

Feb 2009

5/1

# Bürger - Institution of Art

"Hermeneutics" of suspicion / unmasking / disenchanting of traditional concepts of value in "great art" [method → sociology] [anthropology?] [in this case postmarxist critical theory] [Genemica conversation]

But "hermeneutics" in quotes, because:

(in its strongest versions) Underlying aim → discrediting or dismantling of the institutionally sanctioned practice of hermeneutics -- that is, the idea that the central task of the academic critic, historian, scholar is to explicate the workings + meanings of individually valued works of "great art." How → claim → We are weary of this shopworn aim -- scornfully or skeptically dismissed from the outset as an empty enterprise of self-delusion or false consciousness (somehow even morally bankrupt) -- a world of self-reinforcing delusion + complicity -- perpetuating a bankrupt discipline. (squirrel in a cage? closed circle?)

sectors of the new musicology and elsewhere: The grand hope behind this and many related enterprises in some sectors of the new musicology and elsewhere: to leave the traditional institution behind (as retro) and move decisively into an alternative practice; often involved with an anti-humanistic skepticism/critique. (where Verstehen represents merely naive self-delusion)

## "POSTHERMENEUTIC PROJECT" (see Berman, intro, p. xi !!)

- term used by proponents to suggest that explication of texts via analysis, etc., is now declared to be outmoded, a clinging to the naive past of mere affirmation. (milder claim = we've overemphasized it - time to correct)
- Instead: sociological critique of the whole enterprise, with the aim of bringing it down (or at least sharply modifying it) -- many different variants of this

OR:

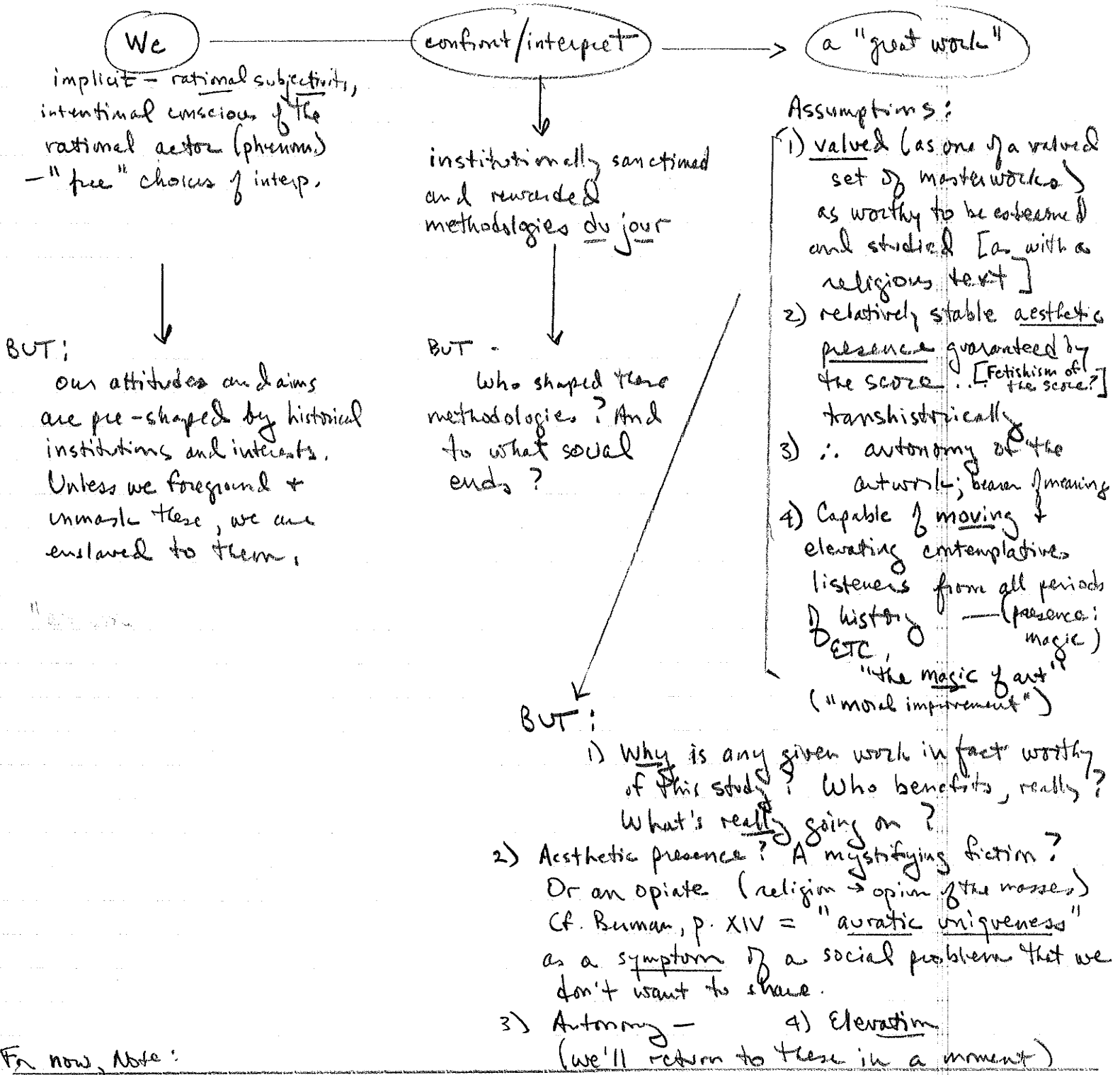
## "ANTI-HERMENEUTIC" PROJECT → where the concepts to dismantle are: "work," "aesthetic presence," "greatness," "value," "meaning," "objective interpretation," "unity," etc.

in its most extreme forms

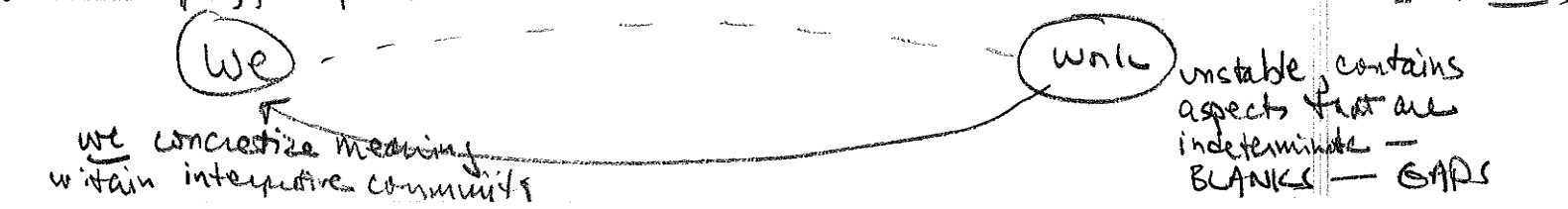
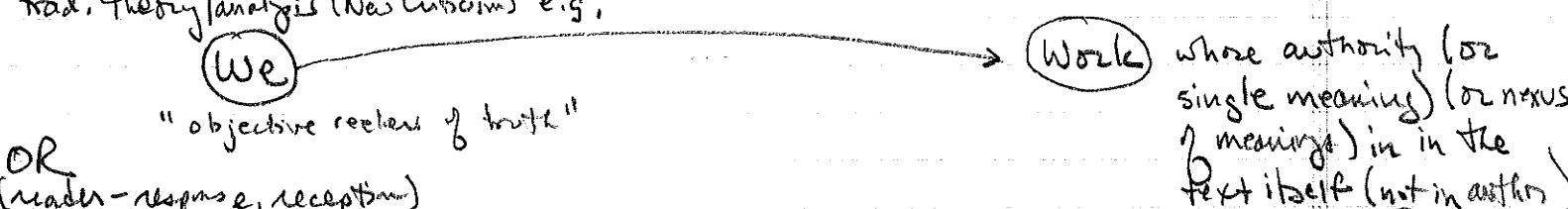
Deep concern → to banish or abolish appeals to these concepts, as old traps that we should not fall into. ∴ They are sometimes turned into taboos or denounced/ridiculed out of existence. (E.g. both Bürger + Hohenbachl dismiss reception theory and reader-response theory as merely permitting us to explicate texts once again, however much on chastened terms.) (Berman, xii)

→  
A  
MAIN  
DIVIDE  
TODAY

Thus each term of the hermeneutic practice is subjected to critique — as well as the whole enterprise.



For now, Note:  
trad. theory (analysis) (New Criticism) e.g.,



istic value systems of modern natural law and utilitarianism). Genuinely bourgeois ideologies, which live only from their own substance,

<sup>i.e.</sup> grounded in free-market capitalism  
-- middle-class values, etc...

The indictment  
→  
concept of alienation from a true, humanized self  
(loss of wholeness)  
as condition of modernity, when religion / class fall away

- offer no support, in the face of the basic risks of existence (guilt, sickness, death) to interpretations that overcome contingency; in the face of individual needs for wholeness [*Heilsbedürfnisse*], they are disconsolate;
- do not make possible human relations with a fundamentally objectivated nature (with either outer nature or one's own body);
- permit no intuitive access to relations of solidarity within groups or between individuals;
- allow no real political ethic; in any case, in political and social life, they accommodate an objectivistic self-interpretation of acting subjects. ∴ loss of "meaning"

(escape alt reality)

Only bourgeois art, which has become autonomous in the face of demands for employment extrinsic to art,<sup>7</sup> has taken up positions on behalf of the victims of bourgeois rationalization. Bourgeois art has become the refuge for a satisfaction, even if only virtual, of those needs that have become, as it were, illegal in the material life-process of bourgeois society. I refer here to the desire for a mimetic relation with nature; the need for living together in solidarity outside the group egoism of the immediate family; the longing for the happiness of a communicative experience exempt from imperatives of purposive rationality and giving scope to imagination as well as spontaneity. Bourgeois art, unlike privatized religion, scientific philosophy, and strategic-utilitarian morality, did not take on tasks in the economic and political systems. Instead it collected residual needs that could find no satisfaction within the "system of needs." Thus, along with moral universalism, art and aesthetics (from Schiller to Marcuse) are explosive ingredients built into the bourgeois ideology.<sup>8</sup>

I would like to divide into four steps the proof for the assertion that the socio-cultural system will not be able, in the long run, to reproduce the privatistic syndrome necessary for the continued existence of the system. I would like to make plausible (a) that the

remains of pre-bourgeois traditions, in which civil and familial-vocational privatism are embedded, are being non-renewably dismantled; and (b) that core components of bourgeois ideology, such as possessive individualism and achievement orientation, are being undermined by changes in the social structure. I would then like to show (c) that the, as it were, denuded normative structures, that is, residues of world-views in bourgeois culture—which I find in communicative morality on the one hand and in the tendencies to a post-auratic art on the other—allow no functional equivalents for the destroyed motivational patterns of privatism. Finally, it must be shown (d) that the structures of bourgeois culture, stripped of their traditionalist padding and deprived of their privatistic core, are nonetheless still relevant for motive-formation, and are not simply being pushed to one side as a façade. Motivations important for continued existence can in no way be produced entirely independently of these enfeebled, or only limitedly effective, cultural traditions. Naturally, my goal in this connection too is merely to collect arguments and indicators for future empirical testing. I shall restrict myself to a few very general catchwords.

a) The components of traditional world-views, which represented the context of and the supplement to bourgeois ideologies, were softened and increasingly dissolved in the course of capitalist development. This was due to their incompatibility with generalized social-structural forces of the economic and administrative systems, on the one hand, and with the cognitive attitudes proceeding from the system of science on the other. *Social-structural discrepancies* are a matter of problematic consequences of the expansion of areas of strategic-utilitarian action. Since Max Weber these tendencies have been examined from the point of view of the rationalization of areas of life once regulated by tradition.<sup>9</sup> The advanced-capitalist development of subsystems of purposive-rational action (and the corresponding drying-up of communicative zones of action) is, among other things, the consequence of first, a scientization of professional practice; second, expansion of the service sector through which more and more interactions were subsumed under the commodity form; third, administrative regulation and legalization of areas of political and social intercourse previously regulated informally; fourth, commercialization of cul-

At heart of Bürger (+ Hohendahl) is the central claim regarding TITE FUNCTION OF "AUTONOMOUS" ART (19th c + decades on either side) (Bürger p.4 bottom/5 et passim)

Bürger insists again and again (as do Bertram + Hohendahl) that other concepts (outside of Institution Kunst) ignore the real function of art in 19th c bourgeois life.

(What is that function, which is the bull's eye central concern of sociological institution theory?)

Let's call it the COMPENSATORY FUNCTION OF [AUTONOMOUS] ART

- - and it is stated and restated in these essays, as an axiomatic starting-point. (foundation-stone of the theory)
- - goal of our work should be to expose/unmask this aspect of mystifying compensation. (in line with the transformational hypothesis)

READ Bürger p. 6 → Rejection of "purposeless creation + disinterested pleasure" (Schiller → realm of play and emancipatory freedom + identity)

p. 7!! bottom to p. 8! and middle \*

p. 8 → to p. 9

p. 11 again! (top), in a nutshell. etc. etc.

Cf. Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 78 (photocopy handout) (EXPLICATE)

∴ "Romantic" Ideal → Art as alternative world of truth, freedom, wholeness — — true meaning (emancipatory space → redemptive space)

And here in critical theory the whole claim is unmasked as an opiate, an illusion to bandage + salve the real social wounds of emerging modernity.

Schubert, "An die Musik"
text + <u>music</u>

deluded ideology?  
or  
reverential "truth"  
+ positive "aesthetic presence"?

Franz Schubert: Lied, "An die Musik," D. 547 (1817)  
Text: Franz Schober

Text form: Two parallel stanzas ("strophes"), each with four lines, rhyming ABAB

Musical structure: strophic (essentially the same music for each textual stanza).

Also: Piano introduction before stanza 1 (function?); piano conclusion after each stanza (function?). Thus the text of the song is framed by the piano alone.

1

Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden,

You lovely art, in how many dismal hours,

Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,

When life's wild circle ensnares me,

Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb entzunden,

Have you ignited my heart to warm love,

Hast mich in eine bessere Welt entrückt!

Have transported me into a better world!

2

Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf entfließen,

Often has a sigh, flowing out of your harp,

Ein süßer, heiliger Akkord von dir

A sweet, holy chord from you

Den Himmel besserer Zeiten mir erschlossen,

Opened up a heaven of better times for me,

Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür!

You lovely art, I thank you for this!

[trans. JH]

∴ Autonomous music (that emancipatory sphere) is actually only seemingly autonomous! In reality, it is instrumental (not autonomous) in terms of function

And its function, ultimately, is to silence real critique of existing conditions.

Ideally, late 18<sup>th</sup> c, public sphere of conversation + discussion emerged (journals, periodicals, universities, coffee houses...) in order to discuss + critique politics and society — with reformist aims.

But AUTONOMY CLAIM silences critique... and that is its intoxicating function.

(Benjamin xvi focus on WHOLE PROJECT! \* \* and xvii \* \*)

∴ A world of dreams, self-indulgent fantasies, and wheel-spinning.  
(cf. double-truth concept?? ideology critique + utopian function?)  
YES NO! NOT HERE!

Moreover → intertwined with social necessity of marketplace distribution to an anonymous public (loss of face-to-face relations) which immediately turns art into a mass-produced commodity (Benjamin p. 8 — but p. 9, maintains that commodity exchange is not their sole function)

But this aspect ("real world") must be concealed in inst. of autonomous art.

1) Benjamin p. 16 → "conceal traces of labor in the art object"  
[COROLLARY → as historians of "art" we must sideline or ignore/minimize this commercial-distribution aspect]

2) Somehow, the institution is also inscribed into the inner working of an individual piece  
via concept of MATERIAL (Aporia) (p. 18) and NORM (p. 17)  
(Unclear → Seems to argue that what is staged in artworks is emancipation from norms → p. 17, 13 up? → but this is a false emancipation, (p. 18 "lack of consequence")

Hoheudaht - Institution of literature

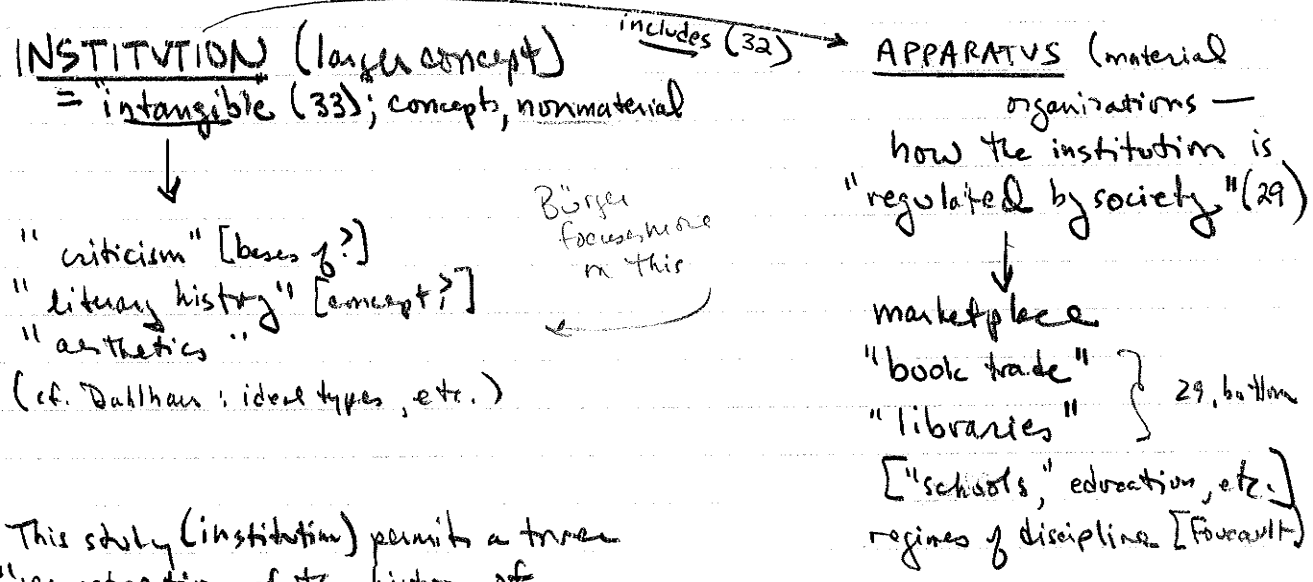
Much the same (indictment of traditional hermeneutics, pp. 1-2, in order to transform the discipline -- "redefine the field of inquiry" [p. 2] in a posthermeneutic way (p. 3) (p. 4)

+ Must unpin "traditional concepts of the text + the work" (p. 3, 8 up) (discard them without a trace)

Ultimately he will march through only seemingly progressive alternatives (which foreshadow his own solution) and find them to have promising elements, but ultimately lapse back into discredited hermeneutics (or have other problems that he will correct with institution theory)

- 1) Reception Theory / Reception Aesthetics
- 2) Reader-Response Theory (Constance School)
- 3) Semiotics
- 4) Early Concepts of the "Institution" (p. 16)
  - 1) Interactionist
  - 2) Materialist (Lit. as Ideology) Gramsci hegemony; Althusser ideological state apparatuses; Eagleton
  - 3) Critical Theory (Habermas, Honneth, Adorno)

And in the end, comes out with a concept that distinguishes between INSTITUTION (Bürger term) + APPARATUS (from Althusser) (p. 29)



point: to disenchant or to unmask

shows how it "really" works

This study (institution) permits a true "reconstruction of the history of literature" (34) (Dahlhaus?)

∴ (p. 34) (bottom!) No study of individual works! (Read!)

Includes sociological study of SUBSTITUTIONS, (but NOT explication of works!)  
(p. 38)

- 38
- 1) Literary criticism (and its ideologies)
  - 2) Literary history ( " " " ) "to secure literary tradition"
  - 3) Canonization ( " " " )
  - 4) Literary norms + Conventions ( " " " )

And substitutions are "relatively autonomous" (39)

Also → investigate "READING FORMATION"<sup>40</sup> → how concrete practices of reading (and consumption) are formed, groomed, determined — and toward what ends?

p. 41 top → Again → dissolution of fixed text

Summary in nuce! → p. 42!

Bennett + his correction via institution theory!

∴ The preferred/proper study for music research is a sociological one, not the explication of texts!

(cf. James → ultimate horizon of meaning → political —

And all is partial or self-deception until interpretation is brought to that level.)