

and in numerous horror and science-fiction films (which, respectively, reflected contemporary fascinations with psychoanalysis and the downside of scientific positivism).

However, despite Polan's interesting re-reading of the history of the Hollywood film in this period, *Power and Paranoia* suffers from several weaknesses. The first, and perhaps most evident, follows from the enormity of the project the author has undertaken. Because Polan tries to address so many individual films, his analysis often falls back on generalities and simple dualisms (as in the reading of *Casablanca* quoted above).

The other problem with the book is Polan's decision to focus almost exclusively on film narrative itself. There is virtually no discussion of the extra-filmic, political interference exercised on the Hollywood film industry by the American state, despite the fact that in no other decade in history did Hollywood come under closer scrutiny by the forces of government.

During the war, institutions like the Office of War Information had a tremendous power over what Hollywood could, should and should not show on the screens across the country. Its manual became a significant guide to industry self-censorship. Polan only alludes to this phenomena in a couple of passages in his book.

The post-war period was also the beginning of the Cold War, the heyday of American anti-communism. While Polan does discuss the late forties rise of the sub-genre of anti-red films, he makes no attempt to look at the impact that the communist witchhunt, initiated by the House Un-American Activities Committee, had on the industry. The government's attack on "leftist" influence inside the industry, and the subsequent blacklisting carried out by the studios themselves, led to the dismissal of some 600 to 1,000 of Hollywood's most creative talents. This attack led to a relative artistic decline in the films made at the end of the decade and into the 1950s.

Perhaps it was a conscious decision on the author's part to exclude these extra-filmic political influences on Hollywood narrativity. However, this exclusion tends to give the book a mono-thematic character. Polan discusses outside social influences on the cinema only where they seem to directly affect the interplay of different narrative strands in specific films.

As a discussion of narrative dissonance in the 1940s, *Power and Paranoia* has few precedents, and is worthy of serious consideration as an immanent critique of the Hollywood cinema. The difficulty lies in the fact that it leaves the impression that narrative conflict is self-generating or, at best reflective, almost impervious to the general and indirect impact of outside social forces. ♦

Joseph Kispal-Kovacs is a graduate student in York University's Department of Social and Political Thought.

KIM IAN MICHASIW

The Therapy of Culture

**Pathologies of
the Modern Self:
Postmodern Studies
on Narcissism,
Schizophrenia,
and Depression**
ed. David Michael Levin

New York: New York University Press,
1987, 548 pp.

In recent years literary, cultural, and social theorists have borrowed liberally from theories of the human subject that derive from the consulting room and clinic. Practising therapists and analysts have, however, tended to seal themselves off from extra-disciplinary influences, even from what used to be called "applied psychoanalysis." Disciplinary lines have hardened and specialization has removed the specialist from movements in "general" intellectual culture. David Michael Levin's collection of 16 essays attempts to redress this imbalance. The volume is witness to the encounter between various contemporary psychotherapeutic practices and those recent theoretical developments that we have come to call postmodern. Here Jacques Derrida visits the consulting room, Martin Heidegger roams the backwards of state psychiatric hospitals, and Michel Foucault drops in for Awareness Week at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur.

The rationale for these encounters is Levin's call for a "cultural epidemiology" for our times. That is, the volume's project is an investigation of those psychic disorders that are now culturally dominant, with the assumption that these are characteristic expressions, perhaps the truest products of the postmodern condition. This assumption is based on the frequently asserted claim that the types of disorder on which Freud founded psychoanalysis – notably hysteria – are rarely encountered by today's analysts. Other types of disorder are now dominant. This shift is in part the result of changes in nosological definitions but is also a sign of the inevitably historical character of psychic disorders.

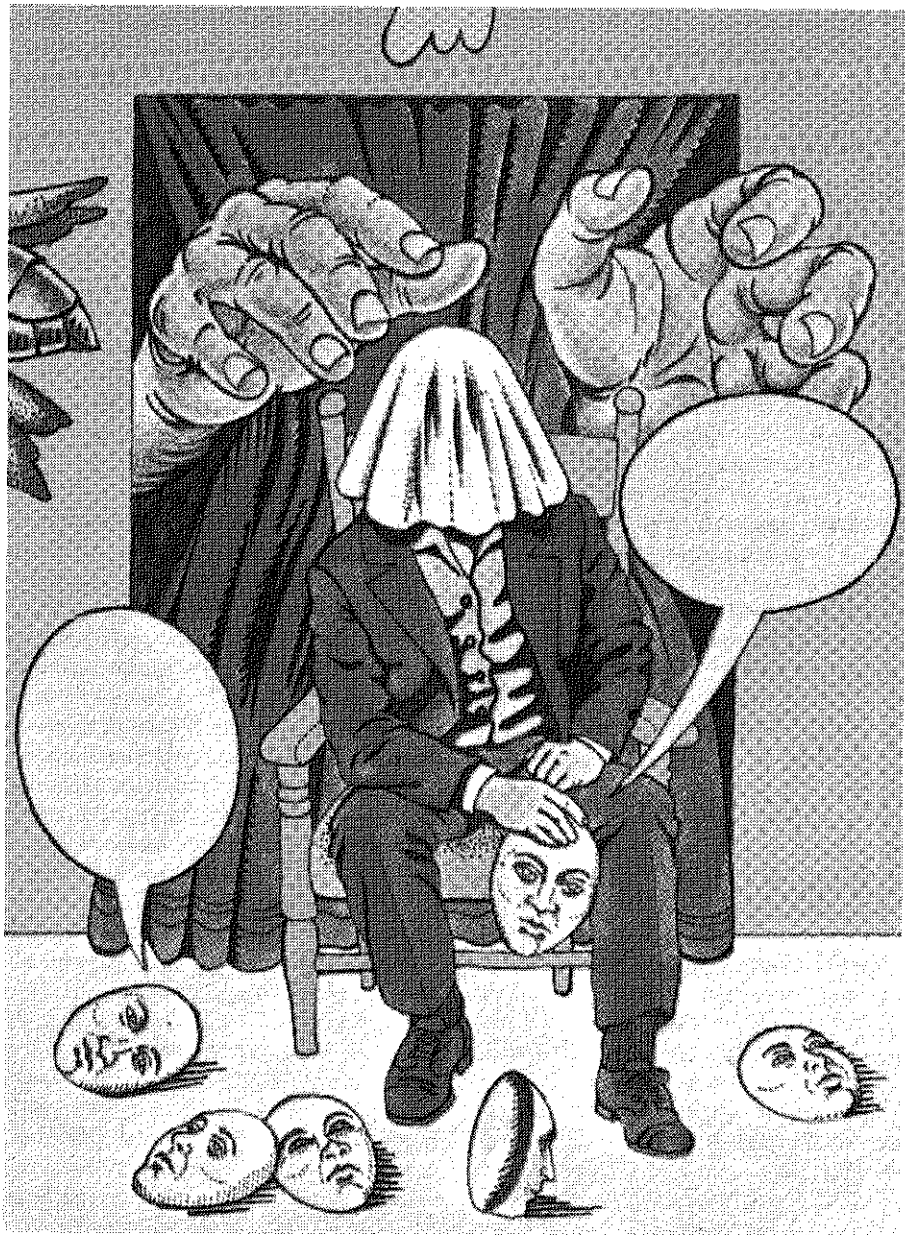
Emphasized here are the intricate linkages between the human subject and its society. These linkages cannot be seen in simple terms of cause and effect but are figured rather as a set of reversible *trompe*

l'oeils of figure and ground. The disturbed subject is not simply the product of a pathogenic environment (family, institutional structure, workplace) as the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s claimed. Rather the subject is both produced and productive and is only institutionalized when that productivity drops below a pre-set level. This project marks a reassertion of Freud's insistence on the continuum between the disordered and the functional members of a society, a continuum that disguises itself as a binary opposition by occluding the middle and by developing a massive psycho-medical establishment to police that occlusion. This policing function is the focus of several contributions to the volume. Notable among these, and the collection's most typically postmodern study, is Irene Harvey's deconstruction of the American Psychiatric Association's 1980 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III). This manual serves as guide to those who separate the "mad" from the "sane" and, as Harvey demonstrates, presumes a radical pre-diagnostic divide between the two. This divide permits identical sets of symptoms to signify entirely different conditions. Senses of uniqueness, individuality and self-initiation are, for instance, signs of normality in the normal and of disturbance in the disturbed. As the essay concludes, "If one were actually to submit to the manual's concept of normality – what it calls our 'sense of self' – one would lose one's job."

The instruments with which the "therapeutic community" creates taxonomies are clearly open to question but these questions do not make the patients (in the literal sense of those suffering) vanish. The way the patient is seen may transform that patient but it is difficult to maintain that the diagnosis *creates* the disorder and the suffering it brings with it. Moreover, even if diagnosis helps to create the disorder, it does so as part of society's pathogenic apparatus.

This last possibility is one of the abiding concerns of Levin's volume and is one of the three primary reasons why the contributors to it feel the need to appeal to contemporary social theory for aid. The first of these is that if technological late capitalism is productive of specific sets of pathologies that can be labelled "character disorders," then some attention to the character of that society is necessary on the part of those who are attempting to cure its victims. Unfortunately this question is addressed directly less often than one might wish. The exception is Cisco Lassiter's committed but disconcertingly brief "Dislocation and Illness," a study of the disorders characteristic of those Navajo forced into urban society by the 1974 Land Settlement Act.

The second reason is that if Foucault's analyses of the birth of the clinic and the



If Foucault's
analyses of
the birth
of the clinic

and the genealogy of our
modes of distinguishing
mad from sane are accepted,
then the eye of the thera-
peutic establishment must be
turned upon itself.

genealogy of our modes of distinguishing mad from sane are accepted, then the eye of the therapeutic establishment must be turned upon itself. In order to do so that eye must see without its discipline's own blinders. It must adopt others' critiques of the prevailing technological rationality in order to see itself as that order's product and servant. This approach, for reasons that I will examine below, produces the volume's most satisfying contributions.

The third rationale, and this is the most troubling to those authors who are in practice, is that if the patient is the product of a diseased and diseasing society, and if that patient's suffering is in part the result of her/his "emargination" from that society, what can a cure mean? Obviously neither the brain chemists' program of drugging the patient into acceptance of institutionalization nor that pharmaceutical simulation of lobotomy that permits outpatients to wander through a world the clinic has expanded to engorge can be accepted. No more acceptable is any variation on the ideal of normalization. How can bringing a patient into line with the order of a pathogenic society be justified? But what does this leave as the therapist's imagined end?

Perhaps because of the contradictions involved in the therapeutic project, the most achieved and assured of the contributions to Levin's volume are authored by those who are not practising, or those who are but have chosen in this instance to take the high ground of historical, statistical, or rhetorical analysis. Harvey's attack on DSM-III is both instructive and convincing, as is Kenneth Pope and Paula Johnson's survey of gender, race and class biases in mental health service. One wonders, however, of how much use either of these is to those who require these services and thus are subject to DSM-III. Regardless of therapeutic biases and classificatory confusion, patients such as those who are quoted at agonizing length in James M. Glass's "Schizophrenia and Rationality" are suffering from more than the institution that defines them. Similarly the volume's several Foucauldian genealogies of the state of mental health care in the USA – notably those of James Bernauer and Richard F. Mollica – are descriptively useful (and damning) but prescriptively limited.

More problematic are those of the volume's studies that take up the editor's challenge to identify the links between late capitalism and its characteristic personality disorders. These fall roughly into three groups: 1) derivatives from the tradition of Critical Theory; 2) "New Age" polemics; 3) variations on anti-psychiatry.

Representative of the first group are the contributions of the editor: an introduction, an introductory essay, and a conclusion, amounting to about one quarter of the volume's length. Levin situates himself in the philosophical line from Nietzsche to Heidegger by way of Horkheimer and Adorno. Thus he stands as an anti-Cartesian, a foe of the mind-body split,



and one who finds in psychopathology witness to the falsity of that divide. Moreover, in what Levin calls our "Epoch of Nihilism," what the Cartesian mind has been objectified as subjectivity. That is, as the old term "self" has been replaced by "subject," "the Self will be increasingly subjected to the most extreme objectification, i.e., domination by the exigencies of an 'objective' ordering of reality." The subjectification of being is a manifestation of the will to power's turning against itself. We become "beings who are subject to the terror of a total objectivity, and we conceal this hopeless dependency within a delusion of omnipotence that makes us believe we have the capacity to survive." Such fantasies of omnipotence slide easily into what are labelled delusional states or pathologies. Accordingly, narcissism, depression and schizophrenia have to be

peculiarly vicious act of interpretive violence. "Cancer and the Self," Roger Levin's contribution to *Pathologies*, provides a prime example of this procedure. His exemplary male patients free themselves, Huck Finn-like, from social encumbrances (wife, family, job) and cure their cancers. His exemplary females are, however, too socialized, too repressed to light out on the road to health indicated by their male therapist. As a result they die.

Sontag is a villain and cancer is an issue because both put in question the reductive psychosomatic both LeVins wish to assert. For Roger Levin, cancer is the body's protest against an unhealthy life dominated by the mind. His cure is effected through listening to the body and presumes that the body is an untainted, socialized oasis, that technological society has affected only the mind. This p-

Withdrawal from social engagement, then, is a good; so too is outward conformity with a social order, however corrupt, so long as the apparent conformist doesn't really mean it. Inarticulateness is also a virtue. The experiences once confined to poets and mystics appear to be immune to verbal representation. Gendlin shares with other contributors, and with postmodern theory in general, a profound distrust of words. His particular strictures on speech are curiously reminiscent of those of Antonin Artaud. One doubts, however, that the expressive, purgative, praeter-verbal shrieks of Artaud's actor-victims should all commence with "Well ... like ... you know...."

Despite the occasional amusement Gendlin's essay provides, the argument's implications are sinister, or they would be if they rested on firmer ground. Any defence of upper-middle class quietism based on the assertion that no one (poets and mystics excepted) has ever, in the history of human consciousness, experienced the intricacies of emotion that beset the average Toronto commodities broker every day, is likely to lack power of persuasion. (The reader is driven to wonder if Gendlin has ever read a novel, or a diary, written before 1900.) Those who might be persuaded, those who are personally complimented or excused, are those who must comprise the majority of Gendlin's clients. Gendlin, and those who share his views, employ the analysis of a pathogenic social order as a rationale for withdrawal and discover in the body an unsocialized site for privileged, untainted experience. That is, they employ a social/historical analysis to remove their patients from history and locate in those patients' bodies a space of freedom that resists, of its own accord, traditional coding and institutional control. From these miraculously pure bodies derive "non ego" experiences that are then "focused" through a sequence of non-linear steps. This results in "a new kind of simplicity ... enabling speech and action." How this translation evades the programming that, Gendlin assures us, infects all language is unclear, as is how we know that an adequate translation has been effected.

This process must, however, be reassuring to the client. In listening to the body the subject's self-mastery is reaffirmed even as the subject "transcends" both Descartes' mind-body trap and conventional patterning. On the other hand, Gendlin's clients, like those of the other contributors who frame similarly hopeful schemes are (at least) middle class and are troubled by such questions as the choice of a mate or the decision to have a baby. These problems are of a rather different order than those of James Glass's patient 'Chuck' who is sent messages by Eddy a police clerk who sits in a small town in Illinois: "Eddy speaks to everyone in the Hospital ... he controls it all ... he's going to kill everyone with a machine gun ... three million people. ... Eddy speaks to me about crucifixion; he tells me I've been crucified, hacked into a thousand pieces, stuffed into a Baltimore sausage." It

One of the volume's significant and surprising villains

is Susan Sontag, whose *Illness as Metaphor*

serves as emblem of Cartesianism run mad.

seen as what Christopher Lasch has called "the characteristic expression of [our] culture."

Levin's descriptive case is persuasive — in part because his analysis is analogous to those of Jean Baudrillard and Arthur Kroker and in larger part because he does not share their cheery, theatrical apocalypticism. The difficulty presented, though, is where one moves from this analysis. In this movement Levin himself begins to cite what he calls "the wisdom in Buddhist psychology [which] is ancient, but amazingly relevant." This turn allies him with the frequent recourse to shamanism and other non-Western, parareligious forms in the volume's Jungian and "New Ageist" essays.

It also produces one of the volume's significant (and surprising) villains, Susan Sontag, whose *Illness as Metaphor* serves as emblem of Cartesianism run mad. Sontag's work is a protest against those American cancerphobes, within and without the medical establishment, who brand cancer a psychosomatic disease and who, in effect, blame the patient's disease on the patient's weakness of character. Sontag argues that to blame a person's cancer on her or his (usually sexual) repression is a

potentially pure body is the basis of "New Age" ideology as it manifests itself in this volume. The key statement of the position is Eugene T. Gendlin's "A Philosophical Critique of the Concept of Narcissism: The Significance of the Awareness Movement." This essay is an extended attack on those "psychoanalytic thinkers [who] can see little more than selfishness and self indulgence in current trends, [who] use the term 'narcissism' to say that people's inner preoccupation interferes with their social bonding." For Gendlin those whose primary concern is with the "intricacy" of their private emotional lives are not self-absorbed bores whom one wants to strangle after ten minutes' "conversation." Rather they are a wonderful new evolutionary development. "In Jung's scheme," Gendlin comments, "such people are not the highest stage of human development." In this instance, however, Jung is wrong, as such people are encountering, regularly, "experiential openings that only poets and mystics once enjoyed."

seems unlikely that "Chuck" is going to be helped much by listening to the voice of this morselated body.

Glass's account of "Chuck" and other patients similarly disturbed serves as an index to the radical separation between the essays of those contributors who treat patients who would be diagnosed as disordered even by a system infinitely more enlightened than DSM-III and those who deal with what Pope and Johnson identify as psychotherapy's preferred client: "young, attractive, well-educated members of the upper-middle class, possessing ... no seriously disabling neurotic symptoms, relative absence of characterological distortions..." Glass and Joel Kovel confront directly the anti-psychiatric maxim that schizophrenia is perhaps the most reasonable response of the human subject to the dehumanized condition of the citizen of late capitalism. They confront also the sheer misery of many schizophrenics' existences, misery that is partly but by no means completely the result of the medical, pharmaceutical, institutional prison into which most schizophrenics are placed. In so doing they address the currency of schizophrenia as metaphor in contemporary theory. In the context of Glass's patients, the schizophrenic taking a stroll who is Deleuze and Guattari's emblem for the postmodern condition is revealed as a remarkably neutralized figure. That "schizo" is not reduced constantly to quivering terror by the threats and orders of a genocidal police clerk. Those whose lives have demetaphorized this postmodern commonplace are generally less delighted about the situation than are those who invoke blithely Deleuze and Guattari's figure at academic conferences. (Glass's account of his patient "Vicky's" becoming-bug underlines the metaphorical opportunism of Deleuze and Guattari's program for becoming-animal, where the human retains control and is merely taking a vacation from species specificity.)

The question for these writers is whether or not there exists a continuity between schizophrenic and "normal" experience. For Kovel the continuum is interrupted by catastrophe. In schizophrenia the "critical negativity within being - that capacity to refuse the given world while remaining one's self - is demolished and transposed to the zone of non-being." Schizophrenia can tell the observer "more about existential possibilities - including emancipation - than does the flaccid despair of normal adaptation. But we appreciate this only if we recognize just how far the schizophrenic has fallen - that he shows us the contours of transcendent possibilities precisely by being so far removed from them." The schizophrenic is the pure product of technological rationality but one whose minor resistances, those guaranteeing the subject's continuing and socially necessary illusion of

independence have imploded, leaving only the chaos out of which schizophrenia is constructed.

Glass's essay is less engaged with the actual treatment of schizophrenics than is Kovel's. Thus it can emphasize the lines of continuity between his patients' illicit delusions and the "legitimate" political delusions that operate in society at large. That is, his patients' convictions of conspiracy are seen as signs of their alienation from reality; the equally ungrounded conspiratorial convictions of the National Rifle Association are regarded as sane. As François Roustang remarks in *Dire Mas-tery*, "delirium is the theory of the one, theory is the delirium of several." If "Chuck's" conviction that malign forces are arrayed against him and the other citizens of Baltimore centred on the KGB, or a cabal of liberal legislators, rather than an Illinois police clerk, he might have emerged a national leader rather than an institutionalized schizophrenic.

Kovel's and Glass's treatment of the schizophrenic can, I think, be a guide to our own dealings with Levin's volume. Both schizophrenia and the collection are definite products and potential critiques of the postmodern condition. The central problematic of the collection is only occasionally addressed directly, but the editor's challenge to see both psychic disorders and writings about them as symptoms broods over and affects the reading of all the essays. Those set at an academic reserve suggest a number of applications of postmodern theory to an area of practice that remains primarily modernist in its assumptions. Those studies more involved, particularly those originating in campaigns for self-improving, self-transcending therapies, are useful as manifestations of sophisticated forms of adaptive pathology. Finally, in Kovel and Glass, we encounter ways of thinking through the critique of our society that is enacted by extreme, debilitating psychic disorders. These ways are beginnings only but they are better beginnings than others being at least relatively free of the metaphorical excess, sentimental liberationism, and the denial of the disturbed individual's actual being that too frequently infest such arguments. ♦

Kim Ian Michasiw is a graduate student in the English Department of York University.



ALAN O'CONNOR

Just Plain Home Cookin'

**City of Quartz:
Excavating the Future
in Los Angeles**
by Mike Davis
photographs by Robert Morrow

London, New York: Verso, 1990, 463 pp.

Like most enjoyable books on cities this one is bulky and unorthodox. It's over 450 pages of text, notes, maps, and Robert Morrow's black and white photos. Mike Davis no longer drives a truck for a living. But if he now teaches at the California Institute for Architecture he wants us to know that behind this book "There are no research grants, sabbaticals, teaching assistants, or other fancy ingredients..." Just plain home cooking from the same person who brought us *Prisoners of the American Dream* - one of a handful of books that actually makes sense of the Reagan and Bush years.

City of Quartz sounds like the title of a bad novel. You know the sort of thing: "Footsteps echoed on dark paved streets. The phone rang in the small sixteenth-floor office of Brad Concrete, Private Investigator." But *City of Sand* wouldn't have done because although Los Angeles seems at times to be built on a kind of dreaming, it is real and solid enough, and not about to collapse back into the desert. And *Silicon Valley* says only one part of what Southern California is all about.

One of the most fascinating parts of *City of Quartz* is an overview of the many ways in which this sprawling metro-centre has been imagined. One thinks of Los Angeles as a city which gets bad press. It has been variously thought of as a retirement health spa for elderly Midwesterners, a socialist utopia, a place of brutal union-breaking and racism, a nightmare of crime fiction and *film noir*, empty space for your very own \$500,000 Dream Home, and a military playground for the Pentagon.

Robert Morrow's photographs for the book might be called documentary. A great many of them are images of monuments or signs such as "Century Woods