more they are present online. In the digital age, the antagonism is not a social one between classes but a schizophrenic one between man and his digital persona. The more users feel empowered by the digital network, the more they get robbed of their atomic selves. Whatever a person's digital persona is, that individual is not. Manuel Castells notes: "Our societies are increasingly structured around a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self."[302]

Yet, the user is not a typical print-based narcissist. Thanks to the wonders of digital technology, users do not see themselves as merely the center of the social world but as its grand framework. While the material and linear nature of paper-based texts led individuals to see themselves as part of larger publics found *out there*, the non-material and nonlinear nature of digital networks leads the users to see their social surroundings as part of *their* world. *Selfies epitomize a new social condition in which users no longer see themselves as part of a public, a class, or a nation. They consider their transitory digital associations as part of themselves.* Digital networks generate a new point of view in which users consider the online world as part of their digital personas. Users are like digital Sun Kings who utilize different networks to fulfill different individual social needs: using messaging applications to satisfy emotional needs, ordering online to meet material requirements, making use of social networks to gratify their amour-propre.

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[302] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, (Blackwell, 1996), 3.

The reversed pattern of perspective generated by digital networks conceals the fact that the more powerful the user is, the less powerful the individual is vis-à-vis the network. The devaluation of the individual is in direct relation to the increasing value of the network. By rendering a reversed point of view in which social relations appear to be part of the user's grand digital existence, digital networks hinder users from seeing themselves as part of any public while at the same time preventing the public from seeing itself. Selfism is a new social condition in which human beings are estranged from other human beings as well as from their own concrete existence. The user's view of society as part of himself turns all users into isolated nodes in an all-powerful digital network.

## Egalitarianism, Historical Materialism, and Zionism in the Age of Digital Hypertexts

When Rousseau constructed his subjective egalitarianism in his works, he did not imagine a form of textuality that has no authors. When Marx and Engels painted a clear-cut line between thought and being, they did not envision digital technology that is both information and matter. When Herzl reformulated Jewish messianism as a modern national movement, he did not imagine a digital network that transcends the limitations of time and space. Despite all this – how can is it possible to bring the political ideas discussed in this study up to date with contemporary digital media culture?

The first chapter asserted that much of Rousseau's novelty was in using the direct channel that had opened between himself and his readers to create a new form of subjectivity that brought to light the similar constitution which all human beings share. In the digital age, the task is to use digital networks in a way that will enable users to detach from their selfies and regain

their individuality. In the same manner in which Rousseau's original texts provided a reading experience that aided eighteenth-century readers to develop their autonomy in a fixed social setting, a Rousseauian use of digital networks should generate an emotionally charged experience that will show users the way to reconnect with their flesh-and-blood individuality. Once users are able to see themselves beyond the network, they may regain awareness of their actual social surroundings and thus overcome selfism.

This kind of Rousseauian use of digital networks is far from being hypothetical. It characterizes the way many protest movements use the Internet. One example is a selfie posted on the *We are the 99 Percent* website affiliated with the *Occupy Wall Street Movement* (Figure 17 below). The selfie was taken by a twenty-three year old journalism student. It shows a young woman holding up a letter against the camera in which she describes in her own handwriting the hardships she endured in supporting herself while attending college. The letter is signed "I am the 99%." This type of selfie has the opposite effect of the typical one found online. Its aim is not to beautify reality, but to critique it; it is not self-absorbed, but it is a genuine cry for help. The piercing eyes of the young woman peeping behind her own handwriting have an effect to that of Julie's letters. They both strike their audiences as authentic expressions of everyday people. The underlying message in both cases is that – behind the social façade – *we* (at least 99% of us) are the same. The empathy which this type of authentic first-person account generates compels users to reconnect with their sense of self. It forces them to acknowledge their actual social setting. In doing so, it shows them the way to overcome selfism.

Figure 18: Taken from http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/
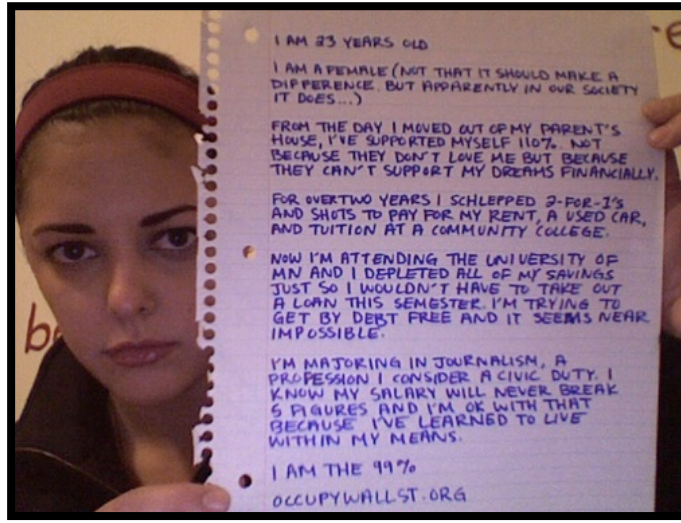
Yet, given the disappearance of the author in digital hypertexts and their open-ended nature, constructing Rousseauian reading experiences is no longer in the hands of professional authors like Rousseau. Since in today's digital media culture men of letters do not enjoy the social capital they once did nor do they exhibit the same absolute control over their texts, it is the public of users at large who bear the responsibility to take up Rousseau's role. As the example above demonstrates, it is up to all users to generate authentic reading experiences that will challenge *Selfism*. Nevertheless, recent trends in the online world raise concerns about the diminishing ability of users to use the Internet in such a Rousseauian way. As Alexander Gallaway,Lessing, Evegeny Morozov, and others have pointed out, the Internet in recent years has become increasingly centralized and commercialized.[303] The once-open digital plane is today more and more dominated by information corporations, monitored by government agencies, and

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[303] Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*, (MIT Press, 2004); Lawrence Lessing, *Code*, (Basic Books, 2006); Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*, (Perseus Books, 2011).

exposed to cyber-criminals. Thus, it still remains to be seen whether future users will be able to generate online Rousseauian experiences that will wake users up from their digital slumber.

How is it possible to bring historical materialism up to date with the new digital media culture? The first issue to tackle would be to fit Marxist ontology to the new digital condition. Sticking to Marx's and Engels's original formulation of historical materialism leads to the conclusion that digital networks would not qualify as part of the structure, as they are made of intangible bits and not atoms. Yet, this is true only insofar as digital information is considered metaphysical in nature. In the age of the Information Economy – in which bits tend to function as atoms – this is no longer the case.

A good example of this is the increasingly popular technology of 3D printing. 3D printers produce objects through sequential layering (known also as additive manufacturing) based on the commands they receive from information animation modeling software. The use of the noun *printing* is a bit misleading, since what 3D printers do is take digital information and transform it into concrete objects. 3D printers do not use ink but many different substances that allow them to produce almost any object.

This new technology demonstrates that in the Information Age there is an increasing exchange between the digital and physical worlds. This flow between the two worlds has the effect of redistributing the means of production. For a few hundred dollars anyone today can buy a 3D printer that could produce anything from door knobs, wrenches, and even food supplies. One can imagine that in a few years 3D printers will be found in every house and will serve as a private factory that allows every household to own the means for the "production of material

life," as Marx and Engels would have it.[304] The case of 3D printers is just one out of many examples that demonstrate that, today, *digital is material*.[305]

Expanding Marx's and Engels's historical materialism so that it will include digital production suggests new and interesting veins of research. While in the industrialized age Marx and Engels pointed to the material conditions that brought about bourgeois society, one task of historical materialism in the digital age would be to unearth the material foundation of the "networked society," in Castells's terms.[306] This kind of research may investigate what is the form of property and the division of labor that serves as the basis *Selfism* as a social condition. The task will be to ask whether *Selfism* is in fact a result of the mode of production in which every user is the owner of the means of production. There are, of course, many other research trajectories open; the important point, however, is that once it is acknowledged that the digital is material, there are various ways to apply historical materialism to the study of the material conditions underlying the online world.[307]

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[304] Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (International Publishers, 1975), 42.

[305] 3D printers are also used by radical anarchist groups to print 3D-guns. Those groups post the digital blueprint of the gun online so that it can be downloaded by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Some of those groups who operate in the U.S. are arguing that their practice is protected not only by the Second Amendment (the right to bear arms) but also by the First (Freedom of Speech). Even more remarkable is the latest use of 3D printing to produce human organs. As of today a number of companies are making final tests in using human tissues to print vital human organs that will be readymade for transplant. This kind of bio-printing further puts into question Marx's and Engels's dichotomous division between the material and the metaphysical world.

[306] See Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, (Blackwell, 1996).

[307] Such an attempt was made recently by Eran Fisher in his work *Media and New Capitalism in the Digital Age: The Spirit of Networks*, (Palgrave, 2010).

Lastly, the task of bringing Herzl's Zionism up to date with the new digital media culture seems to be harder than in the other two cases. The reason for that is the apparent incongruity between the territorial component, so central to Herzl's enterprise, and the nonmaterial and global nature of digital networks. While, as Anderson noted, print technology laid the grounds for the idea of the modern territorial nation-state, the speed and global nature of digital networks change the function of territory in the formation of national identities. Land in networked societies neither serves as the sole basis of the physical wellbeing of society nor as the primary source of identity. Human interaction in the online world has the tendency to transcend national borders. This raises questions about the relevance of Herzl's vision of a Jewish territorial state (as well as the value of nationalism in general) in the age of globalized information.

In spite of all that, the last chapter documented that Herzl's Zionism was not based solely on territory but also on mass circulation. Mass circulation allowed Herzl to detach Jewish messianism from the Jewish tradition and land it in international politics. In light of the central role mass circulation played in Zionism and in that of texts in the Jewish tradition in general, perhaps digital hypertexts may serve as the foundation of a new digital Jewish identity.

A comprehensive exploration of such an identity is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet, just based on the general characteristics of digital hypertexts as discussed here, it is not inconceivable that this digital Jewish identity would be fundamentally different from all the previous print-based ones. The nonlinear and interactive nature of digital hypertexts – which is poles apart from the closed and removed nature of Jewish canonical texts – may invoke a more open-ended Jewish identity. The global reach of digital networks may allow Jewish communities to override prevailing national and cultural divisions. Digital hypertexts may turn out to be effective means for fulfilling the promise of the traditional print-based Jewish texts of invoking a

true cosmopolitan – not to say universal – Jewish polity. Perhaps they would serve as a global digital homeland – as Heine would have it – for the Jewish people.

Nevertheless, there are also obvious predicaments that will prevent digital hypertexts from serving as a basis for such a global Jewish polity. First, the electronic nature of digital hypertexts will hinder them from being used by Orthodox Jews in some of the major Jewish rituals. It is hard to see how digital hypertexts could function as sacred objects. Second, as pointed out earlier, because of their nonlinear nature, digital hypertexts resist the mere notion of canon – so central in Judaism. Given the central role canonical texts play in Jewish communities, the fluid nature of digital hypertexts casts serious doubts about their ability to serve as the basis of any kind of sustainable Jewish identity. Before anyone thinks seriously about a Jewish digital identity, those issues must be resolved. Yet, in the short run, digital hypertexts could still prove to be useful in facilitating a Jewish identity – even a temporary and unstable one – that will aid Jewish users in attenuating their *Selfism*.

Final Remarks

In the last thirty years digital media technologies provided book historians, media theorists, and philosophers with a vantage point that allowed them to view written language as a changing technology. In this dissertation I attempted to bring this perspective to the study of modern political thought. As the three case studies discussed here demonstrate, doing so points to the extent to which modern political thought is a print-based tradition. It shows modern political theory to be a print-based tradition not only in the sense that it was conveyed through print but, more importantly, in that it presupposes that most human interaction is carried out through ink and paper.

Since modern political theory is a print-based tradition, it does not always sit well with today's global, digital media culture. While the dichotomies between private and public, ideology and praxis, and local and global that underlie many of the major ideas in modern political thought may describe human interaction in the age of the printing press, they appear to miss out on some of the basic characteristics of human interaction carried out through digital networks. This may raise more general questions about the extent to which modern political thought and the digital media culture of our time are compatible.

Yet, in the last section I suggested possible ways to reconfigure the political ideas of the past so that they could address some of the issues pervading modern, networked societies. A Rousseauian use of digital hypertexts may still reinforce the autonomy of users and engender their empathy towards their fellow users. By the same token, Marxist historical materialism may be broadened so that it could be used to investigate with a critical eye the material conditions underlying the online world. Lastly, Herzl's use of mass circulation publication may provide inspiration for using digital hypertexts to create a globalized digital Jewish polity.

Although the political ideas discussed in this work were thought about in the age of ink and paper, this last discussion indicates that they still may prove useful in thinking about politics in the digital media culture of today. The initial observations put forward in the last section of this work hopefully will open the way for more studies that will help bring political theory closer to the digital epoch.

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