Chapter 9

Homelessness:
The Other as Object

Eric Mark Kramer and Soobum Lee

BIRTH OF THE STRANGER

The human animal is a very sociable creature. Indeed, it has become generally accepted (Lorenz, 1983; Geertz, 1973; Pribram, 1971; Kramer, 1992a) that the development of the human nervous system demands sociocultural interaction (communicative stimulation). The nurturing of natural abilities is precisely why no two clones would be identical. As Clifford Geertz (1973) put it, "a cultureless human being would probably turn out to be not an intrinsically talented though unfulfilled ape, but a wholly mindless and consequently unworkable monstrosity" (p. 68). Geertz, along with DeVore (1965), argues that Homo Sapiens literally have a social brain.

But what is the nature of social for this creature? In his classic works The Naked Ape (1967) and The Human Zoo (1969), Desmond Morris argues that, more than 10,000 years ago our Ice Age ancestors’ brains were already as big and highly developed as ours are today (Morris, 1969, p. 13). In fact recent evidence from northern Germany and Siberia indicates that the social brain extends much further back in time to at least half a million years. Over nearly all of that time, the species lived in groupings of no more than 150 individuals. Their territory was vast. When a group became too big a splinter group would go off to establish its own home range.

It was not until after the last great Ice Age that larger settlements of a more permanent nature began to appear. After millennia of learning to be cooperative, probably through the "long hunting apprenticeship" of the species, the cultivation of two plants, barley and wheat (and a little later rice and maize), led to a surplus of food. The invention of irrigation and the storage of surplus demanded settlement which led to a new age of urban population density and specialization.

Permanent settlement is closely related to a perspectival attitude which is characterized by an emergent sense of self and a new sense of not only space but
more importantly time; depth space and depth time (Gebser, 1949/1985; Kramer, 1992a). To be a farmer, the human animal had to "stretch his far-reachingness beyond anything he had previously experienced," certainly beyond the time frame of planning a hunt (Morris, 1969, p. 17). Not only did this new, temporally expanded horizon emerge, but another barrier to full fledged urban life was breached, the loss of tribal ("local") identity. As the social environment expanded, the self shrank and solidified into more of a self-contained individual than is evinced by un- and preperspectival tribal humans. The urban world gave birth to the stranger. Perspectival consciousness is characterized by functional fragmentation, merit, and instrumental value.

BELongING

The point in this chapter is to ask what the phenomenon of the homeless has to say to us about the larger society that created it. The existence of the "homeless" tells us very much about the society that gave birth to such a designation. From the beginning, in-grouping and out-grouping are shown to be an essential process for social animals including humans. Stories of outcasting, that is of individuals being singled out and forced to leave the group womb are primordial. Three Biblical examples may suffice. The Archangel Lucifer (the Enlightened One) was cast out of heaven. The source of his great suffering (the greatest of all possible sufferings) was precisely his separation from his beloved divine companion. Campbell and Mavers (1988) put it this way, "The worst of the pains of hell, insofar as hell has been described, is the absence of the Beloved. How do Satan sustain the situation in hell? By the memory of the echo of God's voice, when God said, 'Go to hell.' That is a great sign of love" (p. 204).

The pain of love is in separation. Similarly, Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise into time (mortality) and space, and later Cain was driven out into the larger world where he would be marked as a wanderer stranger. These stories indicate that for such a social creature as human, banishment is the worst of all possible sanctions. It also indicates the perspectival nature of the Judeo-Christian culture which is characterized by a correlation between dissociation and the consolidation of all divinity into a single "royal" god ("king of kings") (Gebser, 1949/1985; Innis, 1950; Ong, 1982). Perspectivalism is characterized by a new sense of distance (not only spatial but also social and semantic) which isolates and thereby gives birth to monadology (individualism).

In the past official banishment was to the "outside." Now it is to the "inner" sanctum of prison (Foucault, 1975/1977). But in both cases, official banishment, by definition, reinforces the claim of ownership the group (the state for instance) has over the individual. Under official group sanction one is seen as part of a larger polis, to be a "charge of the state." To be marginal presumes an association with centralized power. But the peripheral condition of the homeless is not even recognized by the group. The group is not responsible for meeting their basic needs as it is with a prisoner. The modern homeless is literally no body because they do not appear in the collective memory of the group as a bureaucratic entity. They are "invisible" in the sense that Ralph Ellison (1952) uses the term. No one cares, or takes responsibility for them.

Outcasting presupposes the rule of social norms and mores. To be a member means to follow the ways of the clan. To be social means to identify with a group. An identifiable group exists as such because its parameters are limited by the Other, by space, or another group(s). Being outcast or homeless among the insiders must be rationalized by the insiders. The insiders see themselves as rational and caring individuals who, through willing participation maintain a system that is also believed to be rational and caring. So, when confronted with such a wretched situation, the insiders must attribute the situation to the behavior and attitudes of the victim and not themselves or the system which affords them their insider identity. This way the insiders can feel good about their community and themselves. Thus, homelessness must be the effect of sinful behavior on the part of the homeless person. It may be the sin of gluttony (insatiable addiction to drugs), sloth, arrogance or pride (a refusal to conform), wrath (the homeless are that way because they are dangerous), and so forth. A necessary condition for group membership is a group, and a necessary condition for a group to exist is the existence of the Other, be it nature, other animal tribes, or other human groups. A necessary condition for identity to exist is difference. The inside requires the outside and vice versa. Seeing the outcast makes one feel good to be secure within the normative system of interaction. While the parasite is disposed, it is the parasite that enables the host's identity to exist and to enjoy its regal status. The host owes its very existence to the parasite, who by the very act of taking aims from the host makes him or her a moral being. The parasite is the host's savior. To be a hostage is to be held against one's will by one's own morality. The homeless face is personal and painful to the mighty host because the homeless face demonstrates morality and is an inescapable moral face—the savior is also judge.

Belonging is perhaps the most important sense for any social creature. It is so strong that Socrates chose suicide over living beyond the walls of Athens amidst the barbarians. To be outcast is in many ways worse than death for in death, one may still be part of the extended group, a martyr or even an ancestor worthy of worship. One will be missed because one belonged. But the very nature of groupness has at least three variants based on the three different consciousness structures or worlds elucidated by Jean Gebser (1949/1985).

THREE KINDS OF SOCIAL WORLDS

It is important at this point to elucidate the three primary consciousness structures evident throughout history and across cultures. Consciousness structure is manifested by differing valences of spatial and temporal awareness. The three structures are identifiable by the number of dimensions they manifest. After years of rigorous research into all manners of civilizational expressions including art, architecture, dance, music, philosophies, sciences, mythologies, religions, and so forth, Gebser (1949/1985) delineated three essentially different consciousness structures/worlds.

A quick note is necessary here to indicate Gebser's bracketing of Cartesian dualism. Gebser does not assume, in hypothetical fashion, a world and then awareness of it as a dualistic realism. There is no difference between perception and what is perceived and if there were to be such a difference it would be impossible to know. At least two decades before the deconstructive critique of this dualism, Gebser argued that to be logically consistent, all that is what we are aware of. To claim that there is some hidden reality behind or underneath mere
perception is tantamount to hypothetical thinking. Since he was not attempting to replicate or experimentally test any culture, he chose to use a method later called descriptive-analytic by Michel Foucault (1969/1972). History in this sense is not gone but embedded. The now has a sedimentary quality. Gebser, like others, attempted to analyze the nonoriginary origin of sense. This method was independently devised by three different German thinkers. Friedrich Nietzsche (1887/1967) called it genealogy, Edmund Husserl (1952/1970) called it archæological phenomenology, (the investigation into the Selbsterstan-
dlichkeiten or what is handed down as tradition, obvious or taken for granted by the intersubjective community—historically conditioned consciousness or always already world horizon) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1888) called it critical her-
menenutics.

The key is to take context (including the “past”) into account and to presume that artifacts can be “read.” Artifacts hide nothing. They manifest the capacities, motives, wishes, beliefs, and wills of those who made them. In short, what Peter says about Paul may or may not be true, but what Peter says is directly available and it tells me much about Peter such as his skill at articulation, his interests, his feelings about Paul, and so forth.

Using Eric Kramer’s (1997) theory of Dimensional Accrual/Dissociation, which he developed by expanding Gebser’s work on comparative civilizations, one can begin to understand the phenomenon of homelessness as a uniquely perspectival expression.

Magic World

The magic world is univalent, one dimensional (Gebser, 1949/1985). According to Kramer (1997) this is manifested in a world where there is no difference, no separation between the signifier and the signified—no consciousness of space or time be they semantic or physical. Magic communication is idolic (Kramer, 1997). Incantation is magical speech. If writing exists at all, it is as magic “spell.” Writing, which is a form of dissociation from bodily limitations and action, is a sign of an emergent mythic world. But in the magic world, words and deeds are identical. When writing does exist it is in the form of highly motivated pictographic images which are purely emotional, not analytical. A picture “of a thing,” and the thing “depicted.” There is no such thing as magical representation. In the magic world there is no “figural” ambivalence. Bivalent two dimensionality is characteristic of the mythic structure, which is discussed below, not the magic world.

The homeless face is inescapable. Ethics are not analytical but primordially incarnate. The smell of urine, the glassy eyes, the griny fingers exhibit manifest morality—the bodily imperative that cannot be denied. The magic aspect insists that I and He are both human and that human quality cannot be escaped. Even in the act of turning away, ignoring, or rationalizing in all such efforts the homeless Other is the presumed source of the need to ignore, turn away from, or rationalize about. The homeless Other demands identify—for me to identify “with.” When we are face to face the communication of identity and morality is instantaneous. It is always already. The message is “too fast” to dodge responsibility. Magic is spaceless and timeless. The imperative is prereflective.

For magic humans, if one steals a magic amulet (a crystal, sacred object, lucky rabbit’s foot, ad infinitum) one has literally stolen the power. There is no “difference.” If I steal an idol, I have stolen “god” and must suffer the most severe punishment. The magic world is not analytical in mood but rather emotional through and through. Care (will/intent) is a powerful force that underlies all efforts at communication so that in all cultures a magic dimension is present. An idol is more than “merely” a statue, or “merely” a work of art. The magic world is not spatial. Gods and spirits are not somewhere else such as on a mountain top or an even more dissociated heavenly realm. Therefore, reductionism, which is a spatial concept, is senseless. By contrast, reductionism is the very source of knowledge and sense in the perspectival world (Kramer, 1997).

The magic clan moves like a flock of birds or school of fish. There is no “personal choice.” It is a tight unit of intertwined “members.” Members is in quotation marks because there is no separation that would afford the spatial notion of “in.” There is no “membership” “in” the magical group. For magic people, belonging is not contingent upon joining. “In-stitutionalization” does not exist. Officialdom emerges later with hierarchical, perspectival life. Belonging is eternal; before and after birth. The group and the member are identical. One does not “identify” with one’s group in the sense the word “identify” is often used by perspectival people. Instead, the group and individual are the same. The blood of each is the same as all. Separation is practically unthinkable. Of the many scholars (Jung, Eliade, Bataille, Freud, among others) who have tried to describe magical awareness, Gebser’s effort is presented here.

The concept pars pro toto (the part for the whole) is at the same time always a totum pro parte (the whole for the part)—where, curiously and without any probable etymological connection, totem suggests by chance totem. This interchangeability goes even further: the rule may be changed into pars pro parte (a part for a part), and in this sense even into totum pro toto (all for all), without losing its validity. The effectiveness of such interchangeability is perhaps most strikingly demonstrated in the vicarious sufferings experienced in the course of ritual sacrifice. Exchange (Tausch)—in the realm of magic—is by no means deception (Tauschaung); it is rather the expression of the genuine validity of “equals” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 50).

Banishment appears only in mythic two dimensional cultures, and even then it is the most severe of all sanctions. An example of mythic banishment is “official” excommunication.

Mythic World

The mythic unperspectival world is bivalent, two dimensional. A nascent sense of separation begins to appear. This separation is a necessary condition for reflective thought, critique, and taking a discursive position as in ideological distinction. A reflective awareness of culture and nature begins to emerge so that both become available as independent realms for investigation (Kramer, 1992a). A rudimentary self emerges which is disruptive of the magic unitary clan. Myths are of heroic deeds, and the egoistic heroes of such stories are often problematic for the group as was Achilles in the Iliad, Odysseus in the Odyssey, Gilgamesh in the Epic of Gilgamesh, Jesus, and Buddha. They all present a nonconformist mind of their own.
Mythic communication is ambivalent, symbolic (Kramer, 1997). Figures of speech emerge as such. A separation appears between the literal and the figural. Various polarities such as message/intent, body/mind, primary/secondary qualities begin to emerge. Myths are written with metaphors. Language and speech begin to exist as a second order metaphor estranged from native. The identity of the signifier and the signified begins to weaken. If I steal a crucifix there may still be a strong emotional association with the object but the owner is not likely to say that I have stolen his or her god. Despite the emotional attachment, the owner knows that the object is just a symbol of faith. Symbolic communication presupposes a nascent separation which enables one phenomenon to stand in for another. But this substitution is not totally arbitrary, not totally dissociated. Metaphors can seem inappropriate. Drama emerges in the mythic world as the unifying ritual splits into the play and the audience. Theatrical distance emerges. Yet, if the audience cannot emotionally identify with the characters, then the magic of the theater fails. Complete objectifying dissociation requires a third dimension.

Perspectival World

Modernity is essentially perspectival. However, the magical and mythical modes of being are not extinct but coexist. The perspectival world is predominantly trivalent, three dimensional. It’s mode of communication is significational. Perspectival consciousness presents depth space which is empty and in between things. Here emerges empiricism as thingism and alienation. The signifier and signified become accidentally associated (or more properly, dissociated). Language becomes completely arbitrary as does social identity. Dissociated analysis displaces emotional attachment. Communication is enhanced by codal processing as in the computer language of 0,1. The arbitrary perspectival world is characterized by a kind of freedom from community commitments and traditional parameters. Caste systems disappear and individual civil rights take on central importance. A pauper may become president. Identity is set adrift.

Also what is made possible in the perspectival world is the exploration, mapping, codification (as in Newtonian physics), and colonization of space.

Ego hypertrophy is evident as the group disintegrates. Instead of a community, aggregation (of individuals) becomes the norm. The sphere of caring is truncated to the personal agenda of the modern perspectival individual. The individual tends to be on their own. Responsibility that was shared by the magic group now falls onto the slim shoulders of the individual. Rational meritocracy and democratic institutions displace tradition and irrational favoritism (unconditional clan loyalty). Analytics displaces an irrational commitment to superstitious ways. To care becomes inefficient. Mobility of all sorts (including progress) and measurement (the spatialization of all of life) mark the modern perspectival world. Relationships become instrumental and short lived. They last only until their mission is accomplished. All of life takes on a linear process of goal attainment. Efficiency becomes the super-value and speed is of the essence. Personal relationships become ever-smaller in scope. The magic tribe shrinks to the extended family which shrinks to the nuclear family which in turn is split.

THE MODERN STRANGER

The rise of ever larger and more permanent settlements led to sectoralization and specialization. The oldest known town arose at Jericho over 8,000 years ago but it was not the first fully urban settlement. The first empirical inter-city coordination, enabled by writing and specialized administrators emerged in Sumer, between five and six thousand years ago. Here, was born the first citizen or “super-tribesman” who “no longer knew personally each member of his community” (Morris, 1969, p. 18). According to Morris (1969):

It was this change, the shift from the personal to the impersonal society, that was going to cause the human animal its greatest agonies in the millennia ahead. As a species we were not biologically equipped to cope with a mass of strangers masquerading as members of our tribe. As a result of the artificiality of the inflation of human social life to the supertribal level, it became necessary to introduce more elaborate forms of controls to hold the bulging communities together. The enormous material benefits of super-tribal life had to be paid for in discipline. (pp. 18–19)

Thus was born the need for law and complex order. Writing, the self, and text herald the emergence of a new world. All the major world religions emerge as transpersonal systems of law that are, to use Walter Ong’s term “interna- tiorized,” by the development of sacred texts including the Code of Hammurabi, the Torah, the Vedas, the Bible, the Analects of Confucius, the Koran, and so forth (Ong, 1982, p. 178). The spiritual realm consolidates into a single Godhead, personality and judge. Writing replaced oral communication in ontic and power status.

Morris comes to the same conclusion as the great scholars of human inter- change and communication Patrick Geddes (1915), Gebser (1985), and Lewis Mumford (1961). Mumford, Gebser, Geddes, and later Harold Innis (1950) and Ong (1982), concerned themselves with the dissociative aspect of increased population density and the rise of urban life. What Innis (1950) called “empire,” Morris called the “super-tribe.” Several major scholars agree that the shift from orality to writing created a “transpersonal,” or virtual abstract “reality” (Gebser, 1949/1985; Sapir, 1921; Cassirer, 1946; Wallas, 1914; Innis, 1950; Becker, 1949; Ong, 1982). Ong (1982) has referred to this shift as the “technologizing of the word.” It amounts to a completely new attitude (in Husserlian terms) or mood (Kramer, 1997). As Edwyn Bevan (1921) argued, the monocultural powers of Egypt, Persia, China, India and Rome were literally and essentially products of writing. In the urban world to be true and real is to be literal not figural. There are “figures of speech,” which are ambivalent as compared with written law. Gebser (1949/1982) agreed with Edward Sapir (1949) that oral expression has a “latent luxuriance” and is an outlet for intense emotion more than intellectual discipline. The song became disciplined speaking, because it was too contingent, too ephemeral, became fixed in writing. Writing is not musical. According to Ong (1982), "Oral discourse has commonly been thought of even in oral milieu as weaving or stitching—rhapsodiein, to 'rhapsodie,' basically means in Greek 'to stitch songs together'" (p. 13). According to Gebser (1949/1985), this is the essentially magical quality of speech (p. 52, 62, 106, 250–251, 348), and in fact Ong's phrase "oral discourse" is incongruent because the magic and mythic worlds of the muse and mouth are not discourse but in-
But the urban world is in Geiber's (1949/1985) terms "perspectival," individualistic, and mental-rational (p. 18, 61, 252, 255–259, 385, 429). The urban world gave rise to linear discourse, a form of speech which was competitive and temporally fragmented with dialectics splitting conversation into formalized debate. The three temporal aspects of debate were categorized by Aristotle as forensic, which is concerned with things of the past, epidictic, which is concerned with the present, and deliberative, which is concerned with future plans of action. This new mode of being stressed individual "positions" and confrontation.

The late modern world is marked by mass anonymity on one hand and hypertrophic egoism on the other (Geiber, 1949/1985, p. 22, 34, 153, 154, 158, 262, 357, 358, 531, 537). It is not adequate to discuss this difference in terms of individualism versus collectivism because the term collectivism means to collect individuals into an aggregate. This misses the fundamental sense of tribal "we" which is an "enmeshment" or "intertwining" (Geiber, 1949/1985, p. 48, 50, 52, 109, 348). The tribal human being is not only intertwined with the other "members" of the extended self (tribe) but with all of the "surrounding," so-called "external" environment ("nature"). What appears with the modern discipline of narrative logic is articulated by Erich Kahler (in The Inward Turn of Narrative, 1973) and Erich Neumann (in The Origins and History of Consciousness, 1954). The modern world is preoccupied with the self and text, which tends to be the articulation of inner, personal issues. Neumann argues that it is a move toward a self-conscious, highly personal, interiority (also see Geiber, 1949/1985, p. 11, 273, 350, 405, 468). This modern form of consciousness appears as individual intentionalness. It is, as many so-called postmodern thinkers have argued, a consequence of writing. As populations grew, the self shrank. In the face of expanding space and populations of strangers oral cultures began to fade because orality could not cope with the distances involved in the formation of larger collectives. The impersonal letter gives birth to the bureaucracy and expanded power-organization. That is, power abstracted from the immediate here and now, power that requires communication beyond earshot.

This transpersonal world is the city. And it is here that anonymity and egohypertrophy (the "status seekers" to recall Vance Packard, 1961) come into being. The loss of direct personal contact, which marks the tribal milieu, was replaced by an essentially specialized and competitive world order. Here is born the impersonal "mob," the prototypical mass (Nietzsche, 1886/1967; Geiber, 1949/1985). For the first time in human history most of the people in one's social environment were strangers. The extended (tribal) self recoiled in the face of others that one could not identify with. Under such conditions, the social bond is greatly weakened. The competitive nature of in-group/out-group relations infects the city which is composed of various sub-groups ("tribes") which spontaneously emerge due to the human need to belong to a group of meaningful size, where one belongs and has an identity.

The city is the place where most people are strangers to each other. It is not a village milieu. The most important difference between the city and the village is the sense of self as a member of an intimate group. In the village, personal knowledge is adequate and the personal nature of everyday intercourse generates an entirely different kind of interaction. As Morris (1969) has experimentally demonstrated, if a person feigns a collapse and lays in a thoroughfare of a vil-

lage, the individual is immediately attended to by others. But if the same person pretends to be in need of aid by laying on a sidewalk in a major city, literally hundreds of persons will avoid that person as if they were invisible and go about their own personal agendas. The person laying on the sidewalk may only be attended to when specialized "officials" such as police arrive to investigate. In a village, such fragmentation as specialized "helpers/investigators" does not exist. Instead, anyone and everyone immediately stops to see what is wrong and to aid the individual. This is why Marshal McLuhan's notion that modern communications technologies will render a "global village" has been rejected by Daniel Bell (1973), Zygmunt Brzezinski (1970), Herman Kahn and Norbert Wiener (1967). In fact, Geiber's (1949) work, which laid the ground for much current communication and identity theory based on a spatio-temporal manifold, rejected McLuhan's "happy positivism" even before it was enunciated.

Rather than a global village, what is emerging is a global city. The difference is essential. The ideas of participation, involvement, trust, reciprocity, intimacy, and belonging, are central to the difference. In a village all others are, to use a phrase from Jean Paul Sartre "authentic."

THE MODERN WORLD AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR HOMELESSNESS

The modern perspectival attitude promotes the contradictory position that it values value-freedom. This ideological absurdity presents various adumbrations of delusion such as detachment, disinterest, and the principle of equivalencies applied to everything including human beings. But perhaps this absurdity is not delusional but rather a fairly clumsy rhetoric motivated by a desire to escape critique and "accountability." The claim to objectivity and value-freedom is, as Walter Benjamin (1928/1968) said over 50 years ago, either incredibly naive, incredibly cynical, or plainly incompetent (p. 95). Cynicism is the ultimate expression of uncaring. It is unique to the cosmopolitan mental-rational individual.

In the modern "value-free world," everyone and everything is equal, in fact identical clones. But this is not magical emotional identification. Rather, perspectivity analytically reduces everything, not to each other, but to some completely different (dead) stuff which is incapable of caring. Disintegration of the body via perspectival atomism is manifested as physicalism and behaviorism. In an absolutist proclamation reminiscent of the Pythagorean claim that "all is number," the modern metaphysics essentially argues that all is matter. Everything, including people are piles of essentially identical atoms. Whether one ascribe to causal or probabilistic epistemology, the logical result of physicalism is the same, the equation of everything with everything else. There can be no qualitative differences, only quantitative ones. Some piles have more atoms than others. Consciousness is defined out of existence as subjective nonsense even though only the synthetic activity of mind makes sense. Caring, belonging, trusting, and involvement are all ridiculed as ambiguous "feminine traits." They defy quantification and must therefore not really exist.

Since everything is dead atoms in a ninety-nine percent void, there can be no ethics. The necessary conditions for the existence of an ethical being are not recognized by physical behaviorism. Value judgments are defined a priori as
subjective nonsense. Therefore, technological and other kinds of projects cannot be critically assessed in ethical terms. The value of the project cannot be discussed and debated. Only that which is quantifiable is real. Only falsifiable empirical statements have any meaning. This rhetorical trick of physicalism however, has not enabled it to out run reflection. It succeeds because of the political dimension it presents. Physicalism is violent and violating. It "takes command."

Physicalism and empiricism define a world wherein critique is no more than invalid opinion. This dominating metaphysics attempts to inoculate itself from consciousness (reflection). Without consciousness, the world functions as automata. Free will and responsibility are abolished. The universe runs on auto pilot; "god's will" in Cartesian terms or the "great chain of causation" according to Aquinas. Progress cannot be helped because of its manifest destiny. Value is reduced to instrumental utility. What is valuable is what achieves the desired goal. The fact that goals are a false, desired, are emotional phenomena, is ignored. The fact that various hypocrites and contradicitions abound is overcome by sheer will-to-power. The triumph of physicalism is not that the rhetoric it deploys protects it from any and all possible criticism. It does not debate. Rather, like all dominating philosophies it's rhetoric is but a veneer that covers the structure of power, a thin irrational rationalization. Physicalism (including cause-effect, stimulus-response behaviorism and empiricism) is an absurd metaphysical philosophy. It is absurd because it is a philosophy that claims that philosophy (thinking) does not exist accept as ink on paper. Empiricists literally have no ideas.

Philosophics presupposes conscious reflection and choice, not material predetermination. Ethics presumes human being. In the modern physicalistic world, meaning is not real. Neither is quality or ideas or feelings. Interest in material production and concentration of power has promoted this anthropicist ideology because it disables ethical reflection. Scientist serves the purpose of demanding the universe. As the highest authority, the logic of material science is used to justify disinterested social organization which reduces everything including people to resource base. According to scientism, only science can answer questions with any accuracy, validity, and/or consistency. Only the scientific method can resolve human questions. The philosophical corollary to the ideology of scientist is positivism with its verifiability principle. Moral and ethical questions are senseless. This is the basis of what several scholars including Max Weber (1905/1958) and Husserl (1952/1970) have called the crisis of modern Europe. Incidentally, this crisis is not limited to the inatable demands and devaluing sentiments of the human sciences but also the physical sciences and their engineering derivatives because they too are human activities.

Because the modern sciences, in principle, ignore value judgments, the great (or even mundane) human questions cannot be seriously addressed. Questions of good and bad, right and wrong are deemed senseless. In such a world, only power is real. But, this is a false rhetoric because desires, values, passions, and wants remain at the core of the world. Because of this principle of devaluation, science becomes the most exploitable of all forms of knowledge, presumably beyond good and evil (to real Nietzsche). For instance, one can create a nuclear bomb but one cannot ask the question is it good to create a nuclear bomb? As a strict politician who flies from philosophical nonsense, who flies from consciousness and will, one becomes the most docile of all prostitutes whose tackle sense embraces all suitors equally. In Part Six (We Scholars) of Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche cautions against those positivists who scorn the personal and redeem us from our selves; those positivists who denounce as negative the passions and will. They reserve the highest honor of truth as salutary neutrality manifested as disinterested, detachment. The great leap forward amounts to the glorious caput mortui of those primitive subjective fictions, virtue and caring.

The objective man who no longer scolds or curses as the pessimist does, the scholar in whom the scientific instinct, after thousand fold total and partial failure, for once comes to full bloom, is certainly one of the most precious instruments there are: but he belongs in the hand of one who is mightier. He is only an instrument—he is not an "end in himself". And the objective man is in fact a mirror: accustomed to submitting to whatever wants to be known, lacking any other pleasure than that provided by knowledge, by "mirroring"—he waits until something comes along and then gently spreads himself out, so that not even the lightest footsteps and the fluttering of ghostly beings shall be lost on his surface and skin. Whatever still remains to him of his "own person" seems to him accidental, often capricious, more often disturbing: so completely has he become a passage and reflection of forms and events not his own (Nietzsche, 1886/1972, sec. 207, p. 115).

Disinterested science, as Nietzsche pointed out, would be not merely a willess mirror but a devastating mind, a self-polishing mirror that gained all its ecstasy from reflecting whatever happened to accidentally appear before it. Under such conditions, the hypertrophic ego displays itself as a pure self beyond good and evil, a god. This would be the triumph of W. Leibniz' windowless monad, the perfection of willless knowledge. The dream is to aspire to become the passive observer of mere mortal contortions, the ultimate voyeur whose transparency lets pass all information equally.

But of course this dream of being absolutely careless, is a ridiculously dystopica ideology. It is absurd because the egoism of being above valuation, of having no perspective (omniscience) betrays the most narcissistic of perspectives. Yet, one must ask how it is that it should come to pass that the highest virtue, the most noble of all aspirations is to become utterly careless and without will or directional consciousness (perspective). This grand transfiguration and redemption amounts to a denial of human awareness and the possibility that there might be any value to anything including human beings. This interpretation, this ideology Nietzsche (1887/1974) would elsewhere call the stupidest of all interpretations, because it would be one of the poorest in (sec. 373, p. 335). The problem is not that the scientific interpretation of the world an inaccurate interpretation, one where the external world is not closely mimicked in perception, an unknowable anyway, but because the scientific interpretation is the least creative of all and like other dogmas, it demands a monopoly on truth. The drama of life, the great fears, daring and passions are reduced by the physicist's watch phrase merely, or really. Love and hate are merely biochemistry and really neuronworking.

But science and technology are tricksters. They are not so disinterested as they seem, but only very selective in their rhetoric. The method (tool) and the hand have been dissociated in the interest of creating what Roland Barthes (1957/1972) has called the alibi (p. 121). The objectifying tool and the intent are separated so that responsibility can be avoided. The arbitrariness, or unknowable
intent, works to the advantage of the sign and ideology maker. He or she can always feign innocence and insist that that is not what I meant even though it is what they meant. Only those who care can be responsible. But the objective observer claims the ability, right, and even duty to merely reflect. Science and technology are the most powerful forces of socio-cultural change today. They constitute the most intense and effective expressions of desire. Desire to conquer the entire world, to predict and control all forces, domesticating them and bending them to the will of the controller, the one that is mightier. The industrial magician. Magic, make, mechanism machine, Germanic Macht (power), and Morgen (to want), and might all share the same root mag (h) (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 46). Method serves the mighty. Because of their power to modify the world, desire seeks out technique to achieve its goals. Science proves most useful. The dissociation between the tool and the intending hand is the hallmark of modernity. The modern world values detachment in all epistemological projects from pure science to professional journalism. Objectifying the Other is the mark of the true truthsayer, the modern sophisticate who has raised him or herself above emotion and engagement. They are, like corporate entities—totally systematic. Such is the ideal of the modern urban mind. Cool efficiency and blind balance and no to hold responsible. It’s the system’s fault. This is the perspective version of the devil I made me do.

**VALUABLE PEOPLE AND THE INVISIBLE**

Value itself is self-evident in the ways technology marks the face of the earth and modifies social organization. Those with technical skills are the most valuable to the passionate (entrepreneurs, dictators, saviors, movers and shakers, in a word magicians). By virtue of their ability to make things, technicians are assured a privileged place within the social structure. They are directed, coordinated, supported, in a word managed by transcending interests such as greed for power. This has always been the case from the time of magicians and wizards to prophets and engineers. Value is utility. In so far as a person is highly exploitable, they have value. Thus, students struggle to become educated at their own expense so that they will be valuable to employers. They make great and lengthy efforts to accumulate the various skills that they can then sell. Those who do well are big fish. The basis of this ideological prejudice is rooted in the instinctual drive to reproduce. The alpha males, the powerful bread winners are selected for by females who want assurances that their off spring will be secure. The logic of instinct manifested as the sex drive grounds the rationalizations for hierarchies. The interesting thing about the modern ideology is that it justifies the exercise of unequal power by promoting the idea that all is equal. Everything is equally available for domination and exploitation.

Under these conditions, the Cartesian dualism between skills and the person who “possesses them” is erased. The modern system of material production renders identities by equating people with their exploitable skills. Skills or talents that do not lend themselves to assimilation and exploitation are deemed worthless. Thus, the ability to think critically is not valued. In fact it is often regarded as an obstacle to the project of acquisition and concentration of power. By the criteria of the modern system, identity is manifest utility. What are you? I am a doctor, a welder, a mason, a computer programmer, and so on. People do not sell their skills or labor, but rather they sell themselves. The person and what is exploitable about them are identical. In the past, people were identified with their skills to the extent that their names indicated their craft. Thus we have Mr. Potter, Mr. Hammer, Mr. Porter, Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Smith. But these skills where in the service of the craftsman. The dialectic of the enlightenment which separated the hand from the mind in the form of modern management did not yet exist (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972). Today the system defines one. We no longer define ourselves. Identity is more dissociated and controlled from afar than ever before.

The Cartesian dualism which inoculated the ideology of exploitation for so long by making it appear that a person sold only their skills while the self was something different, has been exposed as a false rhetoric. If we take seriously the behavioral tenet that we are nothing but the some total of our bodily movements, then we are our skilled and unskilled actions (Braverman, 1974; Kramer, 1997). Therefore, if a person has no technical value they are “no body.” Their body is of no value. Their movements are of no concern. No one cares about them. According to the logic of modern physicalism, care means that you are valuable to me. And since value has been reduced to utility and exploitable motion, I care about you only to the extent that I can exploit you. The unexploitable are not even afforded shelter or food.

In this modern metaphysics with its attendant value of overdetermined efficiency in material production, only behavior “counts.” And the structural system takes moral president. Everyone must do their bit, pull their weight, which means to work to maintain the system or else the system will abandon them. The system determines the rewards and punishments on a reciprocal basis. If you maintain the system, it will maintain you.

New identities emerge. People can become “obsolete.” As Geddes (1915) put it “technics takes command” so that people must be re-tooled for their own good. Benevolent management seeks to align the interests of the workers with those of the transcendental (which takes ontic priority) system so that everything will run more smoothly. But contradictions within the system prevent hegemony from becoming total. The world is open and so change is impossible to escape. The “criminal” time cannot be arrested. Mumford (1934) called the tendency toward totalitarian ordination the machine id, the externalization of will to power as machine might. Lackadaisical flux comes under control by the endlessly redundant motion of the clockworks which is the prototypical model for the machine world (Kramer and Ikeda, in press). But it must be understood that machine is not machine anymore than scientism is a science or computerization is a computer. In the latter case, what is at issue is not a metal box with wires in it, but a mode of being, a way of structuring interaction, valuation, morality, labor, et cetera. It is an ideology, an “ism.” About the same time that machine precision was being brought to bear on all aspects of human behavior, both Max Weber (1905/1958), with his analysis of bureaucratic ordination, and Mumford recognized the danger of worshipping efficiency and the idea that each problem has one best solution so that thinking became synonymous not just with problem solving but with one (the best) way to think. Even Marx’s claim to be “scientific” and that the revolution is inevitable was tainted by the romance of inescapable precision and “historical” logic. Though flux cannot be arrested, there is no guarantee which way things will go (Nietzche, 1887/1974). Marx is a thor-
oughly modern thinker with great faith in historical logic. It is no mere coincidence that the most horrendous efforts at total social structuration and systemization, communism and Nazism, both claimed that transcendental “destiny” was on their side, and that they both planned to create the new improved material man. If one reads any of the propaganda generated by either the Soviet, Chinese, or Nazi systems it is practically identical in its utopian worship of logical control, centralization (in the service of efficiency), and techno-industrial prowess.

For the modernist, rationality comes to mean efficiency of material production. Rationality rejects value debate. One cannot ask whether or not bureaucratization is “good.” Instead it is normalized and naturalized by the Hegelian notion (borrowed by Darwin) of linear progress and evolution.

The productive and unexploitable such as children, “dim wits,” the “undependable,” and the elderly must be segregated and warehoused. They must be isolated from the workers who are perpetually busy. The identity of humans is reduced to “functionalism.” Dysfunctional individuals are worthless. They are “nobodies.” They are invisible. They cannot secure a place, a “position” within the socioeconomic structure. They have no identity. They literally have no where to go. Since they are unproductive, they fail to pull their own weight, they are seen as a drag on the economy. They don’t pay their own way. Hence, budgets are cut and a new type of human is invented, the homeless.

Never before the advent of industrial production have people been seen as “homeless” accept criminals ostracized and exiled from their group. Such a punishment was deemed so repulsive that Socrates, for instance, chose to commit suicide instead. Refugees from war, famine, and plague were “displaced” but not homeless. The homeless literally have no place where they “belong.” They cannot be displaced because they have no place from which to be removed. The identity “refugee” always implies the dimension of home. I am a Cuban refugee, a Cambodian refugee, a Bosnian refugee, a displaced industrial worker. The “I am” and “place” are necessary conditions for refugee status. This is also the case with immigrants and migrants. This is a necessary condition for the double consciousness of diasporic pain which involves having two homes at once and confusion concerning motive, allegiance, and identity.

But the homeless do not even have the identity of being a nomad. They are not “at home” within a nomadic culture with all its complexities and traditions. A nomad has a place within the family lineage and they have a territory within which they move. Gypsies have a shared language and culture. But the homeless have no claims to place or time. They are isolated. They are disembodied and demind. When they are gone, they are not missed because they “have” no friends, they “have” no “significant” others to mark their passage. They are not “had” by anyone. They do not “belong.” They are meaningless. The others which constitute the system which presents functions and structures, places to enact to “belong” do not see them. The homeless are invisible. They have no bodies, they perform no function, they have no displacement, they are nobodies. They are passed on the street like ghosts. Only the “expendable” have value. The homeless are not even objects. And yet, the ever-present magical dimension of life gives them comportment, their hair and skin, their feathery clothes a force that is before words and certainly beyond good and evil.

In the modern world, to be ethical is to be disinterested and to objectify other humans. Hence the modern war on the subject and time. Time, the great criminals and subjectivism, are to be “arrested” via the methodological process of automation, synchronicity, and generalizability. The subject, which is an expression of flux in the form of variance and multiple interpretations, is denied existence. Only static objects (structures) remain. The transcendental statistical mean is more real than lived-bodies. But this rhetoric cannot compete with the con-fronting of sentient soul to sentient soul.

Moderns pretend that subjects are contingent and expendable like the G.I. or general issue human being. While the individual is defined as irrelevant, the function within the reified structure endures. People come and go but the organization endures. In the modern world everything is fragmented so that production, for example, is broken down into simplified and redundant operations. This enables the interchangeability of workers without disrupting the overall production process. In the modern world people are redefined as structural functions and functions are simplified and standardized so that labor is devalued (it is not indispensable as is the case with highly skilled craftsmen). Quite the contrary, the modern perspectival world thrives on the dispensability of everyone and everything. People are temporary (“temps”) within the permanent structure of the system. Mass production demands mass consumption, planned obsolescence and a throw away world.

In order to facilitate this worldview, a way to preserve power was invented. Capital, as pure power, can be “saved up,” transferred, transformed, exchanged, converted, and grow. It is modern magic, pure, the potential to make things happen that never happened before. Capital has the proteus power of “liquidity.” Capital is a modern expression of magical power. Capital can take many forms such as electronic signals, various monetary instruments, investments, and savings. Unlike magical and mythical attitudes (Kramer and Mickunas, 1992) wherein value was univalent, meaning inherent, in the modern world value is totally arbitrary, even quantified. Indeed, for many late modern nihilistic positivists and deconstructionists, value and meaning do not even merit existence. Modern value is often expressed as binary code or numerical accounting. But even though the ancient magic has simply been redefined through modern perspectival modes of articulation, it remains pure power. Like coal or oil, money exists as “deposited” and as a “reserve.” Money is stored power, potential energy. But unlike coal or oil, money can reproduce itself.

In the modern world, if it is granted existence at all, value is totally arbitrary. Value is dissociated from any idea, art work, natural phenomenon like the Grand Canyon, or material artifact. Absurdly, however, money is not at all materialistic, rather it is the power to transform material relations. The modern world, despite its pretenses of being dedicated to direct (which means personal) empirical observation, is the most dissociated and abstract mode of being humans have yet articulated. Modern humans are suffering from extreme alienation/dissociation. The modern is dissociated from the natural variance of daylight/darkness through the season, from hot and cold via cybernetic “climate control,” from the products of labor, from extended family relationships, and so on. The modern obsession with the metaphysics of quantification is pure abstraction. This modern metaphysical prejudice has been extended to human beings. As evinced by modern mechanized warfare, eugenics (including the tech-
and "straightens things out," thus exhibiting his or her dominance, the hermit works on self-discipline.

All may be called marginal, but only if a center is presumed. For the magical nomad that spends his or her life traversing the vast oceans, deserts, or prairies of the world, there is no "edge" to life. And therefore, there is no center. To be homeless, presumes a home. Therefore, nomadic peoples are not homeless. Instead, everything, "inside" and "outsides" constitutes "home." For the nomad, there is no edge to the camp. There is no fixed "outside" (or "inside"). There are no sides, just total identity. Modern materialists such as Caton (1990) often make the mistake that being "Homeless" means to have no fixed shelter or dwelling. But, "Home" is an empirical structure, but a sense of belonging. Homelessness is a function of urban civilization with its centralizing tendencies (that even extend to epistemology in statistical form). For a nomad, there is no "edge," indeed there are no sides or "outsides" to reality/habitat. There is boundless sea or prairie, and sky. This constitutes a univalent mode of being prior to the separation (co-constitutive genesis) of culture and nature. Instead of wild/domestic, and culture/nature, for the nomad there is only world. For nomadic peoples, humans have inherent value and identity. But for the modern, value is nonexistent and identity is totally arbitrary. Mobility for the modern is fundamentally different from nomadic movement. Social, economic, and geographic statuses, as well as other forms of mobility for the modern involve the contingency of identity. Thus, irregardless of one's family, age, sex, or other "inherent" characteristic, in the modern world, if one loses their money they can become homeless. Besides money, all other values are irrelevant. Status is achieved (contingent) not ascribed (inherent). "Displacement" presumes a modern trivalent mode of being we call perspectival/spatial.

THE VIEW FROM THE SOFA: WATCHING THE TELEvised OTHER

The modern super tribe is marked by a dualism between intense individualism and mass anonymity. These two forces feed off of one another. Mass mediation is a late modern phenomenon. It exaggerates a single and very tiny perspective on reality to the status of Absolute Reality. Millions uncritically view the world through the single camera angle sharing a double consciousness—a disembodied consciousness like never before. The scope of a single camera is analogous to a single flashlight beam in the vast ocean. Through massive electronic networking this tiny and single conical segment is simultaneously consumed by a mass audience conferring the status of great value and importance onto it. Ironically, each viewer thinks that he or she saw "for themselves" with "their own eyes" a unique truth, but actually they have all seen exactly the same thing from the same angle, lighting, color, etc. This apparatus generates a very powerful false consciousness, a false independence of mind. The modern metaphysical prejudice of "phocentrism" (not "phonocentrism") as Jacques Derrida (1976) claims, makes modern audiences more susceptible to manipulation than they believe (Kramer, 1993b). The more faith they put in what they see, the more completely they can be fooled (especially by digital technique). The modern audience tends to have the same memory, the same view, the same consciousness—mass consciousness. Because they all "share" a single view, reli-
ability is assured. "Cameras don't lie." "A picture is worth a thousand words." Such sayings indicate the power of visual rhetoric. We all see the same thing, therefore it must be a fact. Viewer "counter arguing" and "resistance" is merely anecdotal, a false sense of independence. When "big news," like the Challenger disaster, or the Gulf War is happening, nearly all of the super tribe members rush to, and are fixated with "view" "story." In an effort to reduce uncertainty, they attend for hours to redundant information hoping for a shred of new news. Nothing else exists. Perspectival tunnel vision is shared on a massive scale, and everyone is looking down exactly the same tunnel.

Because of the intense metaphysical prejudice favoring material extension, spatial awareness (visiocentrism), if a story is not "good on camera" it is ignored. If the powers that be ignore it, the audience assumes that it must not be important. The homeless become even more invisible, especially since they do not sell products. Homelessness does not create what Vance Packard (1957) called a "buying mood." Hence, as many experts on the media have noted, cameras are "trained" to look at more visually interesting catastrophes and "personalties" that are created for the sake of selling (commercial entertainers). "Madonna has a baby" gets more global coverage than a thousand homeless who expire on the streets and whose bodies are never claimed. Does anyone wonder what happens to those objects? In every major U.S. city, every night a group of city employees makes the rounds to collect the dead and dispose of the "remains," the residue of the invisible. They leave without a trace. News cameras avoid this specter because it would be difficult for the couch potato to not feel guilty and change the channel.

And yet, news stories about homelessness in the United States have dramatically increased in recent years. The overall image of the homeless, however, has been biased. In other words, the news stories of the homeless typically emphasize deficiencies in individual members of the homeless group, but the news should take such an emphasis instead of arguing social inequalities. Despite this, the mass media has portrayed homeless people as alien representatives from another world.

Marcuse (1988) provided a theoretical background for understanding societal responses to homelessness, which he also categorized through the two methods of publicizing and neutralizing. These constructs are useful in explaining how the mass media depicts the topic of homelessness. On the one hand, the media employs the publicizing and politicizing method in portraying the plight of the homeless, as evidenced by being without shelter in bad weather and needing to beg for food. Alternatively, the media also employs the neutralizing method, which differs from the publicizing method by focusing blame on the homeless themselves for their condition, rather than on concern for either their welfare, or the need for government action (Penner and Penner, 1994). The individual, like Joyce Brown, becomes a "story."

Campbell and Reeves (1989) examine how network news makes sense of homelessness. More specifically, news covering the Joyce Brown stories placed the apparent deviancy of homelessness back into the consensus by translating the unfamiliar into the familiar world of the narrative. That is, network news transformed the troubling experiences of the homeless into familiar news packages. Such transformation is seen as imposing a distance between the audience and the objects of these stories. As an example, Campbell and Reeves observed the CBS account of the Joyce Brown story as follows: "Rather's narration also marks off the homeless as being outside his inner circle-the circle of common sense. Rather's language locates the homeless in the realm of difference, the other, the not us, them" (1989, p. 27).

Power (1991) explored the communication of "otherness" in network television news coverage of homelessness. According to his study, the communication of "otherness" is defined as "the employment of communication mechanisms that engender the perception of difference and inferiority" (p. 6). He interprets the texts of various news segments as evidence of a hegemonic process. On this point, Power regards this hegemonic process as a means by which people understand the media's portrayal of homeless people. Consequently, he claims that audiences merely demonstrate the capacity of understanding the phenomenon of homelessness in individual terms. The result of this study clearly indicates that the role that viewer identification plays in overcoming communication mechanisms engenders these vital perceptions of "otherness."

McNulty (1993) also examined news construction of homelessness as a social problem. Here, McNulty identified the precise methods by which news stories communicate the specific notion that certain types of people are homeless. According to this study, homeless people appear as "institution avoiders," "totally ill individuals," "families and children," "runaway and abandoned teens," and "threatening villains." Campbell and Reeves (1989) concluded that the conventional news narratives about homeless stories thus:

Television as an intimate medium sits in the comfort of our kitchens, living rooms, and bedrooms-our homes. At the same time television peeked at the plight of those without homes, it also imposes distance. The medium let us see the homeless, identify briefly with their predicament, yet, in the end, it sustains the fragile boundaries that mark off the intruders (p. 40).

SEDUCTION OF TELEVISION IMAGES

Television provides an essential element for structuring contemporary existence. According to Baudrillard (1988), "In the image of television, the most beautiful prototypical object of this new era, the surrounding universe and our very bodies are becoming monitoring screens" (p. 12). As noted above, in our desire to be objective "good" observers, we are all spreading ourselves, our rational surfaces out, so that, "not even the lightest footsteps and the fluttering of ghostly beings shall be lost" (Nietzsche, 1886/1972: Sec. 207, p. 115). In this sense, television constitutes an extended self upon which is reflected as real, simulated images and meanings. Increasingly, the self becomes simulation. Consequently, the implosion of the social subject in the masses becomes dependent on the seductive capacity of visual simulations. Generally speaking, in a world of simulation, appearances seem more real than the world of people and objects. As a result, the "real" has become the "hyperreal" product of media images. Moreover, Baudrillard's notion of "cold" seduction characterizes the media's performative function in what may best be described as a postmodern information society. This notion of seduction then informs us that third order simulacra do not represent the "original," "real world," but instead are often reproductions of reproductions (official models). For example, although the homeless story is based upon encounters depicting real-life events, those encounters are no less
fictional than events in the ten o’clock news, or TV dramas for that matter. Consequently, the TV culture becomes the most important agent of collective, “cold” seduction in contemporary culture. Most recently, however, TV programs appear which directly simulate “real-life” situations, perhaps much in the same way TV evangelists appear to simulate religion. With such simulations appearing in the postmodern world, boundaries between “real-life” and “simulated life” continue to implode. For instance, TV news more is increasingly assumed to be the form of “required” entertainment, using both dramatic and melodramatic codes in which to frame their stories.

In other words, television is consumed by individuals in their own respective private psychic and physical understanding and space (Kramer, 1992b). Moreover, as McLuhan (1964) claims, each communication medium’s message resides in its particular capacity to extend personal perception and, ultimately, to shape social organization. At this point, television thus extends the sense of vision, so that the viewer may gain the technological power of surveillance. This surveillance, however, is focused on particular subjects of interest, which means that a contingent ideology (or camera-angle view of reality) is thereby provided (Kramer, 1993). The problem (with respect to the Geberian point of view) lies in the essential characteristic of perspectiveism, which postulates the narrow sector, and subsequently inflates it to world status. Kramer (1993) suggests that the world-view (as propagated by television) may be represented by a camera angle controlled by commercial interests. In this sense, the seduction of televised images of the homeless as “otherness” (e.g., vagabond and/or refugee) is deeply associated with the commodification of pain and wanderlust.

CONCLUSION

In general terms, homelessness refers to persons who “have no fixed abode or nighttime shelter other than that provided by a private or public agency” (Caton, 1990, p. 20). Marcus (1990) have extended the definition to include such categories as the “hidden” or “invisible” homeless. Basically, the term homeless brings into a set of meanings, drawing on pre-established ways of understanding precisely what homelessness represents. In essence, homeless communicates the absence of home, that which we take for granted and have come to understand as something that everyone should have. Homelessness, therefore, comprises a state which occupies a space outside the realm of common sense to the point that portrayals of homeless people takes place within the context of culturally established meanings, meanings derived from place within the system.

What has been set forth in this chapter is an explanation of the sediments nature of the modern, mental-rational perspectival world and how it makes all into strangers. In so far as we are all strangers, or estranged from each other, we are all made homeless. We lack the implicature mutuality that constitutes the sense of belonging and care. But the magic dimension, which is often ignored by the rational mentality, cannot be denied. The truth that is the embodied pain of homelessness defies reinterpretation (rationalization). In some sense, as Marcus (1988) argued, television in its very act of publicizing the image of the homeless, neutralizes the image. This is so because the image is highly dissociated. The object cannot look back and see us thus implicating us in his or her humanity (pain). We see the image and we satisfied (neutralized). But nothing has

changed. Nothing has been done. The greatest threat to praxis is nihilism and dissociation. The homeless on television are reduced and equalized to the status of signs, like everything else. But face-to-face they are more than were arbitrary signs. Their humanity, value, humiliation, and pain is not accidental or arbitrary. We cannot remain totally detached “mirrors” as we may be while sitting on our sofas.

REFERENCES

The Other as Object

To my parents