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A. FUAT FIRAT
Editor-in-Chief
Arizona State University – West

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Consumption Markets & Culture

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CMC: Consumption, Markets and Culture focuses on consumerism and the markets as the site of social behavior and discourse. It encourages discussion of the role of management and organizations in society, especially in terms of production, consumption, colonialism, globalization, business performance and labor conditions. Combining theories of culture, media, gender, anthropology, literary criticism and semiology with analyses of business and management, the journal is international in its scope and iconoclastic in its aims. The editors consider marketing to be the ultimate social practice of postmodernity, blending art and commerce and requiring the constant renewal of styles, forms and images. I :d Educating readers about the conscious and planned practice of signification and representation is, thus, the journal's primary aim; its second is to take part in inquiring in and construction the material conditions and meanings of consumption and production.

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CONTENTS

Romanticism, Introspection, and the Roots of Experiential Consumption: Morris the Epicurean

Morris B. Holbrook[*]

> Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end.... To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success... on this short day of frost and sun....
>
> -Walter Pater (1947a), "Conclusion to *The Renaissance,"* p. 573

> A kind of writing has developed which is neither the evaluation of the relative merits of literary productions, nor intellectual history, nor moral philosophy, nor epistemology, nor social prophecy, but all these things mingled together into a new genre.... The aim is to understand, not to judge. The hope is that if one understands enough poems, enough religions, enough societies, enough philosophies, one will have made oneself into something worth one's own understanding.
>
> -Richard Rorty (1982), *Consequences of Pragmatism, p. 66*

INTRODUCTION

Recent writers have turned increasingly to a focus on consumption experiences as the essence of consumer behavior (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holbrook 1987f). This emphasis recalls Walter Pater's vivid insistence on "experience itself" as "the end" (1947a). It resonates with the romantic spirit; it accepts the gift of subjective intuitions, personal revelations, and introspective insights; and it celebrates a "kind of writing" that Richard Rorty has characterized as "a new genre" aimed at developing oneself into "something worth one's own understanding" (1982).

[*] Columbia University, Graduate School of Business, 504 Uris Hall, New York, NY 10027, USA.

This essay moves toward the closer embrace of such a romantic, introspective, experiential approach to studying consumer behavior. In general, it argues for the potential usefulness, meaningfulness, and validity of subjective personal introspection in advancing the aims, concepts, and methods of consumer research. Toward this end, it begins by tracing the romantic literary background of the introspective essay. It then pleads the case for subjective personal introspection and provides examples of introspective approaches relevant to some consumption phenomena of interest. It concludes that, though any approach has its limitations, subjective personal introspection may contribute valuably to the study of experiential consumption.

CAMPBELL'S ROMANTIC VIEW OF CONSUMPTION

In his book entitled *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism,* Colin Campbell argues that the success of the Industrial Revolution (which required a "demand" adequate to absorbing capitalism's "supply") depended on the development of a culture of consumption (1987). In Campbell's view, this "spirit of consumerism" arose from the awakening of an essentially romantic ethos (associated with an emphasis on hedonic gratification) among the consumers who composed the markets in eighteenth-century Western Europe generally and England in particular.

Campbell supports this argument with considerable sophistication and vigor. Briefly, he suggests (1) that we lack and therefore need an adequate theory of consumer behavior; (2) that such a theory would view consumption as essentially hedonic in nature; (3) that such a hedonic view rests on a fundamentally romantic ethic; and (4) that the appropriate romantic ethic emerged historically from internal forces working within Protestant Puritanism. (In the latter connection, note that Campbell's title plays on Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.)*

SUMMARY OF CAMPBELL'S ARGUMENT

Because of their crucial role in Campbell's worldview and Campbell's relevance to the theme of this essay, each of these points deserves a short summary.

(1) *The lack and need for adequate theory.* Campbell suggests that our ability to understand modern consumption suffers from the absence of a suitable theory of consumer behavior:

> No satisfactory account of the consumer revolution is possible because no satisfactory account of modern consumer behavior exists.... This is a fundamental truth which is observed both by a widespread ethnocentricity and a tendency for social scientists to overlook what are the most characteristic features of modern consumption (pp. 36-37).

From this vantage point, Campbell calls for "the development of a satisfactory overall theory of consumer behavior" (p. 41), "a more adequate theory of modern consumption" (p. 58), or "a more adequate theory of modern consumerism" (p. 59). His own solution involves a theory couched in the terms of hedonism.

(2) *The view of consumption as essentially hedonic.* To explain consumption, Campbell proposes that "a theory of modern hedonistic conduct can indeed account for the distinctive features of modern consumer behavior" (p. 7). Campbell credits Scitovsky as "the only contemporary economist to attempt to pursue this line of thought" (p. 59). He anchors his concept of hedonism in "enjoyment of the pleasurable dimension of an experience" (p. 59) or "the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake" (p. 65) so that "the primary object is to squeeze as much of the quality of pleasure as one can from all those sensations which one actually experiences during the course of the process of living" (p. 69). This hedonic orientation goes beyond sensations as the source of pleasure to embrace the role of emotions in the consumption experience:

> The key to the development of modern hedonism lies in the shift of primary concern from sensations to emotions.... That emotions have the potential to serve as immensely powerful sources of pleasure follows directly from their being states of high arousal; intense joy..., for example (p. 69).

Hence, pleasurable consumption results from the emotional significance of the products consumed. "The central insight required is the realization that individuals do not so much seek satisfaction from products, as pleasure from the self-illusory experiences which they construct from their associated meanings" (p. 89). In other words, consumer products promote daydreams, fantasies, and other imaginative experiences that provide key sources of hedonic gratification in emotional response:

> Individuals employ their imaginative and creative powers to construct mental images which they consume for the intrinsic pleasure they provide, a practice best described as day-dreaming or fantasizing (p. 77).... the contemporary hedonist is a dream artist.... convincing day-dreams are created, such that individuals react subjectively to them as if they were real (p. 78).... Thus fantasizing is fundamentally a form of hedonism (p. 81).... Modern hedonism is marked... by a preoccupation with 'pleasure,' envisaged as a potential quality of all experience. In order to extract this from life, however, the individual has to substitute illusory for real stimuli.... This modern, autonomous, and illusory form of hedonism commonly manifests itself as day-dreaming and fantasizing (p. 203).

(3) *The romantic sources of hedonism.* Campbell traces the hedonic nature of modern consumption to the romantic ethos that developed generally in eighteenth-century Western Europe and particularly in England. He characterizes romanticism as a "mode of feeling" that emphasizes "change, diversity, individuality and imagination" as well as "dissatisfaction with the contemporary world, a restless anxiety in the face of life, a preference for the strange and curious, a penchant for reverie and dreaming, a leaning toward mysticism, and a celebration of the irrational" (p.181). This romantic ethos, in which "imagination became the most significant and prized of personal qualities," emphasized the links among imagination, beauty, and pleasure so that "the imagination and the experiencing of pleasure became largely commensurate,... the Romantic... had an ideal sensitivity to pleasure, and indicated this fact by the spontaneity and intensity of his emotions," and "this ideal of character... place[d] a high moral value directly upon the experience of pleasure, whilst actually devaluing a utilitarian preoccupation with comfort" (p. 193). Hence, in Campbell's view, hedonism, romanticism, and modern consumption have converged via their common pursuit of pleasure resulting from the imaginative evocation of emotional experience:

> The romantic ideal... functioned to stimulate and legitimate that form of autonomous, self-illusory hedonism which underlies modern consumer behavior.... The romantic world-view... enabled pleasure to be ranked above comfort, counteracting both traditionalistic and utilitarian restraints on desire.... More specifically, Romanticism... legitimates the search for pleasure as good in itself.... In all these ways, Romanticism has served to provide ethical support for that restless and continuous pattern of consumption which so distinguishes the behavior of modern man (pp. 200-201).

(4) *The emergence of Romanticism from Puritanism.* Perhaps more controversially, Campbell finds the sources of the Romantic Ethic in certain aspects of Protestantism. Thus, he suggests that the romantic worldview emerged from tendencies latent within Puritanism itself:

> What needs to be asserted most forcibly is that there existed within Protestantism, and even within that especially harsh and vigorous branch of it know as Puritanism, two major strands of thought... and that whilst the former subsequently evolved into rationalism and utilitarianism, the latter developed into Sentimentalism and Romanticism (p. 219).

This latter development resulted from "a 'taste' for the strong meat of powerful religious emotion" (p. 134) characteristic of the Puritans and might be compared suggestively with the ecstatic raptures that typify certain contemporary evangelical, charismatic, and revivalist sects. According to Campbell, such tendencies toward the cultivation of religious emotions paved the way for romanticism and thereby encouraged the emergence of consumption habits that built the consumer demand necessary to accommodate the supply of products unleashed by Weber's "Spirit of Capitalism." In this sense, the Romantic and Protestant Ethics provided mutually reinforcing tendencies that combined to insure the success of the Industrial Revolution.

CONCERNS RAISED BY CAMPBELL'S VIEW

While I admire the scholarship, scope, and suggestiveness of Campbell's account, I might pause briefly to express my disagreement with some aspects of the four major theses just described.

(1) *The lack and need for adequate theory.* First, I cannot agree that no adequate theory of consumer behavior exists. Rather, it seems that the relevant theories have appeared, but that Campbell has not yet found them. Quite understandably, as a sociologist, he has drawn his references almost entirely from the social sciences and the humanities. Hence, his book reflects no awareness of the rather extensive body of conceptual and empirical work available in such sources as the *Journal of Consumer Research, Advances in Consumer Research, Psychology & Marketing,* the *Journal of Marketing Research,* or the innumerable other books, monographs, and articles written by those who consider themselves consumer researchers.

(2) *The view of consumption as essentially hedonic.* Second, I suspect that if Campbell had studied this rather abundant consumer research literature, he would have discovered some helpful support for his theory of hedonic consumption. Specifically, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) have called attention to some "Emerging Concepts, Methods, and Propositions" relevant to "Hedonic Consumption." Further, in work that reinforces Campbell's emphasis on daydreams and other forms of imaginative experience, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) have discussed "The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun." This work has led to a stream of research exploring the emotional, symbolic, and esthetic aspects of consumer behavior. (For reviews, see Holbrook 1987b, 1987d, 1987e, 1987f, 1988a.) Meanwhile, several other consumer researchers (literally too numerous to mention) have explored these and related issues (many with and some without explicit reference to the framework focusing on "fantasies, feelings, and fun"). All this suggests that Campbell has unintentionally exaggerated the depths of ignorance to which he consigns the state of knowledge concerning consumer behavior.

(3) *The romantic sources of hedonism.* Nevertheless, third, I agree with Campbell's emphasis on the need to devote greater attention to the romantic aspects of consumption. Indeed, in some preliminary research, the Romanticism-Classicism Index addresses this issue directly (Holbrook 1986a; Holbrook and Corfman 1984; Holbrook and Olney 1990). However, I must also suggest that romanticism characterizes only some-not all-aspects of consumption and typifies consumers to varying degrees, some more than others. In other words, I believe that *both* classical *and* romantic tendencies-that is, both reasons and emotions, both actions and reactions-coexist within the typical consumption experience and pervade the behavior of the typical consumer so that they tend always to be mingled (i.e., compresent) in a kind of "mixed bag," their relative dominance being a question of degree rather than of kind (Holbrook, O'Shaughnessy, and Bell 1990). Campbell himself allows for this possibility near the end of his book when he acknowledges (somewhat belatedly) that the Protestant and Romantic Ethics are "complementary rather than contradictory, jointly comprising one overall 'purito-romantic' personality system" (p. 223):

> The cultural logic of modernity is not merely that of rationality as expressed in the activities of calculation and experiment; it is also that of passion, and

> the creative dreaming born of longing. Yet, more crucial than *either is* the tension generated between them, for it is upon this that the dynamicism of the West ultimately depends.... modern individuals inhabit not just an'iron cage' of economic *necessity, but* a castle of romantic dreams, striving through their conduct to turn the one into the other (p. 227).

(4) *The emergence of Romanticism from Puritanism.* Fourth and finally, Campbell provides only a partial account of the bases for the emergence of romanticism. We could not reasonably expect anyone to accomplish more in a book of this kind. However, in search of a fuller phylogenesis, one should certainly consider such additional contributing factors as the reaction against (neo)classicism (e.g., Abrams 1953), aspects of the medieval revival (e.g., Beers 1968), disillusionment over the French Revolution (e.g, Abrams 1971), and the Eastern influences associated with the so-called Oriental Renaissance (e.g., Schwab 1984). In the absence of emphasis devoted to such considerations, Campbell's preoccupation with the evolution of Puritanism as the source of the Romantic Ethic appears incomplete at best or even somewhat reductionistic. Perhaps his otherwise excellent book should carry a warning label to the effect that it does not provide a complete account of romanticism. Indeed, as will emerge in subsequent sections, I strongly question whether any such "complete account" is possible.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT WITH CAMPBELL'S VIEW

Having raised these caveats concerning Campbell's portrayal of romanticism and consumption, I hasten to add that I basically support and applaud the general outlines of his position. For example, I agree with Campbell's conception of consumption as "processes through which economic resources are used up... in the satisfaction of human wants" and with his additional comment that "human beings may, however, also obtain gratification from activities which do not, in any conventional economic sense, involve the use of resources at all (except those of time and human energy), such as the appreciation of natural beauty or the enjoyment of friendship" (p. 38). (For a similar concept of consumption, see Holbrook 1987f and related references.) Also, I concur with the importance that Campbell attaches to the hedonic or experiential aspects of consumption, to their anchoring in romanticism, to the resulting preeminent role of such emotions as joy and sorrow, and to the consequent pervasive salience accorded to the "aesthetic dimension of experience" (p. 67). (For example, see the references found in Holbrook 1987e.) Further, I endorse the apposite method of exposition wherein Campbell focuses extensively on examples drawn from such literary figures as Woolf, Sterne, Austen, Addison, Johnson, Rousseau, Shelley, Wordsworth, Pater, and Lawrence, to name only a few of the many references that Campbell scatters throughout his book to telling effect, thereby drawing persuasively on the humanities to illustrate and document points of relevance to the social sciences. (In this connection, see Holbrook, Bell, and Grayson 1989.) In all these ways, then, Campbell's book helps to prepare the path for the kind of approach that I shall pursue in this essay addressing the relation of romanticism to an introspective account of experiential consumption.

ROMANTICISM IN THE LIVES OF CONSUMERS

To preview briefly, I shall adopt a focus on romanticism that differs somewhat from that of Campbell (1987). Specifically, I shall argue that romanticism exerts its influence on the lives of consumers not so much by accounting for why people buy (romanticism → hedonism → consumer demand → buying behavior) as by helping to enrich the experiences that surround consumption activities (romanticism → experiential consumption → emotional responses → pleasure). Here, I shall propose that romanticism, in its various manifestations, opens multiple windows on the nature of the human condition by suggesting a characterization of consumer behavior in terms of its experiential content in general or its joys and sorrows in particular. I shall contend that, though it is often mixed with classicism (as previously noted), romanticism pervades consumer behavior to its very core and finds one key unifying theme in the experiential aspects of acquiring, using, and disposing of products (goods, services, ideas, events)— in short, in the joys and sorrows of consumption. Further, I shall suggest that this theme invites exploration via the deeply self-reflective approach associated with subjective personal introspection.

Before urging these points at greater length, I shall address the question of what I mean by "romanticism" itself. This definitional task poses a challenge that is by no means trivial; for, as we shall see, numerous views on the nature of romanticism have coexisted, each with some claim to credence.

One point that commands wide allegiance and on which I shall insist is that the romantic and classical temperaments appear, to varying degrees, in all human endeavors so that one can find romantic tendencies mixed into the works and experiences of all eras-in Greek epics, for example, as well as in modern poetry. If a particular period (say the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) adopts the romantic perspective to an unusually high degree, this in no way precludes its appearance in other times and places. Thus, Pater argued that "the romantic spirit is, in reality, an ever-present, an enduring principle . . . a very continuous and widely working influence" (1947b p. 584). This conviction led Pater to proffer an illustration drawn from antiquity by claiming that "the *Odyssey*, with its marvelous adventure, is more romantic than the *Iliad" (pp.* 588-589). Hence, for Pater,

> Romanticism, then, although it has its epochs, is in its essential characteristics rather a spirit which shows itself at all times, in various degrees, in individual workmen and their work, and the amount of which criticism has to estimate in them taken one by one (p. 588).

Pater's own writings will concern us at some length when we turn to issues associated with subjective personal introspection (1947a, 1985). For now, I simply want to stress his argument that, throughout history and to varying degrees, romanticism has pervaded a broad range of human experience. Beyond this ecumenical point, however, considerable diversity exists in the various formulations that have attempted to capture the essence of romanticism. Here, I shall distinguish between eclectic and global views before isolating the version that will concern us most directly in the present study.

ECLECTIC VIEWS OF ROMANTICISM

Eclectic views of romanticism tend to generate lengthy enumerations of characteristics presumed to typify the romantic temperament. For example, in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle of Maintenance*, Pirsig deals with the different world views characteristic of romanticism as opposed to classicism (1974):

> I want to divide human understanding into two kinds-classical understanding and romantic understanding .... The romantic mode is primarily inspirational, imaginative, creative, intuitive. Feelings rather than facts pre-

> dominate.... It proceeds by feeling, intuition and esthetic conscience.... The classic mode, by contrast, proceeds by reason and by laws.... The classic style is straightforward, unadorned, unemotional, economical and carefully proportioned. Its purpose is not to inspire emotionally, but to bring order out of chaos.... Everything is under control. Its value is measured in terms of the skill with which this control is maintained (pp. 66-67).

The split between classicism and romanticism is a familiar theme in the study of philosophy in general and esthetics in particular (e.g., Jenkins 1962). For example, in the literature on esthetics, Osborne describes classicism as involving an emphasis on technical dexterity, realism, harmony, composition, proportion, concinnity, correctness, completeness, convincingness of representation, skill, craft, rules, and methods. By contrast, for Osborne, romanticism involves "genius, creative imagination, originality, expression, communication, symbolism, emotion, and sentiment... elevation of the artist; the exaltation of originality; the new value set on experience as such with a special emphasis on the effective and emotional aspects of experience" (1970 pp. 193-194).

This treatment accords well with the viewpoint of literary critics (Frye 1963). Abrams, for example, sees romanticism as spontaneous, expressive, personal, lyrical, subjective, involved, sincere, intense, inspired, passionate, demonic, sublime, dreamy, imaginative, humanistic, natural, and organic. He adds that romanticism (particularly of the Wordsworthian type) has close associations with cultural primitivism. "Poetry originated in primitive utterances of passion which, through organic causes, were naturally rhythmic and figurative" (1953 p. 101).

Thus, the romantic temperament reflects the more spiritual (vs. technical) and ancestral (vs. modern) values emphasized in Hirschman's recent account of the "Primitive Aspects of Consumption" (1985a). More generally, Highwater notes the affinity of the romantic sensibility to the primal mind and its reverence for the natural, the intuitive, the emotional, and the visionary— as opposed to the mechanical, the linear, the reasoned, and the literal (1981).

Similarly, in the philosophical literature, Brinton describes romanticism as

> a temperament or personality often, perhaps usually, held to be a constitutional element of an individual... that... can only be understood as a very complex syndrome of "biases" in the direction of... intuition, spirit, sensibility, imagination, faith, the unmeasurable, the infinite, the word-

> less... sensitive, emotional, preferring color to form, the exotic to the familiar, eager for novelty, for adventure, above all for the vicarious adventure of fantasy, reveling in disorder and uncertainty (1967 pp. 206-209).

To this, Nozick adds his identification of romanticism with "overcoming obstacles, breaking bonds, powerful irrational emotions, titanic struggle, continuous striving toward new goals, the value of change and novelty, the dynamic process of transcending limits" (1981 p. 613).

In sum, in the eclectic view, the romantic is generally regarded as sensitive, emotional, intuitive, chaotic, and free-spirited, while the classicist is seen as purposive, reasonable, realistic, orderly, and controlled. These list-like characterizations differ in spirit from attempts by several authors to provide more global perspectives on the nature of romanticism.

GLOBAL VIEWS OF ROMANTICISM

Walter Pater. In the aforementioned article on the classic and romantic, Pater cited Stendhal's sweeping characterization of romanticism and classicism as embodied by literary works that give the greatest possible pleasure to oneself and to one's grandparents, respectively (1947b). Pater himself replaced this humorously simplistic formulation with his own generalization based on the nature of "strange beauty" (p. 585):

> It is the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper (p. 584).

Henry Beers. Pater argued that the Middle Ages exert their romantic fascination because of their tendency to illustrate this combination of "curiosity and the love of beauty" (p. 585). By contrast, Beers agreed with Pater in seeing romanticism as a tendency rather than a period, but saw its essence as a reverence for things medieval (1968). Thus, following Heine and writing at the end of the last century, Beers defined his key term as follows:

> Romanticism, then, in the sense in which I shall commonly employ the word, means the reproduction in modern art or literature of the life and thought of the Middle Ages (p. 2).

Beers went on to characterize the medieval poets as "marked by an excess of sentiment, by overlavish decoration, a strong sense of color and a feeble sense of form, an attention to detail, at the cost of the main impression, and a consequent tendency to run into the exaggerated, the fantastic, and the grotesque" (p. 4). This list verges on the enumerative approach discussed earlier. However generally, in what is actually a strongly unified treatment and one still well worth reading after the expiration of nearly a century, Beers stuck quite close to his avowed emphasis on the Middle Ages. From this vantage point, he provided apposite characterizations of the Spenserian poets (Prior, Akenside, Thomson, Shenstone, Warton), the landscape poets (Thomson, Shenstone, Akenside, Dyer), the medieval revival (Warton, Scott, Gray), the Gothic revival (Walpole, Reeve, Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis), the ballads (Scott, Percy), and the Ossianic legends (MacPherson). All this serves to confirm Beers' emphasis on the role of medieval influences:

> The history of romanticism, after the impulse had once been given, is little else than a record of the steps by which, one after another, new features of that vast and complicated scheme of things which we loosely call the Middle Ages were brought to light and made available as literary material (p. 189).

Jacques Barzun. Another global view of romanticism appears in Barzun's *Classic, Romantic, and Modern (1975).* Writing during the Second World War, Barzun rejected a stereotypical list of romantic characteristics that includes "a return to the Middle Ages, a love of the exotic, a revolt from Reason, an exaggeration of individualism, a liberation of the unconscious, a reaction against scientific method, a revival of pantheism, idealism and catholicism, a rejection of artistic conventions, a preference for emotion, a movement back to nature, or a glorification of force" (p. 13). To replace this list of identifying features, he favored a more basic and unifying tendency found most conspicuously at the end of the eighteenth century because of the need for reconstruction posed as the dominant problem for that age in the wake of the French Revolution:

> Clearly, the one thing that unifies men in a given age is not their individual philosophies but the dominant problem that these philosophies are designed to solve. In the romantic period, as will appear, this problem was to create a new world on the ruins of the old. The French Revolution and Napoleon had made a clean sweep .... The next generation must build or perish. Whence we conclude that romanticism is first of all constructive and creative (p. 14).

However, Barzun also emphasized that this worldview extends beyond the epoch that we commonly call "Romantic" and embraces broader aspects of the human condition-in particular, "the contrast between man's greatness and man's wretchedness; man's power and man's misery" (p. 16). Thus, the problem of reconstruction involves "a human constant,... the knowledge that man is both creative and limited, a doer and a sufferer, infinite in spirit and finite in action" (p. 17). In this view, Goethe's *Faust* is the "bible of Romanticism" (p. 8), whereas— in his Confessions— Rousseau is its prophet (p. 20):

> Survival... suggests that the first law of the universe is not thought but action. As Goethe has Faust say, "In the beginning was"— not the Word, or Thought, but "the Deed" (p. 77).

Hence, Barzun found essential romanticism in a chronicle of great deeds such as Homer's *Odyssey (p.* 67) and in Byron's Faustian echo of Rousseau to the effect that "the goal of life is not happiness . . . but activity" (p. 77):

> *Faust* is rightly supposed to be the gospel of the romantic life.... The crisis consists in rejecting, with full risks, the inherited modes of experience and taking up activity as the path to new ones.... the romantic apostles of Faustian striving... could only admire an active greatness.... The goal and the reward were... won by striving (pp. 87-93).

M. H. Abrams. In an appendix, Barzun provided a long list with examples that illustrate alternative uses of the term "romantic." From what I have said, it should be clear that he attempted to center his own usage in the creative act of (re)construction. More recently, Abrams has linked romanticism to a comparable focus on the themes of reconciliation, reunion, and return (1971). Abrams' view serves as the basis for my extended discussion of romanticism in "A Literary Approach to the Joys and Sorrows of Consumption" (Holbrook 1990b). Because I have pursued it at length in that context, I shall not dwell further on the revelatory work of Abrams in the present essay.

Rene Wellek. Writing about a decade after Barzun, in 1955, Wellek saw a reaction against the canons of (neo)classicism as the hallmark of romanticism (1981).

> We can speak of a general European romantic movement only if we take a wide overall view and consider simply the general rejection of the neoclas-

> sical creed as a common denominator.... it was a revolt against neoclassicism, which meant a rejection of the Latin tradition and the adoption of a view of poetry centered on the expression and communication of emotion (pp. 2-3).

Wellek traced this tendency through the work of such literary critics as the Schlegels, Schelling, Novalis, Wackenroder, Tieck, Paul, Jeffrey, Southey, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Given the extensive borrowings (some have called them plagiarisms) by Coleridge from the Schlegels, Schelling, and the others, one might summarize Wellek's principal theme by attending briefly to his characterization of Coleridge, whose influence as a critic vastly exceeded his originality. Like Schlegel, Coleridge rejected the (neo)classical unities of time, space, and action, replacing them with a holistic view of the artwork as possessing "unity in multeity" (p. 170). This criterion of wholeness countenanced his celebration of the imagination as a unifying force that achieves "the reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" (p. 186) and supported his emphasis on the role of feeling (p.163) together with his view that "poetry must be passion" (p.167):

> Passion seems identified with one of his most personal requirements for the production of poetry; with joy, with happiness, or as he can say, the peace of God. In joy individuality is lost. *Dejection: An Ode* is the most impressive declaration of an intimate connection in Coleridge's experience between the loss of joy and the drying-up of the powers of creative imagination (p. 168).

This interplay of imaginative joy and sorrowful dejection informed the later work of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Keats-who tended to admire such creations as Goethe's *Werther (p.* 206)-as well as such antineoclassical French thinkers as Madame de Stael, for whom "poetry is emotion, sensibility, pathos, melancholy, sweet sorrow, somber reflection" (p. 221), again with *Werther* as a touchstone (p. 222). Similarly, though Stendhal tended to use "romantic" as a synonym for "modern" (as previously noted), he also tended to adopt an antisentimental version of Madame de Stael's emotionalism:

> Stendhal is frankly and simply an Epicurean, a hedonist who judges and wants us to judge art by the pleasure it gives us (p. 247).

We have already seen that Stendhal's work influenced Pater, if only in its tendency to promote a global view of romanticism, and we shall return to the writings of Pater himself as this essay progresses.

Frank Kermode. Another global view of romanticism appears in work by Kermode (1957) roughly contemporaneous with that of Wellek. Drawing on Coleridge and the English tradition, Kermode sees romanticism as synonymous with the Keatsian interplay of joy and suffering:

> To be cut off from life and action, in one way or another, is necessary as a preparation for the 'vision'. Some difference in the artist gives him access to this-an enormous privilege, involving joy (which acquires an almost technical sense as a necessary concomitant of the full exercise of the mind in the act of imagination). But the power of joy being possible only to a profound 'organic sensibility', a man who experiences it will also suffer exceptionally. He must be lonely, haunted, victimized, devoted to suffering rather than action (p. 6).

Kermode contends that "this association of suffering and joy . . . is at the root of Romantic thought" (p. 10) and offers the odes by Coleridge ("Dejection") and Keats ("On Melancholy") as the loci *classici* for this viewpoint:

> O pure heart! thou needs't not ask of me
> What this strong music in the soul may be!
> What, and wherein it doth exist,
> This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
> This beautiful and beauty-making power.
> Joy, virtuous lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
> Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
> Life, and life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
> Joy, lady! is the spirit and the power,
> Which wedding nature to us gives in dower
> A new earth and new heaven,
> Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud
> Joy is the sweet voice, joy the luminous cloud
> We in ourselves rejoice!
> And there flows all that charms or ear or sight,
> All melodies the echoes of that voice,
> All colors a suffusion from that light.
> (Coleridge, 1948, p. 178)

> She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
> And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh.
> Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
> Aye, in the very temple of Delight

> Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
> Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
> Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
> His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
> And be among her cloudy trophies hung.
> (Keats, 1948, p. 821)

This ethos, stressing the commingling in art of joy and suffering, extends into the 20th century in the work of a poet such as Yeats, whose "Adam's Curse" commemorates the romantic truism that

> ...'To be born woman is to know
> Although they do not talk of it at school
> That we must labour to be beautiful.'
> I said: 'It's certain there is no fine thing
> Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring....'
> (Yeats, 1956, p. 78)

Norhtrop Frye. A final global view of romanticism, offered by Frye, begins from a different vantage point but gravitates toward Wellek's and Kermode's emphases on the commingling of joy and sorrow (1968). Specifically, Frye suggests that "the central theme of Romanticism is that of the attaining of an expanded consciousness" (p. 42). For him, as for Abrams (1971), this pervasive theme stems from the romantic awareness of "the fall of man" as a state in which "a sense of an original identity between the individual man and nature has been lost" (p. 17):

> The context of what corresponds to the "fall," or the myth of alienation, changes accordingly. Man has "fallen," not so much into sin as into the original sin of self-consciousness, into his present subject-object relation to nature, where, because his consciousness is what separates him from nature, the primary conscious feeling is one of separation. The alienated man cut off from nature by his consciousness is the Romantic equivalent of post-Edenic Adam (pp. 17-18).

Given this predicament, the romantic poet tends to see himself as "the hero of the quest" in which he seeks "a nature who reveals herself only to the individual":

> The most comprehensive and central of all Romantic themes, then, is a romance with the poet for hero. The theme of this romance form is the attaining of an expanded consciousness.... To use the traditional metaphors, the great Romantic theme is the attaining of an apocalyptic vision by a fallen but potentially regenerate mind (pp. 37-38).

Frye finds this theme ubiquitous in such figures as Goethe's Faust, Byron's Childe Harold, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, Shelley's Wandering Jew, and especially the narrator of Rousseau's archetypal *Confessions.* Such works replace the "up" and "down" movement of imagery (from heaven to hell) with an opposition between "within" and "without" (from subject to object) (p. 47):

> What is being described is the attaining of an identity with the inner process of nature and a transcendence of the old subject-object separation (p. 115).

Thus, romanticism points to "two kinds of reality"—the "reality out there" (known to science and reason) and the "reality that we bring into being through an act of creation" (which informs the structure of experience) (p. 125). In the latter, our view of nature reflects our own condition; from the perspective of a liberated vision, what looks to us like suffering might reveal itself as exuberance or joy (p. 115). Hence, Keats tends to identify truth with beauty ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Endymion") and their experience with joy (p. 127). His famous "O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts" prompts the following gloss by Frye: "O for a life in which thoughts have the immediacy of sensations, instead of a life in which sensations are as unsubstantial as thoughts" (p. 152). In such a world-as we have already seen in the "Ode on Melancholy"-"sadness" and "sorrow" commingle inextricably with "Delight" and "Joy" to create the "aching Pleasure" of a "Beauty that must die" as the essence of human experience. So, for Keats, joy and sorrow meet in an expanded romantic consciousness:

> For Keats, joy and sorrow can only unite at the point of the greatest intensity of both, not in a lukewarm mediocrity halfway between them.... "Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow" is a constant motif and... the identity of delight and melancholy, of joy and frustration, of escape and annihilation, of the *allegro* and *penseroso* moods everywhere, is constantly present (p. 153).

THE ROLE OF INTROSPECTION

Subjective Personal Introspection in Consumer Research

In what follows, I shall pursue a view— close to that offered by Frye— in which the author in general and the consumer researcher in particular engage in a quest to seek the essence of joyful or sorrowful consumption experiences through an expanded consciousness attained by means of subjective personal introspection. This view borrows from the romantic ideal of the independent, insightful individual who explores the reality of inner visions via the internal search associated with deep self-reflection. In short-following Frye, Kermode, Pater, and the others just described-I shall argue for subjective personal introspection as an approach potentially useful to consumer researchers willing to undertake "auto-ethnography" on themselves via a prototypically romantic kind of participant observation in their own lives. [For comparable examples of "auto-ethnography" applied to consumer behavior, see the accounts of learning to play jazz piano by Sudnow (1978) and the consumption of pets by Sanders (1990).]

I trust it is clear that— while "subjective," "personal," and "introspective" overlap partially in meaning-they also carry somewhat different senses that deserve reinforcement through repetition. Specifically, I shall retain the senses of these terms conveyed by definitions found in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1984). In this light, "subjective" means "relating to or determined by the mind as the subject of experience" (p.1174). "Personal" means "relating to an individual or his character, conduct, motives, or private affairs" (p. 877). And "introspection" means "the examination of one's own thought and feeling" (p. 635). In essence-following the romantic ethos-I shall advocate a phenomenological, private, self-examination of the joys and sorrows that infuse consumption experiences found in one's own everyday communion with the human condition.

Going Against the Grain

I am not so naive as to think that this advocacy will easily win adherents among the ranks of mainstream consumer researchers. Indeed, in the debate that has recently raged within consumer research between what we might loosely call the *neopositivists* (Calder and Tybout 1987; Hunt 1983; Leong 1985) and the *interpretivists* (Hirschman 1986; Holbrook 1987b, 1988a; Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy 1988; Hudson and Ozanne 1988), only an occasional lonely voice has spoken out on behalf of a subjective, personal, introspective approach to consumer research (Holbrook 1986b, 1987a, 1988b, 1988d). Instead, rather than encouraging or even tolerating introspection as a valid source of knowledge, neopositivists have preached against what they regard as a dread "anarchy of self-indulgence and paroxysms of self-expression" (Calder and Tybout 1987, p.139). Meanwhile, even those more inclined toward aspects of relativism (Muncy and Fisk 1987) have tended to relegate introspection to the role of theory development within the context of discovery (Deshpande 1983).

However, some philosophically inclined consumer researchers, have emphasized the importance of persuading others (Peter and Olson 1983) so as to build a social consensus in support of a given approach (Anderson 1983, 1986):

> In short, science is a social and historical enterprise, and its knowledge products can be affected as much by sociological factors as by purely "cognitive" or empirical considerations (Anderson 1986, p. 156).

This latter perspective reflects the spirit of much postmodern thought in epistemology and the philosophy of science. By emphasizing the rhetorical role of various means toward persuasion, it appears to open the door, a least a crack, to accepting the potential validity of one's own subjective personal introspection.

Toward a Defense of Introspection

This is hardly the place to attempt a full-fledged epistemological defense of introspective approaches to acquiring knowledge. Indeed, with the increasingly common denial of the distinction between subject and object by thinkers such as Rorty (1979, 1982) and Bernstein (1971, 1983), any such arguments on behalf of subjectivity might seem to be beside the point. However, in a loose sense, the postmodern flight from a correspondence theory of truth (in which mind mirrors nature) toward one based on consensus (arrived at through a communal conversation) does appear to leave some room for insights or arguments drawn from subjective personal introspection to play a justificatory role in the intersubjective validation of shared knowledge.

The (neo)positivistic distinction made by Reichenbach (1938) between the contexts of discovery and justification (Scheffler 1982, p. 2)-especially when coupled with the abandonment of the once popular introspective accounts (Bazerman 1987, p. 131) and the disrepute of introspection among modern psychologists (Carlston 1987, p. 150)-has often encouraged the assignment of introspective methods to the realm of gaining insights or inspiration as part of the process of idea generation, hypothesis formulation, or theory development. However, in the postmodern critique, the distinction between justification and discovery has tended to break down (Kordig 1978; Nelson 1987a, p. 416; Sheffler 1982, p. 17):

> One essential element of the decision situations that scientists must resolve if their field is to move ahead [is that] there are always at least some good reasons for each possible choice. Considerations relevant to the context of discovery are then relevant to justification as well; scientists who share the concerns and sensibilities of the individual who discovers a new theory are ipso facto likely to appear disproportionately frequently among that theory's first supporters (Kuhn 1977, p. 328).

In particular, one finds a growing recognition that justification may depend in part *onsubjective factors*. "If subjective factors are required to account for the decisions that initially divide the profession, they may still be present later when the profession agrees" (Kuhn 1977, p. 329).

Since the time of Heidegger, increasingly numerous philosophers have challenged the meaningfulness of the Cartesian split between subject and object (Guignon 1983, p. 85). Heidegger's efforts to overcome the subject-object dichotomy (Guignon 1983, p. 98) find their contemporary echo in the influential writings of Richard Rorty (1979, 1982), who draws on Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Dewey (among others) to argue that the gap between subject and object-mind and matter, self and other-is a pseudo-problem that leads to a false correspondence-based approach to epistemology. In place of a correspondence theory of knowledge, Rorty (1979, 1982) follows Kuhn (1970a, 1970b, 1977) in espousing a community-based view of knowledge as social in character and as dependent on the shared rules and group norms of human agents engaged in a discourse or conversation. Kuhn views science as a group product generated by a scientific community bound together by a common language (1977, p. xxii). Elsewhere, Kuhn adds (1970a):

> If I were writing my book again now, I would... begin by discussing the community structure of science.... Community structure is a topic... which... has recently become a major concern (p. 252)... Typical communities... consist of a hundred members.... Groups like these should, I suggest, be regarded as the units which produce scientific knowledge.... I regard scientific knowledge as intrinsically a product of a congeries of specialists' communities (p. 253).... Science is not the only activity the practitioners of which can be grouped into communities, but it is the only one in which each community is its own exclusive audience and judge (p. 254).

Pursuing a similar conception, Bernstein also regards knowledge as social in character and as based on various community rules or norms. "Thus the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY" (1971, p.176). If anything, Rorty goes even. farther toward shifting his emphasis to the importance of a conversation among the members of a moral community (1982):

> Pragmatism... is the doctrine that there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones-no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of the objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow-inquirers.... The pragmatist tells us that it is useless to hope that objects will constrain us to believe the truth about them.... The only sense in which we are constrained to truth is that... we can make no sense of the notion that the view which can survive all objections might be false... In the end, the pragmatists tell us, what matters is our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark (pp. 165-166).

Such neo-Heideggerian attempts to circumvent the subject-object dichotomy and the resulting emphasis on communal standards of truth entail a move toward an emphasis on intersubjective validity. For example, Megill suggests that "Heidegger's most pervasive concern... is precisely with circumventing... the subject/ object dichotomy" (p. 200) and then adds that "an attempt to go beyond the subject/ object distinction... seeks to place itself at the center of experience" where "the truth it seeks belongs not to the order of objectivity but to that of intersubjectivity" (1995, p. 201). In this connection, even Karl Popper tended to define "objectivity" as synonymous with *intersubjective* testability so that "the *objectivity* of scientific statements lies in the fact that they can be *inter-subjectively tested"* (1959, p. 44). More recent thinkers have moved even more vehemently in this direction. Thus, Booth (1974) assumes that "validity or falsehood is... established communally, in some kind of intersubjective agreement" (p. 119). Rorty praises "the new fuzziness" in which "objectivity is intersubjectivity" (1987):

> What I am calling "pragmatism"... has been also rather endearingly called... the "new fuzziness," because it is an attempt to blur just those distinctions between the objective and the subjective and between fact and value which the critical conception of rationality has developed. We fuzzies would like to substitute the idea of "unforced agreement" for that of "objectivity."... We would like to disabuse social scientists and humanists of the idea that there is something called "scientific status" which is a desirable goal....There is no point in assigning degrees of "objectivity."... For the presence of unforced agreement... gives us everything in the way of

> "objective truth" which one could possibly want: namely, intersubjective agreement (pp. 41-42).

(For an example of a phenomenologically oriented social scientist who places great weight on the importance of intersubjectivity, see Denzin 1984.)

In the perspective just described, any means toward building intersubjective agreement may play a role in establishing community-wide, shared versions of truth. Thus, Feyerabend (1982) acknowledges the influence of Wittgenstein (p. 26) in arguing that knowledge depends on traditions that become objective when adopted by the participants (p. 27) so that apparent objectivity is really (inter)subjectivity (p. 28). Hence, science depends on persuasion and can, in fact, be viewed as an exercise in rhetoric (Burke 1969). For example, Booth's (1974) conception of "man as a rhetorical animal" (p. 137) leads toward a "consensus" theory of science as a social process (pp. 109-112) based on the push toward "communal validation" (p. 146). Along similar lines-in a spirit reminiscent of contributions by Berger and Luckmann (1966)-the volume edited by Nelson, Megill, and McCloskey strongly emphasizes the link between communication (rhetoric), constructivism (the social and linguistic construction of reality), community (shared conventions, conversations, and construals), and conviction (convergence of consensus) (1987):

> For the same reasons that the received view seeks to exclude politics from science, it tries also to denigrate or ignore rhetorics in research. By rhetorics, I mean less the hollow, decorative, or manipulative talk opposed by the received view... than the substantive, expressive, and persuasive talk needed for communication among humans.... rhetoric must play a legitimate role in collective inquiry of any kind (p. 202).... A better course by far is to make rhetoric of inquiry an ordinary part of... science. Rhetoric of inquiry concerns the interaction of communication and inquiry. It studies the reasoning of scholars in research communities.... it endeavors to learn how reason is rhetorical and how recognition of this should alter inquiry... Rhetoric of inquiry intends to help scholars improve the rhetoric— and therefore the content, as well as the reception— of their research... it accommodates studies of the many shared but often unarticulated features of human communication in scholarship (Nelson 1987b, pp. 205-206).

Meanwhile, McCloskey has expanded Rorty's view of the sciences as "styles (or traditions) of educated conversation" (Bruns 1987,

p. 241) to develop an entire treatise on the role of rhetoric as it affects scientific discourse in economics:

> Rhetoric does not claim to provide a new methodology, and therefore does not provide formulas for scientific advance. It does not believe that science advances by formula. It believes that science advances by healthy conversation (McCloskey 1985, p. 174).

Accompanying this concern for the role of rhetoric, one finds an increasing acceptance of the need for pluralism in approaches to epistemology and science. (For a related point concerning pluralism in consumer research, see Lutz 1989.) Thus, Booth expresses "confidence in a multiplicity of ways of knowing" (1974, p. 99). Nelson (1987a) regards rhetoric as the "postmodern epistemology" (p. 408) and goes on to argue for the pluralization of modes of inquiry: "Rhetoric of inquiry neither wants nor needs to banish logic of inquiry; instead the challenge is to pluralize it" (p. 414). Bernstein endorses "the manifest pluralism of contemporary philosophy" (1971 p. 7). And Rorty proclaims that "we should not worry about... 'scientific' status.... We should let a hundred flowers bloom, admire them while they last, and leave botanizing to the intellectual historians of the next century" (1982, pp. 218-219).

All this appears to establish some opportunity for the role of introspection as an alternative path to knowledge. Put simply, subjective personal introspection may provide material that will help convince one's audience concerning the merits of one's insights, the universality of one's feelings, or the validity of one's experiences. Rhetorically, the introspective essay may play the role of a persuasive communication. For example, Booth emphasizes the rhetorical power of stories and suggests that "narrative embodiment often does in fact strengthen persuasion" (p. 181); this argument supports the persuasiveness of the introspective essay:

> Any literal statement of message loses the special kind of knowing that the stories offer.... The only discursive treatises that seem to rival narrative in this kind of adequacy are those which, like Pascal's *Pensees,* make narrative heroes out of their authors. It is the passion of Pascal we read for, the arguments almost becoming characters in his drama... the rhetoric of narration provides one way of knowing that can never be achieved by "the rhetoric of science" (1974, pp. 186-187).

Similarly, McCloskey acknowledges the potential power of subjective personal introspections in advancing the rhetoric of economics;

he claims that "introspections, even if imprecise, can be better than regression estimates infected with misspecifications and errors in the variables" (1985, p. 45):

> Economists pointlessly limit themselves to "objective" facts. The modernist notion is that common sense is nonsense, that knowledge must somehow be objective, not *verstehen* or introspection. But, to repeat, we have much at our disposal about ourselves as economic molecules, if we would examine the grounds for assent (p. 181).

In the postmodern view, this push toward introspection returns the self-observer to the human concerns that mark people's struggles with their inwardness, their self-consciousness, and their passionate feelings. Thus, Bernstein has suggested that (hu)mankind's task is to become human (1971):

> His task as a human being is not to "think" himself out of this condition: such an attempt is pathetic and comic. His task is to *become* an existing human being, and this means to become subjective, not objective, to passionately appropriate and identify himself with the existential possibilities that confront him (p. 114).

Long ago, Nietzsche— as quoted by Kaufmann (1974)— had said something very similar on the role of personal experience: "We, however, we others who thirst for reason want to look our experiences as straight in the eye as if they represented a scientific experiment" (p. 116).

I Am a Camera

I wish to suggest that our faith in the validity of subjective personal introspection rests on a principle analogous to that which works toward the assumed veridicality of images produced by a camera. Here, it appears helpful to borrow from some comments on photography found in the discussion of *Romanticism and Realism* by Rosen and Zerner (1984):

> That photography not only does not, but cannot, lie is a matter of belief, an article of faith. It is not that a photograph has more resemblance than a handmade picture (many have less...), but that our belief guarantees its authenticity; to put it simply, we tend to adhere unquestioningly to the conviction that the photographic image is of something that was actually in front of the camera, in a necessary and deducible relation to it; we tend to trust the camera more than our own eyes. From this, the photograph has acquired a sym-

bolic value, and its fine grain and evenness of detail have come to imply objectivity; photographic vision has become a primary metaphor for objective truth (pp. 107-108).

Essentially, as this passage suggests, a photograph is the product of a socially constructed apparatus. As a community, we agree on certain laws of physics and chemistry concerning the behavior of light and its effect on certain silver-halide emulsions. Collectively, we build a device that transmits light in a certain way to a chemically coated strip of film. Certain institutions use agreed-upon procedures to develop this film according to certain carefully specified norms, rules, and conventions. And-voila!-we obtain a photographic image that, we agree, represents reality in a manner about which there exists a high degree of social consensus. Thus, Rosen and Zerner comment that "it would be foolish to claim that this phenomenon is unrelated to the way a photograph is made, to the mechanical apparatus and chemical processes that largely replace the decisions and judgments of the picture maker" (1984, p. 108).

In a sense, subjective personal introspection represents a similar sort of phenomenon. As a society, we agree on certain principles of education and on the inculcation of certain values. Collectively, we raise children to share certain sets of presuppositions and beliefs as a basis for conceiving the world. We monitor these conceptions as they mature developmentally, making certain adjustments deemed socially necessary. And-voila!-we thereby produce phenomenal private impressions that we as a society have some reason to trust, precisely because we as a society have played such a major role in creating the human instrument that registers them.

This argument— analogous to the notion that "I Am a Camera"— depends on the role of codes as a basis for the communication or conversations via which we establish conventions. As noted by Thayer (1982),

> The point is... that the world that each of us experiences has been, of necessity, preencoded for us. What we learn is not the world but particular codes into which it has been structured so that we may 'share' our experiences of it. The world into which every infant is born and into which every child is socialized is not a'natural' world. It is a world that has been invented-construed-so that we might inhabit it (p. 30).

Thus, I believe that society has some reason to trust the subjective personal introspections of the human mind in general (and of mine in particular) because that human mind is a recording and decoding instrument that society itself has built:

There is no such thing as 'objectivity'.... theories precede facts; we have to have theories in order to know what facts to look for... and thus the interpretation... precedes the perception... the world we observe is a world that pre-exists for us, in the structures or sign-systems of which we are in turn creations-properties of the cultures within which we have been informed. Our own minds, once in-formed, have a vital and vested interest in those particular properties (Thayer 1982, p. 37).

Indeed, to round out the camera analogy, Rosen and Zerner note the relevance of this perspective on the intersubjective validity of introspection to the ethos of the romantic period (1984):

> The objective photographic vision depended paradoxically on means that stressed the subjective elements of perception... the necessary presence of the distinctive perceiving subject, the peculiarly individual point of view. That such a development took place throughout the Romantic period, when the subjective perception of the outside world was at the center of thought, is understandable; and insofar as the camera eye— or camera-I— institutionalizes and enforces this authority of the highly personal "point of view," it is indeed a fulfillment of the Romantic movement (pp. 109-110).

From Science to Scholarship

In the present essay, I wish to follow the arguments just reviewed to suggest that subjective personal introspection can and sometimes does reveal useful, meaningful, and valid knowledge concerning consumer behavior. Whether such knowledge is "scientific" or not depends on how one defines "science." If one adopts the scientistic definition favored by some neopositivists (e.g., Calder and Tybout 1987, following Popper 1959), the answer is probably "no." If one accepts the more relativistic criteria (e.g., Peter and Olson 1983, following Feyerabend 1975) suggested by contemporary interpretivists (e.g., Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy 1988, following Gadamer 1975 and Ricoeur 1976,1981), the answer might under some conditions become "yes."

My own position emphasizes the importance of scholarship above and beyond that of science in consumer research (Holbrook 1990a; Holbrook, Bell, and Grayson 1989). From that perspective, it matters less whether one's colleagues accept introspection as potentially scientific than whether they acknowledge its possible usefulness, meaningfulness, and validity as a scholarly enterprise capable of making potentially valuable contributions to the study of consumer behavior. Specifically, I wish to contend that the aims, concepts, and methods of introspective research on consumption experiences may be useful, meaningful, and valid in the context of consumer-related scholarship.

Things to Come

Toward that end, I shall continue by discussing the background of introspection as a style of thinking. I shall follow this with some particular examples of cases where the introspective approach seems justified by virtue of its aims, concepts, or methods. From these examples, I shall conclude that subjective personal introspection can contribute to the development of useful, meaningful, and valid knowledge in consumer research.

Here, the "validity" at stake may be intersubjective instead of objective in nature. Informed by phenomenological, private, self-reflection, it may be humanistic rather than scientific in spirit. Dedicated to a deep probing of the human condition, it may involve broad scholarship as opposed to narrow empiricism. Bathed in the ethos of romanticism, it may entail an exaltation of ecstatic experience versus a resignation to realistic rationality. If so, it may move part way toward attaining the celebratory vision to which this essay aspires.

THE BACKGROUND OF SUBJECTIVE PERSONAL INTROSPECTION

From Ancient to Modern

In order to introspect, one must have the sense of a self that one can introspect into. The ancients (as revealed, for example, in the Homeric epics) lacked any such clear sense of self (Davy 1978). Thus, Auerbach comments that "Homeric heroes... wake every morning as if it were the first day of their lives" (1953, p.12). To this, Gray adds that "Homer's... warriors don't ponder alternatives:... A hero doesn't learn by experience" (1985, p.18). On this theme, Jaynes gives the following account of his hypothesis that the ancient Greeks lacked a sense of consciousness and, as a result, did not introspect (1976):

The first writing in history in a language of which we have enough certainty of translation to consider it in connection with my hypothesis is the Iliad (pp. 68-69) . . . I propose here to regard the poem as a psychological document of immense importance. And the question we are to put to it is: What is mind in the Iliad?.... The answer is disturbingly interesting. There is in general no consciousness in the Iliad (p. 69)... The characters in the Iliad do not sit down and think out what to do. They have no conscious minds as we say we have, and certainly no introspections.... the gods take the place of consciousness.... The beginnings of action are not in conscious plans, reasons, and motives; they are in the actions and speeches of gods (p. 72).... Who then were these gods that pushed men about like robots and sang epics through their lips? They were voices whose speech and directions could be... distinctly heard by the Iliadic heroes (p. 73).... The gods are what we now call hallucinations (p. 74).... The Trojan War was directed by hallucinations. And the soldiers who were so directed were not at all like us. They were noble automatons who knew not what they did.... Iliadic man did not have subjectivity as do we; he had no awareness of his *awareness* of the world, *no* internal mind-space to introspect upon (p. 75).

In sum, it appears that, in the words of Davy "an evolution— or rather an involution— of consciousness has occurred" (1978, p. 51). Something like our modern conception of consciousness began to emerge with the Socratic Greeks but probably did not grow into anything like our current sense of personal selfhood until the Enlightenment, as represented most spectacularly by the chasm that Descartes (1986) opened between body and soul, between mind and matter, between subject and object, or between self and other (Campbell 1984). Descartes himself retreated into the rationalistic side of his mind-body dualism (the cogito), leaving it to the empiricists to work out the implications of the contention that all knowledge stems from experience. (For a good introductory review, see Scruton 1981.)

However, both the rationalists and the empiricists shared a conviction that our mental activities-our sensations or thoughts, our experiences or ratiocinations-constitute all that we can know with certainty or, at least, with incorrigibility (Ayer 1956, p. 54). This perspective encouraged an epistemological reliance on introspection that dominated Western philosophical thought at least until the advent of Wittgenstein (1958). By questioning the possibility of private language, the latter has opened up a new set of problems with which I do not pretend to have coped satisfactorily (Bloor 1983; Kripke 1982). In a loose sense, Wittgensteinians have returned to something like a neo-Homeric view of the human condition, but one in which we no longer hear the voices of the gods. Those voices have perhaps been replaced by the "conversation" in which a linguistic community shapes our intersubjective sense of what is real (Rorty 1979).

Rorty has suggested the lines of an analysis that attacks Wittgenstein's arguments against privileged access to private mental states as "misguided" (p. 109). According to Rorty, "privileged access to [say] our own pains" (p. 109) establishes "that there is no better way of finding out whether somebody is in pain than by asking him, and that nothing can overrule his own sincere report" (pp. 109-110). Thus, "we can have privileged access without paradox" (p. 110). Indeed, for Rorty, the hallmark of the "mental" is its "incorrigibility" (pp. 54 ff.). In other words, I might make a mistake about what I see (e.g., mistaking my cat for a sofa pillow), but I cannot make a mistake about the fact *that I* think I see what I think I see (e.g., that I think I see the pillow). From this, it follows that if I experience a feeling such as pain, I just do experience that feeling.

Rather than delving deeper into the Wittgensteinian objections to subjective personal introspection and their Rortian replacement by a discourse-based framework of shared public social conventions and conversations, I propose to follow the romantic instincts previously expressed back to a period just before the emergence of the Cartesian Dualism (circa 1640). Anticipating this intellectually cataclysmic philosophical development, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) had written his memorable collection of self-reflective introspections, thereby giving birth to the concept of the personal essay.

Michel de Montaigne

Though we might trace the origins of Montaigne's approach to such intensely personal works as the spiritual revelations of Saint Augustine (1961), whose prayerful *Confessions* reflect the progress of his religious conversion and transformation from "a great sinner" to "a great saint" (Pine-Coffin 1961, p. 11), we find general agreement that Montaigne virtually invented the modern essay form (Good 1988, p. viii, p. 1). The term "essay" itself comes from the French "essai," meaning "an attempt"; a "trying," "trial," or "test." Thus, Auerbach concludes that the title of Montaigne's *Essays* "might fittingly though not very gracefully be rendered as 'Tests upon One's Self' or 'Self-Try-Outs'" (1953, p. 292) aimed at constructing "the kind of knowledge which matters to him, that is, self-knowledge" (p. 293). In other words, Montaigne's essays in "self-testing" attempted to construct a "self-analysis" (Auerbach 1953, p. 290), a "self-portrait" (Popkin

1967, p. 366), a "book of the self" (Good 1988, p. 27, p. 38), or an "introspective study of human nature and human conduct" (Frame 1958, p. v) in line with what Auerbach describes as "a method of selfauscultation, of the observation of one's own inner movements" (1953, p. 297). In this leaning toward "self-auscultation" (literally, "listening to himself"), Montaigne showed some affinity for more contemporary approaches— such as Phenomenology and Existentialism (Good 1988, pp. 11-12)— concerned with what we might call the Personal Construction of Reality (Hirschman and Holbrook 1990):

> Montaigne writes essays about his own life, and since one of his main activities is writing essays, the form and content tend to converge into a single activity of "essaying": testing and tasting one's own life while experiencing it, thinking about it and recording the thoughts, reading and revising and adding to those thoughts, and comparing them to the recorded thoughts of others. The essay is a sample of the self as it is involved in this complex of activities, and the essayist is a taster for his reader (Good 1988, p. 32).

However, Montaigne's preoccupation with self-auscultation does not imply any self-centered flight into solipsism or egocentrism. Rather, he aimed to use his self-discoveries as a window through which to observe human nature (Frame 1958, pp. xiii-xiv). Thus, Montaigne believed that his method of introspection could "illuminate the general conditions of human existence" (Auerbach 1953, p. 309) so that "in his study of his own random life Montaigne's sole aim is an investigation of the *humaine condition* in general" (p. 301).

All this appears in the famous passage quoted at length by Auerbach (1953) as his *Ansatzpunkt* or point of departure (Auerbach 1969):

> I set forth a humble and inglorious life; that does not matter... Each man bears the entire form of man's estate.... Authors communicate with the people by some special extrinsic mark; I am the first to do so by my entire being, as Michel de Montaigne.... If the world complains that I speak too much of myself, I complain that it does not even think of itself.... At least I have one thing according to the rules: that no man ever treated a subject he knew and understood better than I do the subject I have undertaken; and that in this I am the most learned man alive. Secondly, that no man ever penetrated more deeply into his material, or plucked its limbs and consequences cleaner, or reached more accurately and fully the goal he had set for his work. To accomplish it, I need only bring to it fidelity; and that is in it, as sincere and pure as can be found (Montaigne ed. 1958, p. 611).

Here, we find not only Montaigne's claim to be the first to speak entirely of himself but also a rationale for that enterprise in terms of the conviction that his fidelity and sincerity insure a complete understanding of his subject matter and that this subject matter leads toward a fuller comprehension of humanity because "each man bears the entire form of man's estate." In Auerbach's view, this passage provides a complete justification for the project undertaken in the Essays (1953):

> The famous sentence upon the *humaine condition* which is realized in any and every human being... has evidently answered the question of the significance and use of his undertaking. If every man affords material and occasion enough for the development of the complete moral philosophy, then a precise and sincere self-analysis of any random individual is directly justified (p. 297).

When we turn to the essays themselves, we find a wealth of personal revelations combined with the keen insights of an inquiring mind. Significantly for our present purposes, many of these introspective observations concern themselves with patterns of consumption and other aspects of consumer behavior. Thus, is an early essay called "Of Custom...," Montaigne addresses the local mores that people take for granted as part of their immediate social environment in what, today, we might refer to as an insight into cultural relativism:

> The principal effect of the power of custom is to seize and ensnare us in such a way that it is hardly within our power to get ourselves back out of its grip and return into ourselves to reflect and reason about its ordinances. In truth, because we drink them with our milk from birth, and because the face of the world presents itself in this aspect to our first view, it seems that we are born on condition of following this course (p. 83).

Montaigne pursues this perspective by adducing all sorts of wonderfully bizarre consumption habits-many of them doubtlessly apocryphal in origin or even invented by his own fertile imagination but used tellingly to provide vividly concrete instances of his basic point that different cultures produce dramatically different modes of consumer behavior, all of which appear perfectly normal to the members of those societies where they flourish. For example, a highly condensed excerpt from his lengthy account would include the following dramatic if partially fanciful details:

> To come back to the point. There are countries where, except for his wife and children, no one speaks to the king except through a tube. In one and the same nation the virgins openly show their pudenda, and the married women carefully cover and conceal them.... There are places where there are public brothels of males, and even marriages between them; where the women go to war alongside their husbands, and take their place not only in the combat but also in command. Where they not only wear rings on the nose, lips, cheeks, and toes, but also have very heavy gold rods thrust through their breasts and buttocks. Where in eating they wipe their fingers on their thighs, on the pouch of their genitals, and on the soles of their feet (p. 80).... Where they cook the body of the deceased and then crush it until a sort of pulp is formed, which they mix with their wine, and drink it.... Where the eunuchs who guard the religious women also lack nose and lips so that they cannot be loved (p. 81).... where women piss standing, men squatting ....Where in all their lives they cut neither hair nor nails.... Where they grow all the hair of the body on the right side as much as it can grow, and keep the hair on the other side clean-shaven.... Where a man can respectably have children by his mother, and fathers have sexual relations with their daughters, and with their sons (p. 82).... In short, to my way of thinking, there is nothing that custom will not or cannot do (p. 83).

In some of these passages, Montaigne sounds like an impressionable voyeur who has freaked out from reading too many *National Geographics* or a contemporary voyageur just back from a mind-boggling tour of Greenwich Village. But, even here, he can quickly shine the light of his introspective relativism onto the foibles of his own society. One illustration that still carries some weight for today's Western consumers concerns the pocket handkerchief, about which Montaigne tells the following charming story:

> One French gentleman always used to blow his nose in his hand, a thing very repugnant to our practice. Defending his action against this reproach...,he asked me what privilege this dirty excrement had that we should prepare a fine delicate piece of linen to receive it, and then, what is more, wrap it up and carry it carefully on us; for that should be much more horrifying and nauseating than to see it dropped in any old place, as we do all other excrements. I found that what he said was not entirely without reason; and habit had led me not to perceive the strangeness of this action (p. 80).

Montaigne's Epicureanism

Montaigne's preoccupation with the local customs characterized his perspective increasingly as he moved through his philosophical phases of Stoicism and Skepticism toward a more Epicurean focus on the nature of his own private experience (Frame 1958, p. xii). Epicureanism, the philosophical basis for Montaigne's later essays, holds two important characteristic beliefs— first, the incontestability of immediate experience and, second, the identification of Good and Evil with pleasure and pain, respectively (De Lacy 1967, p. 3). The latter tenet also characterizes Ethical Hedonism-as found, for example, in the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill— making Hedonism the more general perspective (Brandt 1967, p. 432). However, we must resist branding Montaigne a hedonist-first, because that term has some corrupt connotations in the English language associated with such sensory enjoyments as "wine, women, and song" (Brandt 1967, p. 432) and, second, because such a label might blur our focus on the experiential core of Montaigne's later philosophical approach. [A similar logic, by the way, dictated the change in our own terminology from "hedonic consumption" (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982) to "the consumption experience" (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982).]

From the perspective of his Epicureanism, Montaigne's later essays resound with the determination to draw deeply upon personal experiences. As noted by Good (1988). "Experience is the unifying idea toward which his essays seem to be working in one way or another:... His last and perhaps his greatest essay is 'On Experience'.... Here the experience of essaying and the essaying of experience are given their fullest treatment" (p. 37). Thus, a pastiche taken from the first twenty pages of Montaigne's essay on experience includes the following statements of his commitment to self-examination:

> There is no desire more natural than the desire for knowledge. We try all the ways that can lead us to it. When reason fails us, we use experience (p. 815)... I write of myself (p. 818)... I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics (p. 821)... I would rather be an authority on myself than on Cicero. In the experience I have of myself I find enough to make me wise, if I were a good scholar (p. 822).... It is from my experience that I affirm... the school of the world (p. 824).

This resolute and relentless focus on personal experience in the "school of the world" leads Montaigne ineluctably toward a penetrating preoccupation with his own habits of consumption:

> "On Experience" represents the furthest expansion of this essayistic principle of all-inclusiveness, so that Montaigne gives us the smallest details of his existence, his habits of eating, sleeping, defecating, exercising, love

> making, talking, and reading... Montaigne's project... has the cumulative all-inclusive form of experience itself (Good 1998, p. 42).

In passing, Montaigne reveals innumerable details (sometimes more than we really want to know) about his favorite foods ("salt meats," p. 843; "meats that can be eaten rare... to the point of smelling high," p. 845; "melons" and "all kinds of sauces," p. 846); his dislike for a stuffy or smokey atmosphere ("all heat that comes from fire makes me feel weak and heavy," p. 828; "I fear a stuffy atmosphere and avoid smoke like the plague," p. 848); his nocturnal habits ("I like to sleep hard and alone, even without a woman, in the royal style, rather well covered up," p. 840); his fondness for scratching ("I mostly scratch my ears, which are sometimes itchy on the inside," p.841); the torments suffered from his kidney stones ("is there anything so sweet as that sudden change... by the voiding of my stone...?," p. 838); and even his own slovenly table manners ("I often bite my tongue and sometimes my fingers, in my haste," p. 848).

All this self-revelatory reportage hinges, of course, on the Epicurean ideal of pursuing one's pleasures and avoiding as many pains as possible. At one point, Montaigne's preoccupation produces the following product-filled, preference-based, pleasure-oriented, experience-packed celebration of his own consumption habits:

> I cannot, without an effort, sleep by day, or eat between meals, or breakfast, or go to bed without a long interval, of about three full hours, after supper, or make a child except before going to sleep, or make one standing up, or endure my sweat, or quench my thirst with pure water or pure wine, or remain bareheaded for long, or have my hair cut after dinner; and I would feel as uncomfortable without my gloves as without my shirt, or without washing when I leave the table or get up in the morning, or without canopy and curtains for my bed, as I would be without really necessary things. I could dine without a tablecloth; but very uncomfortably without a clean napkin, German fashion; I soil napkins more than they or the Italians do, and make little use of spoon or fork (p. 830).

Clearly, in Montaigne, we encounter a man who believes that, in describing his consumption experiences, he describes himself and-in a sense-portrays all humankind. As noted by Thomas, the miracle is that-by dwelling on himself as revealed through his own consumer behavior-Montaigne manages to put readers in touch with the essence of the human condition (1979):

> He is resolved from the first page to tell you absolutely everything about himself, and so he does.... he tells you and tells you about himself (p. 121).... To be sure, he does go on and on about himself, but that self turns out to be the reader's self as well.... *you* lean forward in your chair, and he begins to tell you what it is like to be a human being (p. 122).

From Montaigne to Pater

Montaigne's creation of the essay form inspired countless subsequent attempts in closely related genres (including, of course, this essay). In general, Good (1988) describes the essay form as "a commentary which has broken free... to become self-contained and sui *generis"* (p. 3), "a provisional reflection of an ephemeral experience of an event or object" (p. 7), and "a highly 'existentialist' form" in which "neither the self nor the world is fixed, but reciprocally shape or reshape each other within the experimental or experiential field" (p. 12):

> The essay presupposes an independent observer, a specific object, and a sympathetic reader.... In it, an open mind confronts an open reality. An uncertain, unorganized world enters an unprejudiced awareness, and the essay results as a record and provisional ordering of the encounter. In a sense, self and object organize each other.... Self and object define each other. (p. 4).... The essay offers personal experience (p. 5).... the discourse of the essay is uniquely personal.... The particularities of the essay are of general interest because they are still the "raw data" of experience (p. 6).... Ultimately, the essayist's authority is not his learning, but his experience. The essays claim... is to yield flexibly to individual experience. Instead of imposing a discursive order on experience, the essay lets its discourse take the shape of experience.... Reflections in the essay rise from and return to particular experiences (p. 7).... The essay offers knowledge of the moment... where self and object reciprocally clarify and define each other.... The essayist's truths are... personal and provisional. The essay stays closer to the individual's self-experience than any other form except the diary.... The mixture of elements in the essay... can only be held together by the concept of self (p. 8).... The essay... represent[s] a temporary individual patterning of an experience from a single viewpoint, a miniaturized attempt to create a provisional "world" through a now purely private and momentary "configuration" without access to a higher synthesis but still recapturing a brief sense of "wholeness" (p. 18).... The heart of the essay as a form is this moment... where the self finds a pattern in the world and the world finds a pattern in the self. This moment is . . . a spontaneous, unpredictable discovery.... This discovery can be about the self or about the world, but is mostly

about a combination of both. Self and object are configured in a mutually illuminating way (p. 22).... The essay aims to inspire confidence... by its capacity to record the particulars of experiences and responses accurately as particulars. The essay is an act of personal witness (p. 23).

Very often, following Montaigne, the self-reflective epiphanies of the essayist described by Good have referred to consumption experiences and other aspects of consumer behavior. For example, McCracken (1988) recounts how Denis Diderot (1713-1784) discovered the importance of harmony or consistency among products that fit together in a pattern of consumption and how Diderot reported this phenomenon in an essay entitled "Regrets on Parting with My Old Dressing Gown." In honor of Diderot's ruminations, McCracken refers to cultural consistencies, correspondences, and complementarities among goods (e.g., the sense in which a BMW car and a Rolex watch "go together") as "Diderot Unities and the Diderot Effect" (1988, pp. 118-129).

In another set of personal *Confessions*, written by an almost exact contemporary of Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) declared his intention "to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature" wherein "the man I shall portray will be myself" (1933, p. 17). Essentially an exercise in telling "the story of his feelings, and of what they led him to do" (Cohen 1933, p. 9)-a focus that helped to prepare the way for the Romantics-Rousseau's *Confessions* doubtless reflected the influence not only of Augustine but also of Montaigne. Yet, paradoxically, Rousseau began his autobiographical revelations by declaring that he had "resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which, once complete, will have no imitator" (p. 17).

However much we might need to rely on speculation in questioning the first part of this assertion, we can decisively reject the second part in light of the countless authors who have explicitly or implicitly followed Rousseau by casting an autobiographical eye on their own emotional and intellectual experiences. Among others, these have included Goethe, Tolstoy, Mill, Ruskin, Trollope, Gide, Proust, Dickens, and Joyce (Cohen 1933, p. 7). Most conspicuously for my present purposes, a century after Rousseau had come and gone, they have included Walter Pater (1839-1894).

Walter Pater

Pater (1947a) explicitly acknowledged the influence of Rousseau's *Confessions* in reaching his own conclusions on the preeminent importance of seeking and finding "intellectual excitement," especially in his appreciation of the arts:

> For our one chance lies in... getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion— that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of *art* for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake (p. 575).

Harking back to the creations of Montaigne two centuries earlier, Pater's chief literary accomplishment lay in his development of the subjective personal introspective essay in which he evinced "his power to paint evocative pictures of moments of intense experience in finely wrought, decorative prose" (Schaper 1967, p. 56):

> Pater's importance for English letters might be said to lie largely in his having cultivated the essay form to a high level of competence combined with elegance, making a fine art out of... the impressionistic recording of subjective states of mind (Schaper 1967, p. 56).

Further recalling Montaigne, Pater subscribed to a kind of intellectually rarefied Epicureanism.

Pater's strong tendencies toward Epicureanism-his dedication to the joys of consumption-surfaced most clearly in the "Conclusion" to his book *on The Renaissance* wherein he vividly proclaimed his guiding concern for seeking pleasure in experiences pursued for their own sake (Alston 1967, p. 347). In the "Conclusion," whence came my epigraph for the present essay, Pater gave passionate expression to his conviction that the Good Life entails a cultivated appreciation of the beautiful and the profound to be encountered in the immediacy of sensory and especially esthetic experience as an end in itself:

> At first sight experience *seems to* bury us under a flood of external objects.... But when *reflexion begins* to act upon those objects... each object is loosed into a group of impressions... impressions unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them.... Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no

> real voice has ever pierced.... Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation.... Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end.... To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.... Not to discriminate... is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories.... The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience... has no real claim upon us (pp. 573-574).

Though we should properly interpret this famous and stirring passage as a vivid expression of the Epicurean "desire for a refined type of happiness which is the reward of the cultured man who can take pleasure in the joys of the mind" (Winn 1962, p. 93), Pater's contemporaries tended to misconstrue his "Conclusion" as an outpouring of vulgar hedonism in the mode of "eat and drink for tomorrow we die" (Levey 1985, p. 20). Pater himself was "embarrassed and troubled" by these accusations and commented sardonically, "I wish they wouldn't call me a 'hedonist'.... it produces such a bad effect on the minds of people who don't know Greek" (Roe 1947, p. 567). Indeed, to discourage such misimpressions, Pater removed his "Conclusion" from the second edition of *The Renaissance.* Further, for the purpose of dealing more fully with the issues raised by such problems of misunderstanding (Levey 1985, p. 22), Pater wrote his masterpiece*Marius the Epicurean.*

Marius the Epicurean

On the surface, as an example of historical fiction, *Marius the Epicurean* presents the story of a young Roman's intellectual education, spiritual awakening, religious conversion, and untimely death in the time of Marcus Aurelius (roughly 161-180 A.D.). Yet a broad critical consensus generally agrees that *Marius* conveys an essentially autobiographical and idiosyncratic outlook—impressionistic and confessional in its tone, personal and self-reflective in its approach (Levey 1985). Above all, Pater adopts an introspective focus and turns it onto the nature of subjective experience. Thus, according to Levey, "the most significant and fundamental similarity between Pater and his fictional character lies proclaimed already on the titlepage in the use of the words 'the Epicurean' to describe Marius" (p. 19).

Actually, Pater portrays the early education of Marius as Cyrenaic rather than Epicurean in content. As another form of hedonistic philosophy, Cyrenaicism shared certain beliefs with Epicureanismnamely, the tenets (1) that "only active physical sensations... were sure guides and criteria for action" and (2) that "the particular sensation of pleasure of the moment was... the only good desirable for its own sake, and the criterion of right and wrong" (Kidd 1967, p. 286). For a while, oriented toward the joys of consumption, Marius embraces these simple doctrines of Cyrenaicism:

> He was ready now to concede, somewhat more easily than others, the first point of his new lesson, that the individual is to himself the measure of all things, and to rely on the exclusive certainty to himself of his own impressions (p. 110).... and for a time Marius lived much, mentally, in the... philosophy of pleasure (p. 111).... It became the stimulus towards every kind of activity, and promoted a perpetual, inextinguishable thirst after experience.... With Marius, then, the influence of the philosopher of pleasure depended on this, that in him an abstract doctrine... had fallen upon a rich and genial nature, well fitted to transform it into a theory of practice, of considerable stimulative power towards a fair life (p.112).... The peculiar strength of Marius was, to have apprehended this weakness on the threshold of human knowledge, in the whole range of its consequences. Our knowledge is limited to what we feel, he reflected: we need no proof that we feel.... how natural the determination to rely exclusively upon the phenomena of the senses… under the form of a resolve, as far as possible, to exclude regret and desire, and yield himself to the improvement of the present with an absolutely disengaged mind (p. 113).... He would be sent back, sooner or later, to experience, to the world of concrete impressions, to things as they may be seen, heard, felt by him: but with a wonderful machinery of observation, and free from the tyranny of mere theories (p. 115).

Such passages as this sound very much like the earlier "Conclusion." Yet, in Marius, Pater took pains to answer his critics, for whom "words like 'hedonism'— terms of large and vague comprehensionabove all when used for a purpose avowedly controversial, have ever been the worst examples of what are called 'question-begging terms'" (p. 119). Thus, Pater insisted that the Epicureanism of Marius, like that of the "Conclusion," moved beyond simple Cyrenaicism or vulgar hedonism to focus on the pleasures of the mind via the cultivation of the intellect's capacity for the appreciation of beauty and other refined experiences:

> Not pleasure, but a general completeness of life, was the practical ideal.... And towards such a full or complete life, a life of various yet select sensation, the most direct and effective auxiliary must be, in a word, Insight (p.115).... With this view he would demand culture... or, in other words, a wide, a complete, education... directed especially to the expansion and refinement of the power of reception; of those powers, above all, which are immediately relative to fleeting phenomena, the powers of emotion and sense. In such an education, an 'aesthetic' education, as it might now be termed, and certainly occupied very largely with those aspects of things which affect us pleasurably through sensation, art, of course, including all the inner sorts of literature, would have a great part to play.... Such manner of life might come even to seem a kind of religion-and inward, visionary, mystic piety, or religion, by virtue of its effort to live days 'lovely and pleasant' in themselves, here and now, and with an all-sufficiency of well-being in the immediate sense of the object contemplated.... In this way, the true aesthetic culture would be realizable as a new form of the contemplative life (pp. 117-118).

Here, Marius elaborates the true message of the "Conclusion" by pushing Epicureanism in the direction of the contemplative life dedicated to a cultivated appreciation of beauty and a refined sensitivity to feeling. Near the end, Marius reflects back upon his life's experiences as "the unbroken placidity of contemplation" in which "all its movement had been inward; movement of observation only, or even of pure meditation" (p. 288). Ultimately, for Marius as for Pater, this perspective justifies a kind of purified Epicureanism in a manner that puts it permanently beyond the reach of critical attacks on vulgar hedonism:

> His deeper wisdom had ever been... to use life, not as the means to some problematic end, but, as far as might be, from hour to dying hour, an end in itself-a kind of music, all-sufficing to the duly trained ear.... the vision of men and things, actually revealed to him on his way through the world, had developed, with a wonderful largeness, the faculties to which it addressed itself, his general capacity of vision; and in that too was a success.... Throughout that elaborate and lifelong education of his receptive powers, he had ever kept in view the purpose of preparing himself towards possible further revelation some day—towards some ampler vision, which should take up into itself and explain this world's delightful shows, as the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood, might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last (p. 294).

By treating "this world's delightful shows" as "fragments of poetry" from a larger "text," through the penetrating vision of Marius, Pater inevitably gives intensely vivid impressionistic accounts of various consumption experiences that might well interest consumer researchers who have recently begun to turn their attention in the direction of hedonic consumer behavior (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982) or experiential consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Often, unlike Pater, we lack words of sufficient evocative power to represent the everyday consummatory experiences of which we speak (Holbrook 1987f, 1990a).

Consider, for example, the following four intensely rich descriptions of (1) a sailing expedition, (2) an evening supper, (3) the decor of a house, and (4) a garden:

> (1) Flavian and Marius sailed further than they had ever done before to a wild spot on the bay.... In the absolute transparency of the air on this gracious day, an infinitude of detail from sea and shore reached the eye with sparkling clearness, as the two lads sped rapidly over the waves.... They reached land at last. The coral fishers had spread their nets on the sands, with a tumble-down of quaint, many-hued treasures, below a little shrine of Venus, fluttering and gay with the scarves and napkins and gilded shells which these people had offered to the image (p. 95).
>
> (2) The room in which he sat down to supper, unlike the ordinary Roman inns at that day, was trim and sweet. The firelight danced cheerfully upon the polished, three-wicked *lucernae* burning cleanly with the best oil, upon the white-washed walls, and the bunches of scarlet carnations set in glass goblets. The white wine of the place put before him, of the true colour and flavour of the grape, and with a ring of delicate foam as it mounted in the cup, had a reviving edge or freshness he had found in no other wine (p.128).
>
> (3) The fragments of older architecture, the mosaics, the spiral columns, the precious corner-stones of immemorial building, had put on, by such juxtaposition, a new and singular expressiveness, an air of grave thought, of an intellectual purpose, in itself, aesthetically, very seductive. Lastly, herb and tree had taken possession, spreading their seed-bells and light branches, just astir in the trembling air, above the ancient garden-wall, against the wide realms of sunset (p. 228).
>
> (4) An old flower-garden in the rear of the house, set here and there with a venerable olive-tree-a picture in pensive shade and fiery blossom, as transparent, under that afternoon light, as the old miniature-painters' work on the walls of the chambers within-was bounded towards *the west by* a low, grass-grown hill (p. 229).

These brief excerpts demonstrate that, in Pater's Epicureanism, one dwells in a world of deeply felt and intensely vivid experience.

Further, Pater's concentration on such imaginative details of experience is no mere accident of literary style. For example, one theme in Marius concerns what Pater calls "the sentiment of home" (p. 59). Very early in the book, he crowns a beautifully rich description of his hero's childhood villa with a memorable whiff of olfactory imagery: "Even on summer nights the air there had always a motion in it, and drove the scent of the new-mown hay along all the passages of the house" (p. 47). Much later-toward the end of the story, as Marius lies ill and dying in a strange bed-he recaptures his sense of home via a repetition of this vivid sensory impression:

> Even during those nights of delirium he had felt the scent of new-mown hay pleasantly, with a dim sense for a moment that he was lying safe in his old home. The sunlight lay clear beyond the open door; and the sounds of the cattle reached him softly from the green places around (p. 292).

Against the backdrop of this refined Epicurean attention to the impressionistic details of everyday consumption, we might appropriately regard the conversion of Marius to Christianity as a kind of exalted consumption experience (cf. Holbrook and Corfman 1984; Havlena and Holbrook 1986; Hirschman and LaBarbera 1987; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). By this, I do not mean in any way to cheapen the nature of that spiritual awakening, but only to remark its connection with Pater's impetus toward the cultivation of refined experience. Thus, while still young, Marius becomes aware of "the isolating narrowness... of his own theoretic scheme" (p. 181). This awareness moves Marius in the direction of "a new departure, an expansion, of sympathy" (p.188). That expanded sympathy turns toward "a certain permanent and general power of compassion" (p. 274) for the suffering of others. And this power of compassion emerges as a new kind of experiential insight based on "a ready sympathy with the pain one actually sees" such that "the practical and effective difference between men will lie in their power of insight into those conditions, their power of sympathy" (p. 274). All this leads to a profoundly spiritual consumption experience associated by Marius with his religious conversion to Christianity:

> This was brought home to him, when, in early spring, he ventured once more to listen to the sweet singing of the Eucharist. It breathed more than ever the spirit of a wonderful hope-of hopes more daring than poor, labouring humanity had ever seriously entertained before.... As he followed again that mystical dialogue, he felt also again, like a mighty spirit

> about him, the potency, the half-realized presence, of a. great multitude, as if thronging along those awful passages, to hear the sentence of its release from prison; a company which represented nothing less than-orbis terrarum-- the whole company of mankind. And the special note of the day expressed that relief-a sound new to him, drawn deep from some old Hebrew source, as he conjectured, Alleluia! repeated over and over again, Alleluia! Alleluia! at every pause and movement of the long Easter ceremonies (p. 278).

Following Marius (a.k.a. Pater) into this deeply introspective experience of the subjective community of humankind, I find this passage inspiring. However, more to the point of the present essay, I find Pater's frank autobiographical and impressionistic treatment of subjective personal introspection also inspiring. Hence, my respect for Pater's attempts to capture the essence of life via intensely felt confessional accounts of individual consumption experiences has encouraged my effort to reflect the spirit of his insights in my own self-reflective subtitle: "Morris the Epicurean."

SUBJECTIVE PERSONAL INTROSPECTION IN CONSUMER RESEARCH: MORRIS THE EPICUREAN

Aims

Certain phenomena raise questions difficult to address by conventional approaches to consumer research. Further, such questions often turn out to rank among the most important of those that confront the study of consumer behavior. From this, it follows that some substantively important issues concerning human consumption experiences invite investigation by new or divergent approaches such as those that draw heavily on subjective personal introspection.

In essence, "subjective personal introspection" designates a type of research closely allied to what Hirschman (1985b), following a typology proposed by Mitroff and Kilmann (1978), calls Conceptual Humanism. Briefly, the latter perspective raises issues of personal values and humanistic concerns that often surface in the realm of stories, anecdotes, and metaphors. In this view, Conceptual Humanists (of whom I am apparently regarded as a prime specimen) inhabit a world of poetic imagination and expressive narrative.

One example, explored with increasing frequency in recent years, concerns the phenomena associated with consumer esthetics. (For recent reviews, see Holbrook 1987d, 1987e; Holbrook and Zirlin 1985.) Originally proposed by Holbrook (1980) as an outgrowth of issues raised by marketing the arts (e.g., Levy and Czepiel 1975; Mokwa, Dawson, and Prieve 1980), this stream of research investigates questions concerning the nature and determinants of esthetic experience. As acknowledged by Holbrook (1987e), most of this work has moved in a direction somewhat contrary to the spirit of Conceptual Humanism by adhering to the American tradition of neopositivistic semiotics (e.g., Morris 1964). This tradition gave birth to a rigorous but sometimes overly mechanistic experimental esthetics (Berlyne 1971, 1974) that has, in turn, inspired a stream of laboratory and field studies of consumer responses to popular entertainment and works of art (e.g., Holbrook 1981; Holbrook and Holloway 1984; Holbrook and Huber 1979; Holbrook, Moore, Dodgen, and Havlena 1985). Yet, as explained in detailed reviews by Holbrook (1987d,1987e), these neopositivistic studies suffer from some dangerous oversimplifications. Two of these limitations strike me as of special importance in the present context.

First, by seeking well-controlled manipulations of the independent variables (e.g., artistic features arrayed according to a factorial design), the laboratory experiments tend to lose track of the artistic gestalts that characterize works of art in the real world. In a situation where our reactions to artworks depend on their emergent holistic properties, an approach that relies on the conjoint analysis of main effects and lower-level feature interactions may fail to capture the gestalt-like phenomena of interest (Beardsley 1981).

Second, by relying on well-established structured ratings to represent the dependent variables (e.g., semantic differential scales), the previous work on consumer esthetics has tended to embody a rather shallow view of the esthetic consumption experience. Specifically, verbal ratings on a check-mark scale appear better suited to assessing simple hedonic preferences than to plumbing the emotional depths or scaling the ecstatic heights attained in the most dramatic forms of esthetic rapture (Laski 1961).

In short, if we aim to address the complex interaction between an artistic whole and a viewer or listener that culminates in a profound aesthetic moment, we seem to require some phenomenological ac-punt of the experience involved. This suggests the need for an introspective approach. Two papers-entitled "I'm Hip: An Autobiographical Account of Some Consumption Experiences" and "An Audiovisual Inventory of Some Fanatic Consumer Behavior: The 25-

Cent Tour of a Jazz Collectors Home," respectively-have attempted this kind of analysis via subjective personal introspection (Holbrook 1986b, 1987a; cf. Hirschman 1985b). As explained later, I do not claim that these papers succeed completely. I only suggest that they indicate the kind of phenomenological description that appears consistent with an introspective approach to investigating the sorts of questions raised by consumer esthetics. (For further discussion of phenomenological approaches in consumer research, see the contributions to an ACR session chaired by Fennell 1985; also see Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989.)

Concepts

The introspective approach may also serve as a source of meaningful concepts where such insights might otherwise remain unavailable. Here, drawing again on subjective personal experience, I might offer three recent examples. The first looks back to my previous axiological comments concerning the aims of consumer esthetics; the second lands squarely on the issue of introspective conceptual content; the third anticipates my later methodological discussion of psychoanalytic interpretation.

First, with respect to consumer esthetics, introspection suggests that the dialectic process of artistic creativity described by Holbrook (1984; cf. Koestler 1964) is paralleled by a corresponding process of profound esthetic experience in which a framework of expectations (the thesis) is violated by a departure (the antithesis) that, in turn, leads to a resolution (the synthesis). This process received its clearest exposition-apparently based largely on subjective personal experience-in the work of Meyer (1956). Later, Meyer (1967) connected his concepts with information theory (Garner 1962) and, drawing on similar sources, Berlyne (1971) proposed an account based on what he had earlier called "the arousal jag" (Berlyne 1960).

Second, some concepts in consumer research spring to life from intuitive experiences that I believe we can and should trust. For years, scientists have insisted on the importance of such imaginative leaps via subjective personal introspection-as in the oft-told story about Kekule's discovery of the benzine ring through the dream-like image of a snake biting its own tail (Beveridge 1957, p. 76). Perhaps, given the topic of the present essay, I might be permitted my own subjective account of a personal story concerning one such (to me) fruitful introspection. Once, after one of my most brilliant students with a strong interest in the arts had expressed the vague hope of conducting some research dealing with film, I went around for several weeks puzzling about how to address this rather nebulous topic. Finally, one day, I found myself watching the movie Out of Africa-deeply immersed in the experience but, at the same time, totally convinced that my perceptual and emotional reactions were being strongly manipulated by the cinematic use of symbolic consumption. Subsequent more systematic viewings permitted us to translate this concept into a more detailed analysis of the role of consumption symbolism in developing plot and character in this particular film (Holbrook and Grayson 1986). Thus, ultimately, we tied our interpretation to evidence provided by a close reading of the movie's text. The initial concept, however, sprang almost entirely from a sudden Eureka-like moment of subjective personal introspection. [For a comparable introspection concerning theme rather than plot and character, see my interpretation of *"Gremlins As* Metaphors for Materialism" (Holbrook 1988c) and the account of how this reading of the film crystalized while I was pedalling my exercise bike (Holbrook 1989). Further, notice that no less a scientific spirit than Karl Popper claims to have arrived at his conception of objective knowledge via an interpretation of the differences between Bach and Beethoven (Popper 1976).]

Third, with respect to psychoanalysis, one very important set of ideas appears difficult to approach by any route other than the introspective. Here I refer to the distinction-fundamental to Freudian interpretation-between manifest and latent content (Freud ed. 1965). Not to belabor what everyone already knows about Freud, let us recall his claims that dreams, slips of the tongue, neurotic symptoms, works of art, and many other everyday phenomena present manifest content at the overt public level serving to disguise covert hidden meanings that have been repressed by virtue of being too threatening to be expressed openly. In this view, Freud regarded each human life as a text and each text as a palimpsest containing multiple messages superimposed on one another with many layers of meaning lying below the surface (cf. Ricoeur 1981). This basic conception of symbolic activity as grounded in repression and disguise-estrangement and concealment, alienation and distortion, exile and mystery-has given birth to a wide range of interpretive projects in the theory of hermeneutics (e.g., Habermas 1968; cf. Rogers 1987), semiotics (e.g., Eco and Sebeok 1983; cf. Umiker-Sebeok ed. 1987), psychoanalysis (e.g., Freud ed. 1965; cf. Holbrook 1988b, 1988d), and the arts (e.g., Holland 1973; cf. Hirschman 1987). Moreover, such interpretations raise some methodological issues that we must also consider. Thus, in general, aims and concepts associated with subjective personal introspection lead directly to questions of method.

Methods

Psychoanalytic approaches to consumer research provide perhaps the clearest example of the methodological issues raised by subjective personal introspection. To put it charitably, the neopositivists have tended to label psychoanalysis with the scientistic stigma of not conforming to the rules of the hypothetico-deductive method (Grunbaum 1984). In consumer research, this perspective has encouraged the decline of Motivation Research (e.g., Dichter 1960) and has left us with the prevailing consensus expressed by Calder and Tybout (1987):

> Freudian ideas are embraced by analysts without a serious attempt at empirical refutation and are then used to interpret behavior. Such work is bogus from the standpoint of scientific knowledge (p. 139).

In particular, this widely shared opinion embodies a disinterest in types of investigation that lead toward idiographic as opposed to nomothetic knowledge (Windelband 1924, cited by Makkreel 1975, p. 42). Also, the dominant consensus reflects a fear that unchecked subjective personal introspection might foment an anarchy of self-indulgence ("anarchy' being such a frightening word that it compelled Feyerabend 1975 to add a clarifying footnote to the subtitle of his book, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic` Theory of Knowledge):*

> In an extreme form it could lead to anarchy. If construed as the "anything goes" and "why not call it science" of a Feyerabend, there is little to stop researchers from indulging in anything that suits their fancy in the name of scientific knowledge (Calder and Tybout 1987, p. 139).

Yet, these animad versions on the psychoanalytic approach ignore the potential personal validity of subjective self-knowledge gained via systematic clinical introspection. They ignore the propositioncentral to the humanities at least since the time of Vico, 1744 (1976)that humans can best understand the truths that humans themselves create (Holbrook, Bell, and Grayson 1989). Thus, work in hermeneutics by Gadamer (1975), Ricoeur (1981), and Habermas (1968) has moved toward the justification of self-reflective psychoanalytic insights via the self-corrective process of a Hermeneutic Circle in which one's preconceptions are adjusted against the evidence of a text so as to converge toward a valid interpretation. As Ricoeur has insisted, the text of interest may be any type of meaningful action (behavioral, narrative, imaginary, and so on). In short, any consumption activity-any aspect of one's own lived experience-can become a text suitable for self-reflective interpretation via subjective personal introspection. (For an extended elaboration of this theme, see Hirschman and Holbrook 1990.)

One example of such a self-reflective interpretation appears in a psychoanalytically oriented analysis based on subjective personal introspections concerning my own collection of art objects (Holbrook 1988b, 1988d). Drawing on material from five years of Freudian psychoanalysis, this interpretation received further corroboration in the judgements of several psychotherapists, in additional supporting details from the clinical analysis itself, in some historical documentation made available for inspection, and in other objects of consumption found around the household of interest. Hence, one feels justified in claiming some kind of validity for this analysis. The validity in question may be intersubjective—that is, ultimately depending on agreement within a subjective community rather than objective in nature-but recognition of this limitation simply puts us in the middle of the aforementioned postmodern philosophical mainstream that has followed in the wake of the flagship project launched by Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dewey, and others more than half a century ago (Rorty 1979).

Further, though any given psychoanalytic interpretation tends to describe only one consumer, one should not carelessly rule out this idiographic approach on the grounds of that rather feeble argument. First, any model (psychoanalytic or otherwise) can describe only one case at a time; consider, for example, what happens when we plug individual values into a regression equation. Second, the individually constructed psychoanalytic interpretation may attain wider validity by virtue of suggesting types of consumption processes relevant to broader classes of consumers; this, for example, is the best one can hope for when trying to generalize the results of a laboratory experiment. In short, it strikes me as potentially more profound to describe the consumption patterns of only one consumer in depth, via subjective personal introspection, than to give an inherently shallow and inevitably inadequate account of some detached fragment in the behavior of 32 college sophomores or 276 New Jersey housewives. Thus, the tradeoff between breadth and depth may sometimes favor an idiographic perspective. Undoubtedly, both idiographic and nomothetic levels of analysis are needed to advance our understanding of consumption experiences.

The ACR Trilogy

I might summarize my comments on previous applications of subjective personal introspection by briefly comparing three papers presented at conferences of the Association for Consumer Research in three succeeding years (Holbrook 1986b; 1987a; 1988b and 1988d). I shall refer to the three presentations in this ACR Trilogy by their respective nicknames: "I'm Hip" (1986b), "The 25-Cent Tour" (1987a), and "I Am an Animal" (1988b, 1988d). Because I have already discussed details of these presentations in the preceding sections, I shall not repeat that discussion here. Rather, I simply wish to convey some sense of the progression from the first to the third of these works to suggest the way that subjective personal introspection might generally evolve toward greater levels of intersubjective validity.

To aid this summary, Figure 1 shows a structured comparison among the three presentations in terms of original impetus, focus, approach, evidence, weaknesses, and outcomes. Specifically, "I'm Hip" provided a phenomenological account of the author's own interest in jazz-as player, listener, and collector-and followed an intensely personal, confessional style of presentation that drew on audio recordings of favorite examples in a rather free-form organization to encourage some intuitive faith in the power of subjective personal introspection, but that left a felt need for a more structured approach. Toward the end of introducing a clearer and more detailed structure, "25-Cent Tour" pursued a naturalistic inquiry based on the systematic investigation of local evidence found in the author's own home via the structured presentation of recordings and photographs to document his fanatic collecting behavior so as to build some sense of the meaning found in these treasured possessions, but without benefit of corroboration by outside observers. Finally, "I Am an Animal" sought this sort of corroboration through in-depth self-reflections on the results of a five-year Freudian psychoanalysis with supporting evidence provided not only by audio recordings and visual graphics but also by historical records and the accounts of detached observers.

Figure 1: THE ACR TRILOGY

Title	**"I'm Himp"**	**25-Cent Tour**	**"I Am an Animal"**
Original Impetus	Phenomenological Focus	Structured Naturalistic Inquiry	Psychoanalytical Interpretation
Focus	Autobiographical Interest in Jazz—Playing, Listening, and Collecting	Systematic Investigation of Local Evidence for Fanatic Collecting	In-Depth Self-Reflections on Collections of Art based on 5 Years of Freudian Psychoanalysis
Approach	Confessional Presentation	Structured Presentation	Interpretive and Corroborative Presentation
Evidence	Audio Recordings	Audio Recordings; Visual Photos	Audio Recordings; Visual Images; Historical Records and Detached Observers
Weaknesses	Little Structured Analysis	Lack of Corroboration	Idiographic in Scope; Easy Target for Scientific Prejudices
Outcomes	Intuitive Faith in Subjective Personal Introspection, But Need More Structure	Sense of Meaning in Possessions, But Need for More Corroboration	Corroboration of Interpretation, But Rejection as "Not Appropriate"

It would be misleading to imply that the corroborative approach to psychoanalytic interpretation represented by "I Am an Animal" had won eager acceptance among the gatekeepers in our discipline. Rather, in the review process, the extended paper (Holbrook 1988b) was attacked as too idiographic in scope and as a departure from the prevailing (scientistic) neopositive norms. Reviewers and editors called it "scholarly," "interesting," and "courageous." But-despite the multiple attempts to corroborate its interpretive assertions-they attacked its idiographic scope, labled it "nonscientific," and deemed it "not appropriate" for publication in a leading journal of consumer research.

Nevertheless, though chastened, I remain optimistic concerning the role that subjective personal introspection might play in the study of consumption experiences. As shown by Figure 1, I see previous studies as evolving toward a more solid level of intersubjective validity with some claim to establishing consensus in a continuing dialogue or conversation. Thus, I retain my faith in the potential contribution of introspection to the study of experiential consumption.

Future Directions

My comments concerning possible future directions for research using subjective personal introspection in studies of experiential consumption will necessarily be both subjective and personal-not to mention introspective-in nature. Moreover, though they address a future of potentially unlimited horizons, I shall keep them mercifully brief. My primary suggestion for progress in research on subjective personal introspection involves a continuation of the evolutionary pattern represented by the comparisons shown in Figure 1. Within this framework, useful developments suggest themselves in the three areas of aims, concepts, and methods.

Aims. With respect to aims, the introspective approach appears well-suited to addressing a variety of substantive areas that have proven elusive in consumer research. Foremost among these, I would include the phenomenological aspects of hedonic responses to works of art in general and the states of ecstatic rapture that accompany profound esthetic experience in particular. Such aspects of esthetics pose mysteries whose fascination is exceeded only by their impenetrability (Holbrook 1980; Holbrook and Zirlin 1985).

Concepts. With respect to concepts, the introspective approach appears to offer promise as a way of addressing the growing recognition that many consumption phenomena do not permit neat divisions and breakdowns into clearly delineated causal networks but rather seem to involve complex patterns of mutual interdependencies. Such gestalt-like, holistic, mutually interdependent patterns of inter-relationships constitute the essence of Lewinian field theory and merit sustained attention devoted to such issues as how we might incorporate both the rational (active) and emotional (reactive) sides of consumer behavior into a unified view of consumption (Holbrook, O'Shaughnessy, and Bell 1990).

Methods. With respect to methods, as already noted, the introspective approach raises new challenges concerning the specification of what constitutes reliability and validity in the application of research based on subjective impressions, personal insights, and introspective self- reflections. I have already suggested some grounds for believing that justification in the form of intersubjective validity is possible in the application of introspective methods. However, the modes and criteria for establishing reliability and validity thus far remain vague at best and require considerable further specification. My own instincts suggest that the most promising direction lies in the pursuit of corroborative supporting evidence, as illustrated by the aforementioned psychoanalytic study referred to as "I Am an Animal" (Holbrook 1988b, 1988d). In terms of reliability, such corroboration involves checks on internal consistency (e.g., convergent details within the text of one's own private impressionistic experience). Meanwhile, corroborative validity involves the ability to predict or to anticipate unexamined portions of the unfolding subjective personal introspective text (e.g., a hitherto neglected fragment of evidence drawn from some as yet unexamined aspect of one's own life history or the observations of an outside analyst concerning apposite aspects of one's own overt behavior). Here, as always, the crux of the matter hinges on insuring that the sources of such corroborative support for reliability and validity remain as independent as possible. Ways of insuring such independence present a formidable challenge to practitioners of the introspective approach and require the further development of appropriate procedures and imaginative solutions (Calder and Tybout 1987; Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy 1988).

Cashing It Out at the Workbench Level. Those who want to "cash out" my approach at the "workbench level" (to pick two favorite metaphors that, thus far, have been provided with only the most nebulous definitions by their incessant users) need look no farther than the experiences of their own daily lives. We eat, drink, work, and converse with our family, friends, and colleagues on the basis of truths (not *the* Truth, but convictions about how the world operates) revealed to us, in part, by subjective personal introspection. Via such conversations, the subjective may become intersubjective, though it will never be come "objective" (in the sense of a correspondence theory of truth) or "impersonal" (in the sense of not involving people). To make a start, we need only consult the Book of the Self-that is, the discourse on *human* nature-written in the text of our daily lives as ordinary consumers (Hirschman and Holbrook 1990).

CONCLUSION

I might move toward a tentative conclusion by suggesting one final intuitive basis for my faith in the power of subjective personal introspection to provide insights into the nature of experiential consumption. Various postpositivists-- especially those devoted to the pursuit of naturalistic inquiry (e.g., Lincoln and Cuba 1985)-have expressed support for participant observation as a route to in-depth understanding (e.g., Jorgensen 1989). It remains to point out that, in a sense, subjective personal introspection represents the ultimate method of participant observationpar *excellence* in which a researcher merges with the phenomenon under investigation: "The most direct route to truth is for the researcher to experience the phenomenon of interest-to 'become the phenomenon'" (Jorgensen 1989, p. 28). Jorgensen dutifully notes the potential dangers of "going native" (p. 62), but ends by attesting to the advantages of relying on an intimate familiarity with the insider's life experiences:

> One of the principal advantages of participating while observing, however, is the possibility of experiencing the world of daily life as an insider. Sometimes this only can be accomplished by becoming the phenomenon and experiencing it existentially (pp. 62-63).... Personal experience derived from direct participation in the insiders' world is an extremely valuable source of information.... As a researcher, you should be properly critical of personal experience-just like any other information. Yet your experiences-because they are your experiences-are subject to even more critical examination than the experiences of other members (p. 93).

Specifically, in subjective personal introspection, one reports events and interprets meanings in which one has experienced intimate involvement, to the greatest extent possible, since birth. The power of this kind of imaginative absorption into one's subject matter was articulated by C. Wright Mills (1959) in *The Sociological Imagination* and has recently been revived and rejuvenated by Norman Denzin (1989):

> The researcher with the sociological imagination uses his or her life experiences as topics of inquiry (p. 48). . . . Persons with the sociological imagination self-consciously make their own experience part of their research (p. 49). . . . researchers are advised to study those areas of social life where they have some intimate familiarity. By doing so, he or she can draw upon the stock of knowledge that has been built up out of previous life experiences. This is one of the consequences of C. W. Mills's directive to connect personal biography with sociological inquiry (p. 108).

I might add that, potentially, this quintessential type of participant observation entails certain clear advantages of a practical nature. One need not spend a lengthy time in the field and need not confront strange, unpleasant, or dangerous surroundings. One need not learn a new language, struggle over the problem of communicating with the natives, or travel long distances to find a suitable research site. One need not walk among the rattle snakes, drink contaminated water, or spend sleepless nights in a recreational vehicle. One need not struggle to obtain the consent of one's informants, grovel to secure the approval of a human subjects committee, or *wrestle* with difficult ethical problems concerning the violation of other people's privacy. In short, one need only commit oneself to an honest exploration and revelation of one's own subjective personal introspections concerning one's own phenomenological, private, self-reflective world. One need only commit oneself to a systematic, sincere, and searching self-examination.

Ultimately, however, my conviction concerning the potential usefulness of subjective personal introspection rests less on the consideration of various postmodern arguments concerning philosophy and practice than on a conscious surrender to certain essentially romantic impulses discussed at the beginning of this essay. Some thinkers-or perhaps I should call them "feelers"-find themselves temperamentally drawn to accounts of lived experience. Such researchers may wish to portray the human condition in terms of imaginative revelations-inner visions and, yes, ecstatic passionsthat open themselves to access only via the paths of subjective personal introspection. Thus, the impetus of romanticism (versus, let us say, the posture of classicism) and the insights of introspection (in contrast, perhaps, to quantitative measures drawn from more mechanical operations) merge in mutual support for a project founded on the roots of experiential consumption *(where* human experiences, as opposed to purchase decisions, lie at the heart of consumer behavior). Those ready to embrace these aspects of humanity will find much of what I have said natural or even obvious. Those devoted to a more resolutely classical approach to the purportedly objective study of market behavior will find my story mystical or even incomprehensible and will wonder-perhaps with hostility-why I have spent so much time and space talking about myself. "Who cares," they will ask, "about the adventures of Morris the Epicurean?"

I might reassure such critics by conceding that I do not wish to make exaggerated claims for the benefits to be gained from a romantically introspective approach to research on experiential consumption. Like any worldview, romanticism has its lacunae. Like any research style, introspection suffers from potential weaknesses. Like any focus, the consumption experience overlooks some important phenomena. Notice, however, that these concessions cut both ways. First, I would admit, Morris the Epicurean faces certain limitations. But second, I would insist, so do other approaches.

This truism surfaced recently in considering the approach represented by the well-publicized Consumer Behavior Odyssey (e.g., Belk ed. 1991; Belk et al. 1989; Connors 1986; Wallendorf and Belk 1987). In general, the Odyssey participants did everything possible to follow the methodological dictates prescribed by the advocates of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba 1985; cf. Hirschman 1986). These prescriptions call for careful member checks and research audits and for taking pains to keep one's objective observations (as contained in one's field notes) separate from one's subjective impressions (as confessed in one's journal entries).

However, we might strongly question the feasibility of removing interpretation from one's observations (Geertz 1973). Though Sperber (1985) distinguishes between interpretive ethnography and theoretical anthropology, in the apparent hope of keeping the two separate, the entire weight of Western philosophy argues vehemently against any such possibility (Bruner 1986). Indeed, Schweder (1986) has commented that ethnographies inevitably call forth a level of personal involvement something like that experienced in storytelling, and even Sperber (1985) has grudgingly admitted that "though they make... use of... experience, ethnographers achieve relevance in the manner of novelists" (p. 34):

> these works... give us an insight into some fragments of human experience, and this, by itself, makes it worth the journey (p. 34).

Thus, for example, Denzin follows Mills (1959) in suggesting that "interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and the self of the researcher" (Denzin 1989, p. 12):

> Interpretive interactionists find that their own worlds of experience are the proper subject matter of inquiry (p. 25).... Interpretive interactionism asserts that meaningful interpretations of human experience can only come from those persons who have thoroughly immersed themselves in the phenomenon they wish to interpret and understand (p. 26).... Such work will join the study of biography and society in ways that were outlined by Mills (1959). It will involve researchers drawing upon their own biographical experiences as they formulate their interpretive work (pp. 33-34).

On a similar theme, Rosaldo argues on behalf of a "corrective to literal-mindedness" via the greater use of personal narratives and case histories (1987):

> Personal narratives and case histories..., using the past tense and talking about particulars as they do, can depict the experience... in ways more difficult to achieve through normalizing discourse.... an increased disciplinary tolerance for diverse legitimate rhetorical forms could allow for reading and writing any particular text against other possible versions. Allowing forms of writing that have been marginalized or banned altogether to gain legitimacy could enable the discipline to approximate people's lives from a number of angles of vision (p. 106).

Ultimately, Geertz tends to view ethnographies as aspiring toward the status of inspired poems or insightful novels in that "the writing of ethnography involves telling stories, making pictures, concocting symbolisms, and deploying tropes" (1988, p. 140):

> To say it is art... is also to say the burden of authorship cannot be evaded.... ethnography... is a work of the imagination.... The responsibility for ethnography, or the credit, can be placed at no other door than that of the romancers who have dreamt it up (pp. 139-140).

Faced with the virtual impossibility of removing oneself from one's data, one might plausibly respond by seeking an approach that openly acknowledges the self-reflective nature of one's materials. Toward this end, for example, I kept an introspective log of my experiences on the Odyssey rather than separate sets of field notes and journal entries (Holbrook 1987c, 1991). In at least one detailed case (referred to earlier in my discussion of psychoanalytic interpreta tion), I believe that such an orientation produced a better accountone that is more personally useful, more imaginatively meaningful, and more intersubjectively valid-than that available within the conventional limits of naturalistic inquiry (Holbrook 1988b, 1988d).

All this means that we should avoid dismissing inherently romantic approaches (grounded in intuition or imagination) from the annals of consumer research without examining the potential usefulness, meaningfulness, and validity of subjective personal introspection (inward-looking, deep-probing self-reflection) in studying a variety of different consumption experiences (some merely hedonic, others profoundly ecstatic in nature). As I have tried to show, cases of consumer esthetics, critical analysis, psychoanalytic insight, and other experiential aspects of consumption may lend themselves to investigation via the kind of subjective personal introspection that rests on an essentially romantic orientation. These examples seem to confirm that, for some types of inquiry, romantic introspection may advance the aims, concepts, and methods of consumer research on experiential consumption. If so, somewhere in the scheme of things, Morris the Epicurean may find his home.

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Romanticism, Introspection and Consumption: A Response to Professor Holbrook

Colin Campbell[*]

Since Professor Holbrook pays me the considerable compliment of devoting several pages of his intriguing paper "Romanticism, Introspection, and the Roots of Experiential Consumption: Morris The Epicurean" to a discussion of my book, I should like to take this opportunity to reply to some of his comments. At the same time, I should also like to make a few observations on his stimulating views on the place of Romanticism and introspection in the study of consumption.

(1) *The lack and need for adequate theory.* Professor Holbrook criticises my work because of the limited range of sources which I consulted in the course of my research on consumer behaviour and, in particular, for the fact that it was not informed by the wealth of research and scholarship (including in no small measure his own) to be found in the pages of the *Journal of Consumer Research, Advances in Consumer Research, Psychology & Marketing* and the *journal of Marketing Research.* This is a criticism which I readily acknowledge. My background in academic social science, and more especially in predominately European traditions, meant that I was not really acquainted with the largely North American and more commercially oriented research reported in these publications. This clearly constituted a limitation to my own understanding in this field and one which I have since endeavoured to correct. Had I been familiar with this body of work prior to writing my book, I'm sure that my discussion would have been much improved.

[*] The University of York, Department of Sociology, Heslington, York YO 15DD England.

However, my growing acquaintance with this research has not as yet done anything to disabuse me of the view-as Professor Holbrook seems to have assumed that it would-that no adequate theory of modern consumer behaviour exists. For whilst much excellent research is reported in the journals mentioned above, that which I have had the opportunity of consulting to date does not appear to address the key question which was the starting point for my own work. Professor Holbrook observes that "relevant theories" can be found in the pages of these journals but does not identify these or specify to which aspects of modern consumer behaviour they might apply. But it was never my intention to claim that nothing was known about consumption or that there was a lack of a theory of consumer behaviour. What I asserted was that "... there is no satisfactory account of *modern* consumer behaviour" (italics added), a point I link clearly to the lack of any satisfactory account of the eighteenth-century consumer revolution (Campbell 1987, p. 36). I specifically observed that "it is not consumption in general which poses special problems of explanation, so much as that particular pattern which is characteristic of modern industrial societies" (p. 39). Significantly, however, the adjective "modern" is missing from Professor Holbrook's summary statement of my thesis. Its centrality to my argument can be gauged, however, from its presence in the book's title.

What perhaps I should have emphasised more clearly was the fact that I was following Weber's example (Weber 1930) to the extent of making a clear analytic distinction between "traditional" and "modern" economic practices. It follows from this that not all features of contemporary consumer behaviour are ipso *facto* deemed to be "modern", merely that the overall pattern constitutes a mixture in which the "modern" is considered to predominate. My endeavours were thus not directed at explaining all aspects of contemporary consumption but at eliciting the mechanisms which accounted for its distinctly "modern" dynamic.

(2) *The view of consumption as essentially hedonic.* Naturally I am delighted to hear that there is much support for the hedonic view of consumption and indeed that there is, in general, more known about consumer behaviour than I had perhaps assumed. Here too however, Professor Holbrook seems to assume that I entertained a grander ambition than was actually the case. For my specific concern, as stated above, was to formulate a plausible answer to the question of how it is that individuals in modern society are able to generate endless and apparently inexhaustible wants, not to propose a theoretical

perspective or paradigm which would encompass all known features of consumer behaviour.

On the other hand, I was ambitious enough to want to formulate a "theory" in the precise sense and not merely draw attention to neglected features, advocate a particular methodology or advance the case for the adoption of a given perspective (all of which, if I understand him correctly, constitute the aims underlying Professor Holbrook's work). Hence it was not my intention merely to observe that emotions, day-dreams or "fantasies, feelings and fun" were in some way implicated in consumption but to formulate a precise statement of the manner in which they functioned, through the medium of longing, to generate a endless series of wants.

(3) *The romantic sources of hedonism.* It follows from this that I do not believe that "romanticism" is a term which successfully characterizes either all aspects of consumption or all consumers. Indeed, Professor Holbrook expresses my own position exactly when he says (presumably in relation to the contemporary consumer) that "reasons and emotions, both actions and reactions-coexist within the typical consumption experience and pervade the behaviour of the typical consumer." It would seem that the reason why he sees my acknowledgement of the role played by the rational (or, in his terms "classical") ingredient as a "somewhat belated" one, is once again because he assumes that I had set myself the task of explaining contemporary consumption as a whole rather than its distinctly modern ingredient.

(4) *The emergence of Romanticism from Puritanism.* Finally, Professor Holbrook suggests that I provide "only a partial account of the bases for the emergence of romanticism." Such a criticism can be readily acknowledged, but then it is hard to believe that he really regards this as a serious failing since, as he is quick to admit, it is doubtful whether any complete account is possible. Certainly he does not offer an alternative, merely suggesting a list of "additional contributing factors" which in his view are needed in order to redress this incompleteness. Factors such as the medieval revival, disillusionment with the French Revolution or Eastern influences associated with the Oriental Renaissance. However, the task of explaining the emergence of Romanticism involves much more than a mere listing of those factors which at one time or another different scholars have suggested might be significant. The crucial part of any theory is a statement of the relative significance

which should be attached to each factor together with a precise specification of how these inter-

acted to produce the end result. This was indeed what I was attempting to do in my account of the dynamic interaction between evolving religious teachings and ethical and aesthetic ideals on the one hand and people's practical concern with character-confirming conduct on the other. Hence it was on the basis of such an analysis that I judged Puritanism to have played a crucial role. Professor Holbrook seems to regard this emphasis to be excessive or inappropriate. Yet he does not say why. He merely quotes those scholars, such as M. H. Abrams, who have chosen to write about other features of Romanticism. Yet there is no theory of cultural change to be found in these works; that is to say, there is no account of how changes in values and beliefs are related to changing patterns of motivation and conduct. To suggest, therefore, as Professor Holbrook does, that my approach is "incomplete" (or even, more bizarrely, that it is "somewhat reductionist"), would seem to imply that he is aware of some theory of how Romanticism developed which is unknown to me.

If Professor Holbrook has misunderstood the nature of my argument, however, (and the author as well as the reader must usually accept some blame for such misunderstandings) it is probably because he does not share my over-riding concern with theories of cultural change and hence is not a great admirer of the Weberian essay which served as my model. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* Weber employed the case study approach to develop just such a theory and I endeavoured to follow him to the letter. I was thus not interested in the simple compilation of factors which for many historians serve as 'explanations' of socio-historical phenomena. On the contrary, I was concerned to follow Weber in analyzing the immanent processes of development which, in accord with the principle of rationalisation, determine the evolution of cultural systems of meaning (see Weber 1964 and 1965), and then in showing how this in turn affects the prevailing patterns of motivation and "practical systems of action" of ordinary people. Since Weber had himself completed this analysis up to the point represented by Calvin's theodicy, it was natural that I should take this as the starting point for my own work.[1]

I was not concerned, as I am sure Professor Holbrook must have realised, to provide a description of Romanticism such as one might find in an encyclopedia, nor to ensure that my summary account embraced all the many and various opinions on the topic. On the contrary, I was concerned (a) to understand this phenomenon in terms of its own inner cultural logic, and (b) to specify the particular

forms of practical ethical and aesthetic action which a commitment to its precepts might be considered to have engendered in those who embraced them. In particular, I was interested in the development of a distinctly romantic ideal of character and the effect that this would have on those actions in which individuals would need to engage in order to convince themselves that they lived up to this ideal.

I am definitely not concerned, as Professor Holbrook appears to be, with "romantic aspects of consumption" or with Romanticism as an ingredient in or accompaniment to consumer behaviour. On the contrary, my interest in consumerism is limited to the part played by autonomous hedonism and it is only in relation to the "spirit" of the latter that I regard Romanticism as entering into the picture. Indeed since Romanticism is essentially a moral and ethical movement involving a commitment to a transcendent ideal, I believe that the Romantics were correct to perceive their philosophy as fundamentally opposed to those essentially mundane and utilitarian attitudes which characteristically accompany consumption. I was merely concerned to observe that those self-same Romantics actually aided the emergence of modern consumerism since their advocacy of a romantic world-view unwittingly served to legitimise autonomous illusory hedonism.

INTROSPECTION AND THE STUDY OF CONSUMPTION

If I might now turn to Professor Holbrook's own paper, I am pleased to say that although we clearly have a somewhat different approach to the issue of how Romanticism connects with consumer behaviour, I nevertheless find myself very much in sympathy with the argument which he advances.

My own view has long been that introspection is a legitimate method of inquiry open for use by any researcher or scholarly investigator, no matter what his/her discipline. To reject it out of hand on the pretext that it is "unscientific" strikes me as particularly churlish if only because it should be obvious that the study of a wide range of phenomenon is necessarily dependent on such an activity. Those who wish to investigate topics as various as backache, daydreaming, nostalgia, creativity and mystic enlightenment are all in the first instance dependent on reports which derive from introspection. To accept that such data is indispensable when originating from "subjects" but to deny it any value when it originates from the

"researcher as subject" has always seemed to me to be a peculiarly inconsistent standpoint.

However, this does not mean that I consider it wise to employ this method as the sole or even principal means of obtaining data in any area of study, whilst I definitely consider it to be unwise to employ it without a clear understanding of its limitations. What therefore disturbs me somewhat about Professor Holbrook's otherwise admirable discussion is his failure to acknowledge these and indeed to recognise that there are very considerable obstacles to be overcome by anyone who hopes to use introspection as a successful research tool.

WHAT IS MEANT BY INTROSPECTION?

My anxiety on this score is increased by what appears to be Professor Holbrook's flexible use of the term "introspection." My *Collins Dictionary of the English Language (1979)* suggests that this means "to examine and analyze one's own thoughts and feelings," whilst A *Dictionary of Psychology* suggests "observations of one's own mental processes" (Drever *1956).* Since Professor Holbrook does not supply an alternative definition, I can only assume that his usage is close to this conventional meaning. Admittedly he does repeatedly use the phrase "personal subjective introspection" but I cannot really believe that this is a different concept (certain other methods may be either personal or subjective without being introspective but it is hard to see how introspection could be anything other than both). Whether used with or without these additional adjectives, the essence of the concept is that attention is being paid to one's own thoughts and feelings, especially those currently or recently in consciousness, and principally for the purpose of studying them. In Professor Holbrook's paper, however, the term is not used merely to refer to the examination and analysis of one's own thoughts and feelings but is extended to cover both observation of one's own external behaviour and extended reflection on one's beliefs and values.

We can see an example of the first usage in the discussion of Montaigne's account of his personal habits, where much of the detail supplied is clearly derived from self-observation (that is, observation of the "public self") rather than introspection, and as such could just as easily have been supplied by others. One does not need to analyze one's own thoughts and feelings in order to know that one often sleeps alone or that one frequently bites one's fingers and makes

"little use of spoon and fork" while eating, for example. Whilst even the fact that one *likes* to sleep alone or *dislikes* a stuffy atmosphere, both of which seem much more likely to have been arrived at via introspection, could equally be deductions based on observation of one's own conduct.

The second extension of normal usage is evident in the Pater material which suggests that introspection is merely the starting point for extended meditation on topics which are not part of present experience. Close observation of the effect or impression which external events are having upon oneself may well fall under the heading of "introspection," but if this quickly leads on to reflections about the nature of the sublime, or the human condition in general, then introspection proper has been left behind. Here the initial thought or feeling merely serves as a stimulus for reflections on a subject other than one's own self and its workings and a better term for what is taking place would be contemplation or meditation.

Finally, in his references to hermeneutics and psychoanalysis, Professor Holbrook appears, at times, to be equating introspection with reflexivity. But a process in which one's own assumptions and methods are the subject of close scrutiny does not necessarily have to proceed via an analysis of one's own thoughts and feelings. It is more likely to proceed by means of the close analysis of a "text" that is treated as external to oneself even if it is, in fact, the product of one's own actions. Thus to "reflect on" (i.e. think about) one's consumption activity is not necessarily to engage in introspection.

I do not draw attention to these distinctions out of mere pedantry but because I believe that they significantly affect the scope and character of Professor Holbrook's conclusions (if not, in the end, the main thrust of his argument). It follows, for example, from the distinctions noted, that much of the benefits and advantages which Professor Holbrook claims for "the introspective approach" actually derive from techniques other than introspection. In particular, the failure to recognise that much of an individual's knowledge of his or her own conduct, attitudes and experiences may derive from observation of the self rather than introspection is significant because such a method is not at odds with the conventional "scientific" approach which Professor Holbrook criticises. It may be unusual for behavioural scientists to study their own behaviour rather than that of other humans or animals but there is no reason, in principle, why this should require any significant modification to their research methodology. Nor indeed is the stress placed on meditation or the importance of

undertaking a careful "reflexive" review of the premises underpinning one's work something which should disturb those engaged in "conventional" science.

The problem here seems to be that too close a linkage is being assumed between the topics of research and the methods to be employed in studying them. Professor Holbrook is keen to encourage consumer researchers to investigate phenomena which they have long overlooked (such as aesthetic responses and ecstatic states), whilst in addition he is keen to encourage them to adopt a method which they have also long neglected, that of introspection. I entirely endorse both sentiments. But then he also appears to assume that "introspection" is the only means of researching such phenomenon when the truth is that there are very few instances in which any necessary connection exists between a particular research topic and a given research method. I would have been happier with the suggestion that introspection should be employed *where appropriate* in the study of these aspects of consumption but that it constituted just one of several techniques which the sensible researcher would use in conjunction with one another.

This leads on to my concern about Professor Holbrook's failure to note the serious limitations which attend the use of introspection as a research method. His claim that since "all humanity lives in one man" the "Book of the Self" constitutes a "discourse on *human* nature" (original emphasis) clearly requires a very strong sociological qualification. No doubt all human beings share some common experiences but the mature and developed "self" is very much a social creation and hence naturally needs to be understood in terms of the society and culture which brought it into being. In addition, it would be a grave mistake to assume that introspection is a universal activity, taking the same form in all human beings, and involving an exploration of a fundamentally unchanging entity called the "self." What people discover when engaged in introspection is, of course, conditioned by what they expect to discover, whilst the presentation of their findings to others in the form of an 'account' is itself largely determined by social conventions. Not all individuals are equally liable to introspect or to accord such activity a similar importance in their lives; whilst among those who do, what they choose to report and how they choose to report it has to be a major topic of research in its own right. Given these very important caveats, I am happy to endorse the plea for consumer researchers to embrace more humanistic and "subjective" modes of inquiry.

NOTES

1. In fact, Holbrook himself, in his own account of the development of the practice of introspection, observes that there were religious precedents for the introspective essays of Montaigne in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. I would simply wish to observe that the obsessive self-observation and self-analysis of the Puritans provides an even more obvious basis for the development of the practice of introspection in the West.

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A Critique of Desire: Distaste and Dislike in Consumer Behavior

Richard R. Wilk[*]

This paper argues that what we do not want to consume is often as personally and socially important as what we desire. Are desire and distaste really two separate bodies of knowledge; do we keep separate mental lists of good and bad, of things to be sought out and things to be avoided? Or are the positive and negative aspects of goods always intimately related to each other, so that we learn a series of relationships between desire and disgust, or desired and detested objects?

This inquiry was prompted by a long term study of consumption in the Central American country of Belize. Survey data show that distastes, aversions, and dislikes are much more socially diagnostic than positive desires. I argue that dislikes and distastes are not the mirror images of tastes and desire, but instead provide very different ways for people to express identity and difference, to create senses of self, space, and personal and social time.

This paper focuses on some often neglected aspects of the ways material culture, particularly consumer goods, play active roles in the creation of individual identities and social relations.[1] Social scientists from many different disciplinary backgrounds have made the relationship between goods and identity an important arena for debate in the last decades, with important ramifications for understanding such issues as nationalism and ethnicity, global economic integration, and continuing technological changes in communications and computing. There is no question that explosive growth in demand for consumer goods is a, perhaps *the*, crucial world cultural and economic transformation of the late twentieth century.

[*] Anthropology Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA.

Much academic and lay discourse about this transformation is explicitly or implicitly moralist, in the sense of taking a position on whether increased demand for things is good or bad for individuals, or cultures, or for social justice, the environment, or some particular interest group or cause. As Belk pointed out some years ago, the moral critique of consumption runs deep in major world religions, and the desire for and love of worldly goods is usually seen as dangerous if not inherently corrupt (1983). The obverse of desire for goods is usually cast as an ascetic lack of desire, or other emotions which promote social relationships, altruism, citizenship, and the good of others. In this paper, I argue for a more dimensional approach to human emotional relationships with goods, an approach which recognizes different kinds of both positive and negative emotions towards goods and their various attributes.

THE COMMODITY CRITIQUE

In the United States conservative elitists often adopt a moralistic anticonsumption position, since they see mass consumer culture as a symptom of what they hate: the commercialism of democracy based on wealth and power instead of culture, position and education. From this perspective, mass culture is a pale substitute for the real thing-an opium for masses who no longer know their place, and don't have the knowledge and taste to appreciate the finer things. But the same critique is advanced in a different form by liberal commentators like Roland Barthes, Christopher Lasch, and Stewart Ewen, who tend to portray modern consumption as a shallow "dream of identity" or wholeness: modern life is so anonymous and people are so rootless and isolated by individualism that they seek goods to substitute for an internal emptiness, assembling a "commodity self." "The marketing engines of style depend on anomic subjects seeking to become splendid objects." (Ewen 1988). Here the culprit is, instead of the tasteless nouveau riche, the capitalist class of advertisers and marketers, whose wealth depends on cultivating "false" needs among the hapless boobs who would otherwise be pursuing arts and literature, or whatever else the critic deems an "authentic" value.

Such is the power of moralistic approaches to consumption that they establish a framework for criticism, a vocabulary for discussion and power that forces all discourse, even that which seeks to explicitly challenge its foundations, into familiar polarities (see Latour

1993). Fresh attempts to look at, for example, the ways goods and possessions play roles in building teen-age identity, easily end up mired in questions about whether objects are used habitually or creatively, if they are tools of oppression or resistance, autonomy or conformity. In order to break from these molds, we need to question the underlying basic assumptions on which they are built, which are themselves part of the culturally-constituted common-sense, the "habitus" that Bourdieu says is the bedrock of any hegemonic system (1978).

One fundamental block of the moralistic approach to goods and consumption is the equation of *consumption* with *desire.* In both the moralistic and utilitarian universes, the reason people want to acquire, possess, claim and display goods is because they expect the goods will make them happy, satisfy needs, or give them some other pleasure. Whether you approve or disapprove of this hedonic search for pleasure, the strength of desire is the engine that drives the marketplace. This assumption leads any search for the origins or causes of modern consumerism towards the issue of needs, desires, wants, and the ways that people achieve happiness, satisfaction, or at least satiation, through consumption. In the process, we bypass a whole complex terrain of less direct processes that entangle goods with emotions that are more equivocal, difficult, and sometimes dark.

Sahlins (1996) traces the history of a modern model of human nature based on pleasure and pain, and of a society premised on the need-motivated human in search of satisfaction. The trail he traces leads back through post-enlightenment social philosophers, to Christian theologians, and eventually back to the biblical Adam. When he disobeyed God and was turned out of paradise, Adam was burdened with "wants ever beyond his powers" and became *homo economicus* (1996). Thus the very foundation of Western religion and morality places desire at the root of human nature; evil and sadness flow from frustrated desire, or form the punishment for desires that transgress. Western Christian theology, therefore, laid the intellectual groundwork for subsequent notions of utility, satisfaction, and even Marx's distinction between use-value and exchange-value.

THE PRIMITIVE AND THE MODERN

Our captivation with desire, wants, and needs also has roots in 19th century critiques of industrial commodity culture and modernity, the lament of the passing of authentic social values and their replacement with unending and insatiable desire for goods (see Falk 1994). Attention has been directed towards modernity as a system where desire is out of control, where the dream world of goods replaces the social and moral pleasures that restrained consumption in traditional society. In the literature on consumerism, objects build identity, and desire is an investment of meaning in things in a process of building the self (Czikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Hilton 1981). Denial, in the form of disgust or phobia, is on the other hand treated as a pathology, as the rejection of identity, failure to become a separate individual, to mature, or to form normal attachments.

The social-competition theory of consumption descended from Veblen does provide a more complex view of consumption as more than a simple response to need or desire, because it accepts that people are also motivated by negative emotions like pride, fear, and envy. These negative emotions never get directly projected onto the material world, however. Instead a general emotional dissatisfaction, and social competition, is inverted and projected into the pathology of endless need (Heller 1985). In consumer fetishism, fear is transmuted into lust. But what, then, of objects, foods and fashions we hate? Are they inverted fetishes, transformations and projections of our *positive* emotions? If, as Bataille says, the violence of refusal is the precondition of desire (1985), what is the precondition of distaste? The commodity critique therefore, accepts that people can have negative feelings, even hatred towards *each other*, but does not make a place for those negative emotions when it comes to the emotional relationships people have with *things.* It still suppresses and hides most distastes, and has no place for the disgust, hatred, and other strong negative emotions that so often play a daily part in consumers' relationships with the material world.

The hegemonic power of *desire* in thought about consumption draws tremendous power from social-evolutionary thinking and the notion of social progress. As Bruno Latour argues persuasively in *We Have Never Been Modern*, the polarity of the traditional versus the modern underlies much of the order western people impose on the world. This idea of a radical break with the past at the beginning of the modern era underlies most of our thinking about the dynamics of consumption too. This is why anthropological studies of so-called primitive consumption play a key supporting role in the commodity critique.

Only in primitive society, goes the story, does rejection, fear, and distaste play an essential role in the relationship between people and objects, in the form of the *taboo* and the *fetish.* Consumption in pre-modern society is, in the classic anthropological treatments, a product of the direct mapping of symbolic objects onto the social order. Avoidance behavior towards relatives belongs in the same universe as the avoidance of particular foods. Social passages from one category to another are marked by changes in permissible consumption, in dress and ornament, as part of the ritual regulation of the passage of time (e.g., Falk 1994). While envy in modern society is said to drive consumption, the *fear* of envy and witchcraft is usually seen as a major *restraint* on consumption among primitives and peasants, who are trying to fit in rather than stand out. Therefore relations of *nonconsumption* are as fundamental to primitives as relations of *consumption* are to moderns.

For structural and cognitive anthropology in the tradition of Mary Douglas, Edmund Leach, and Marshall Sahlins, all tastes are social and categorical, forming neat pairs of opposition, defining bounded categories of time and identity. As such, the classic "primitive" has no individual tastes at all, only categories of proper and improper, clean and dirty. So "primitive society" has been constructed as one shaped by constraint rather than demand, and these constraints are categorical and typological instead of operating at the level of the individual or in a singular and interior process of identity formation. Primitives, they say, do not have individuality and therefore do not create identity through consumption. Where consumption and desire do operate, as in the competitive gift-giving of the Potlatch, the result is social cohesion and solidarity rather than individuation (Wilk 1996).

Modernity is then presented as the inversion of the primitive, where constraint has failed and desire is on the rampage, and where desire comes to dominate as an interior individualizing force (Bell 1976). While primitive denial is social and conservative, modern indulgence is profoundly anti-social and dangerous, concerned with mobility and change rather than stability. This is suspiciously close to the perspective of the middle-class social reform movement in the United States beginning at the turn of the century. As clearly documented by Horowitz (1988), their efforts were aimed at teaching the working class some restraint and policing the improper desires of the poor for luxuries and indulgences.

There are a number of good reasons to mistrust any sort of evolutionary model that poses a radical break between one kind of relationship to goods and another. Marx's notion of change from simple use values to exchange values, for example, rests on shaky empirical grounds that are now frequently challenged. Recent generations of ethnographers question the degree to which the "primitive" societies studied by previous generations were really isolated and untouched. They have also directly challenged the dissolution of the individual into society in classic ethnography, the timelessness, the depiction of order and harmony at the expense of conflict, struggle, and inequality. Just because desires and tastes were at one time suppressed, stereotyped, or hidden among the Zuni or the Tiv, or because they were rarely discussed in public or with the ethnographer, does not mean they were absent, stereotypical or unimportant. Bthnographers are frequently accused, these days, of exoticising and orientalizing their objects of study, making them appear as mirror images of the west (Obeyeskere 1992). In a linked process, they also "occidentalize" the west, suppressing the complexity and diversity of so-called modern society in the interest of sharp distinctions between the self and the exotic other (Carrier 1995). 1 suggest that distaste and desire for goods have been caught up in both orientalizing others and occidentalizing the self, creating an enormous blind spot in the study of consumption in general.

A FULL RANGE OF EMOTIONS

The commodity critique and the evolutionary distinction between primitive and modern focus our attention on desire as the only motive for consumption. These paradigms are powerful, indeed dominant, forms of discourse which suppress alternatives because they are so thoroughly taken for granted. The main goal of this paper is to undercut these paradigmatic approaches by attacking one of the pillars of their foundation, the centrality of desire in consumption. I suggest instead that negative emotions, including a range from indifference through dislike to visceral disgust, play an important role in human relationships with goods and material culture. The goal is not to replace the dogma of desire by elevating negative emotions in it's place. Instead I hope to broaden our thinking about human emotional relationships with the material world to include a much wider range of possibilities, not simply organized along a polarity from desire to disgust, but along other possible dimensions as well.

Bulimia, as a disorder of consumer society, is instructive because it points directly to the close relationship between the extremes of desire and disgust, to the way they are often entangled in the same practice. Drawing on the French philosopher Georges Bataille, Pasi Falk (1994) argues that disgust and desire are the polar ends of a circular continuum that bring the opposites into proximity. In other words, rather than being complete opposites, desire and disgust are perilously close to each other, explaining particular forms of fetishism and inversion.[2]

I suggest instead that the relationship between positive and negative affect in consumption cannot be captured along any single dimension or scale, no matter how contorted. Similar conclusions are reached in consumer-research and social psychological studies of emotions and feelings towards goods that have already been purchased or consumed; a number of studies find that consumption emotions are multi-dimensional, and cannot be scaled as a range of satisfaction, and that there are a variety of both positive and negative emotions that may be linked to each other in complex ways (e.g. Westbrook and Oliver 1991, Russell 1980). Other work has elaborated on the variety of satisfactions to be gained from consumption, and the diversity of goals that motivate consumer behavior (e.g. Richins 1994). These studies suggest various scales of arousal, sensual or intellectual pleasure, and satisfaction, though they rarely question the relationship between positive and negative states. I think these relationships deserve further attention, and want to consider the possibility that when it comes to goods, taste and distaste can be entirely separate, learned in distinct ways, and have different social meanings.

One way to rethink the issue of emotional relationships towards things is to ask if the choice *to* obtain or consume a particular thing is simply the reverse of a choice *not* to consume many others. Perhaps not. It may be an entirely ethnocentric and historic bias to focus on the "choice for," which tends to render the "choice against" as a shadow. The choice to consume something is readily visible, and it has an immediate result. The choice *not* to consume, the rejection of consumption, leaves no material trace, and can be completely invisible. Not consuming may be less of a conscious matter in daily life, in the sense that choices against are part of the taken-for-granted aspect of existence, what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "habitus" (1978). But it may also be possible that decisions not to consume are more frequent, more obtrusive, and more important in forming personal and social identity than choices to consume. It is just that our presuppositions and ideology make them less conspicuous.

Since 1990, I have had many discussions with informants in both the United States and the Central American country of Belize about learning tastes, and experiences that shaped their likes and dislikes. In unguided interviews, it is remarkable how often people focus on how they learned or discovered not liking particular things. In accounts of childhood experience, people make it clear that they learn the world of goods through pain as well as pleasure, by foul as well as pleasant tastes, and as much by learning what not to wear, eat, listen to, drive and hang on the walls as by learning what is good. This in turn suggests that learning good taste is largely a matter of learning what bad taste is, as well as learning what tastes bad.

Being in fashion, as daily practice for the majority of my informants, is more a matter of knowing what is out of fashion, than of knowing what is at the cutting edge of the latest trends. Wearing the wrong thing usually gets a stronger social reaction than wearing the best or the latest. In my interviews with Belizean high school students about fashion and taste, they told me a lot about their anxiety over consuming the wrong things. Only a tiny minority pursued the most fashionable, the most up to date, the name brand clothes and running shoes and haircuts that would place them in the fashion elite. Most were more concerned with not being out of fashion than they were with being in the latest style. Fashionability therefore has two sides: learning to like something new, and learning to hate, or a least avoid something old or foreign. These are not the same processes at all, nor do they call upon the same skills, or have the same social meaning and consequences. 1 would argue that by far the most important daily consumption skill is that of knowing what not to wear. As Grant McCracken notes in *Big Hair* it is easy to tell when you are having a "bad hair day," but it can take a lifetime to find the right style, the one that suits you best (1996).

Negative emotions of all kinds towards goods are generally repressed and hidden in most discourse about fashion, which is portrayed instead as an endless quest for the new. Schneider's analysis of the rise and fall of synthetic fabrics (1994) is one of the few that recognizes that the rejection of the old is as much a part of fashion as the desire for the new. How this rejection is cultivated is largely unknown. Simmonds' analysis of English "foodies" (1990) suggests that magazines are crucial media for signaling when something is going "out," but how consumers translate this into negative opinion, or internalize it as a negative bodily experience, is an open question.

Distaste and rejection is often more important than taste and consumption in making social distinctions. The statement "you are what you eat" fails for this very reason. You are often more defined by what you *don't* eat, as Mary Douglas pointed out so eloquently in *Purity anal Danger (1966).* The boundaries of social groups are often defined by a series of practices of denial, of refusal to consume alcohol, pork, coffee, meat, or other powerful sorts of substances. Similarly, in an anthropological classic, Radcliffe-Brown demonstrated that in many cultures, people are socially defined by avoidance or *joking relationships (1952). In* other words, the salient aspects of roles are defined by the people you cannot associate with, those you cannot touch, speak to, or eat with.

I would argue that consumption in modern market economies works in a very similar way; as daily practice it creates identity and social boundaries through practices of non-consumption, non-association, avoidance, and taboo. Consumption always carries the relations of non-consumption as a silent partner. Yet my whole shelf of recent books in anthropology, cultural studies, history and sociology has almost nothing to say about this shadow.[3] Everyone is writing about what people want and what this signifies. The world in this view is a system of changing desires, when in fact it could equally be cast as a system of changing avoidances and dislikes. While philosophers like Bataille and Derrida have argued that all desire is ultimately rooted in disgust or rejection, and there is a general consensus that dark emotions of fear, envy, and even self-loathing underlie the ever-expanding desire for goods, there has been very little explicit research on the rejection or denial of goods, on the things that people hate as well as love.

MAPPING DISLIKE: SOME EXAMPLES

My intention here is not to suggest a focus on dislikes and distaste to the exclusion of positive relationships with goods, but to argue that both need to be considered. In reality, no form of consumption is really separate from non-consumption. Choices based on want or need are always choices based on aversions and distastes as well, but they are not alternatives or opposites. Instead they have a more complex and interesting relationship. Both can be seen alternatively as having socially or individually positive or negative valences, as being materialistic or spiritual, active or passive. Not having, not wearing, not eating, can be just as much a form of conformity or social distinction as having, wearing, or eating.

This became clear in a survey I conducted in Belize with over 1,200 high school students in four schools. In one question, I asked them to imagine what they would buy if I gave them an immediate gift of BZ$100 ($50 US). Running shoes were the single most common choice, and some students knew exactly what shoe they wanted ("white BK's with a red stripe and bright green laces," for example). But more than half who chose running shoes named several different brands, or just said "tennis" (the local generic term for running shoes) without naming a brand at all. In focus groups when I asked about the importance of brands, I was told that what was important was to have *any* socially acceptable "name brand" shoe; no "tennis" at all would be better than having one with the "wrong name." For most of these students, the goal of consumption was not simply to satisfy desire or stand out from the crowd, to compete for status. Instead they wanted to avoid censure, to be safe or inconspicuous. In fact, many students criticized shoes that were "too flash" or exclusive, too risky, expensive, or fashionable. An approach that focuses solely on the erotic attraction of running shoes, (their imagined connection to American sports figures, or the symbolic movement of names like "Air," "Flight," and "Troop"), would entirely submerge this important and complex set of emotions and motives, and miss a key aspect of the popularity of running shoes in Belize. They are popular because they form a complex field in which *both* desire *and* dislike can be played out in many different ways.

In my work on food preferences in Belize, I found that both desires and distastes can function as relations of inclusion or exclusion. People can define themselves as members of a group because they share tastes with others, or because they share distastes; "we belong because we all like the same clothes" or "we belong because we all hate unclean food." People can also exclude others on the basis of *not* sharing a taste ("you don't share our love for fine wine"), or of not sharing a distaste ("you don't belong because you like rap music"). As figure 1 shows, using the example of two types of beans that make social distinctions in Belize, the combination of likes and dislikes with inclusion and exclusion, creates four possibilities, none of which are mutually exclusive. The key point is that taste and distaste do not form simple complementary pairs; taste cannot be seen simply as the inversion, opposite, or mirror of distaste in forming social boundaries.[4]

	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
LIKE	"WE LIKE RED BEANS"	"THEY LIKE BLACK BEANS"
DISLIKE	"WE HATE BLACK BEANS"	"THEY HATE RED BEANS"

Figure 1: Social Relations and Preferences

The practical uses of the four possibilities on figure 1 are quite unequal and asymmetrical. We usually expect them to occur in simple diagonal pairs, as when our group likes something that another group hates and vice versa, but there is no necessary reason why likes and dislikes should be linked in pairs. This is because in social groups likes are so *much more easily signaled than dislikes.* It is easy to see what you do like to wear, but it isn't possible, without careful and close daily observation, or a close social relationship, to tell with reliability what *you don't* like to wear. Therefore, only in a closed small scale society, can likes and dislikes effectively mirror each other. We would have to see you every day to know both your likes and your dislikes. Only in a close face-to-face setting, a workplace or a small village, can we know what you dislike as well as what you like, so both can equally serve to identify you to us, and to yourself.

In public in a mass society, in settings where we can't monitor what you are **not** doing, similar likes are much more prone to function as signals of inclusion. In other words, you belong by virtue of your visible agreement with a standard list of likes, you wear what we wear and eat what we eat. Equally, the best way to place boundaries around a group in this setting is through a system of dislikes. If you consume what we hate, you don't belong. Again, this makes the contrast socially visible. Of course there are some categories of goods, like uniforms, that accomplish the task of inclusion and exclusion at the same time, regardless of likes or dislikes. But in the absence of overt rules that prescribe a practice for one group and exclude others, group differences in consumer society are best marked by not-consuming something that the excluded group conspicuously consumes, or vice versa, consuming something like pork or short skirts, which you know they do not. This helps explain why sumptuary laws and taboos focus on boundary making through exclusion.

The different social signals sent by consumption and non-consumption also help to explain why, in mass consumer society, dislikes are key in creating explicit boundaries between the individual and other people, in creating a sense of unique identity. Our dislikes and aversions are known to friends and relatives, while our likes are publicly stated in our conspicuous choices of clothes, cars, houses and other goods. Likes might therefore often take conformist, categorical forms that signal membership and consensus, while dislikes set boundaries and build distinctive personal interior identities.

This became quite clear in my work with urban consumers in Belize, while conducting a preference survey. The survey had 389 respondents from three different communities: 250 from Belize City, 81 from the small but cosmopolitan city of Belmopan, and 58 in a small Creole village. The survey was modeled on Bourdieu's research instrument in *Distinction* though I paid more attention to foreign travel, having close relatives abroad, ethnic background, exposure to media, and gender than Bourdieu did in France (1984, see also Wilk 1993 and 1995).

Bourdieu asked only what people liked, about their favorite practices. (In retrospect, this is a peculiar choice for a book about social distinctions.) I blindly followed his lead. My survey covered all kinds of tastes and preferences in music, interior decoration, clothing, music, television, films and reading matter, usually by asking respondents to pick their favorites from a list. The survey also included a bank of Lickert-scaled opinion questions about political and cultural issues and a large section devoted to various measures of social and economic capital.

While I was making up the survey and pretesting it in focus groups, though, I was struck by the uniformity of Belizean preferences. Most people, regardless of class and ethnicity, seemed to like pretty much the same foods, the same TV shows and the same music. In interviews, people rarely got excited about things they liked and rarely picked out something unusual as a personal favorite. This was reflected in my statistical analysis of the survey results, which found few clear relationships between specific tastes, and any of my social, income, class or ethnic variables. On the other hand, even in the early stages of designing my survey form, people would often get interested and deeply involved in discussing the things they hated or disliked.

In interviews, when I tried to discuss why people liked particular foods, TV shows, or music, I found them inarticulate, which is very unusual for Belizeans. I heard a lot of statements like, "Well, I just like it." "It just tastes good to me, that's all." But when I got people talking about what they did not like, I often couldn't stop them. Strong distaste was evocative of personal events, family connections, politics, cultural differences, aging, and life philosophy-the full rich range of ways that taste and preference is part of life. I found it very interesting that particular senses were often invoked when people spoke about their dislikes. Odor and texture were particularly important in the strongest kinds of distaste, in the kinds of disgust and revulsion that are experienced physically. A number of people told me in great detail how particular odors or textures acted as triggers for physical revulsion, and they could sometimes relate them to childhood or other life experiences.[5]

Because of this response in the pretest, I added a few distaste questions to my survey. For example, one item was a list of twenty-two kinds of music, asking respondents to pick their three favorites. The next item asked them to pick two that they "really don't like and would not listen to." I also offered a list of twenty-one common and uncommon food items, which respondents rated on a four part scale, "love," "like," "no opinion," and "dislike."

I have been working for some time on the preference data, looking for the kinds of relationships between social and economic capital and preference that Bourdieu found in France. In contrast to the clear French ranks and hierarchies of taste, Belize is much more heterogeneous and fragmented. Wealth, income, education and occupation matter much less in determining tastes and preferences in Belize, while personal connections, travel, and communication to other countries, particularly the US, matter much more. In explaining overall preferences, age, gender, ethnicity and rural/urban differences explain as much or more variation than measures of education and class. But more important for the present discussion, **none** of the preferences for particular items correlate strongly (r^2>.45) with any measured social, ethnic, or personal variables. The only general rule seemed to be that greater education, increased wealth, and foreign travel led to a greater diversity of desires and likes, a broadening of tastes. Otherwise preferences alone do not make important social distinctions, certainly not to the same degree as in France. The point is that *liking* things has many valences, purposes, and meanings, especially in a society that is crosscut by so many different divisions, with four major languages, open cultural borders and few sharp class boundaries. From the conventional perspective of consumption preferences, these social divisions hardly existed at all.

On the other hand, even my limited data on distastes shows that they are much more powerful social predictors than preferences. For example, taste for Country & Western music was quite widely distributed among the population with some slight concentration among older and poorer people. On the other hand, *dislike* of Country music is dramatically more common among more educated, wealthier, and more traveled people. Similarly, liking classical music is quite common, with higher frequencies among the highest educated. But dislike for classical music is highly concentrated among the less educated, the poor, and the least traveled.

Besides looking at the characteristics of people revealed by their distastes, I have used a combination of data on likes and dislikes to map the characteristics of a range of competing items, according to their average scores on the two dimensions. On figure 2, twenty-two kinds of music are ranked in three groups from the most to the least hated on one axis, and then again from the most to the least loved on the other axis. The resulting cross tabulation sorts musical genres with four extreme poles at the corners. These are types of music

1. a lot of people love and a lot of people hate
2. few people love, but many people hate
3. many people love and few people hate
4. few people love and few people hate

Box 4 may be best described using Bourdieu's term **doxa.** These are items that are so much a part of the landscape that they are unconsciously accepted, or items so new or foreign that they lack significance. They are comfortable and accepted parts of common culture or are so alien that nobody cares about them. Boxes 2 and 3 are in a situation that Bourdieu calls **orthodoxy,** where there is some disagreement about values, but power is being exercised to push towards uniformity. These were once controversial or highly charged genres, which people still feel strongly about, even though the majority opinion is now quite clear. The tastes of the conservative majority occupy box 3 and those of unpopular or marginal minorities are in box 2. The remaining corner, box 1 is the locus of **heterodoxy,** where there is significant dissension and active conflict between contending tastes. The newest Belizean genre of music, a local invention based on the traditional music of an ethnic minority, called "Punta Rock," presently occupies this highly unstable position.

	LOVE (ranks) HIGH 1–7	MEDIUM 8–14	LOW 15–22
HATE HIGH 1–7	1 PUNTA ROCK	ROCKERS DISCO SPANISH	RAP JAZZ ROCK 2
HATE MED 8–14	COUNTRY/ WESTERN	MARIMBA CLASSICAL CULTURAL	DUB BOOM & CHIME FOLK
HATE LOW 15-22	CALYPSO OLDIES EASY LISTENING RELIGIOUS SOUL 3	SOKA SOFT ROCK	BLUES REGGAE STEEL BAND 4

Figure 2: Matrix of Music Likes and Dislikes

It is possible to use figure 2 as a way of thinking about changing tastes over time, defining a style system. If new genres or styles enter in box one, and become the object of active disagreement and controversy, they should then move towards either corners 2 or 3. The final fate of genres seems to be to fall into the indifferent doxa of corner four or to reach some sort equilibrium in the center.

I have also used some of my survey data to look in more detail at the balances between tastes and distastes, broken down for individual goods and genres. This is easiest with responses on food items, where the frequencies of the four possible responses (love, like, neutral, and dislike) yield profiles that are particular to groups of food items. The national staple dishes were loved or liked by almost everyone; like soul music, scarcely anyone hates rice and beans in Belize (these are the foods that belong in box 3 on figure 2). Another group include snack foods like hamburgers which very few people feel strongly about one way or the other. Recent imported "trendy" foods like pizza are the most widely hated and least loved. Interestingly, the controversial, high-hate, high-love foods are local foods with a long history, but with clear associations with youth, the working class, and rural areas.

The overall results of my analysis of the survey are that food dislikes are much more powerful social indicators than positive tastes. The foods that Belizeans dislike are much more revealing of their social position and life experience than the things they like. Furthermore, the number of things on my list of twenty-one foods that people love and hate, the simple count of things that they responded strongly to is itself an interesting variable. I correlated the raw number of each person's food "Loves" and "Hates" with all the other social, ethnic and locational variables from the survey. The average person loved 6.1 foods on my list (range from 0-19), while hating 4.3 (range from 0-14). Figure 3 gives one example of how the food hate count looks, when broken down by the occupational categories of respondents.

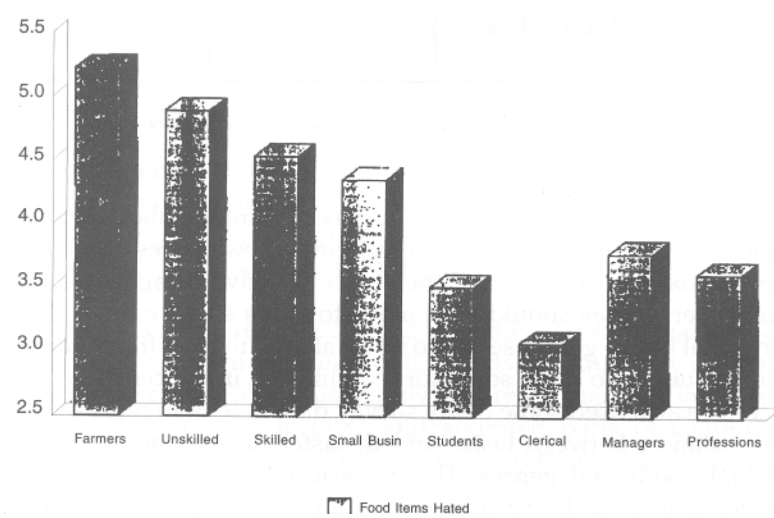

Figure 3: Food Hatred by Occupation

The "Loving" food index correlated significantly (1-tailed at $p<.01$) with only *one* variable, education level, though the relationship was weak. More highly educated people tended to love fewer foods (perhaps a sad commentary on the value of education). On the other hand, my index of *food hatred* correlated significantly with eight out of ten social variables. Urban people tended to hate more things, and members of the Creole ethnic group had significantly more hates than members of other ethnic categories. People who were richer, had higher household incomes, were better educated and in higher status occupations all tended to have fewer hates. The fraction of the population that would in Belize be considered the urban poor, were much more likely to dislike a broad range of foods, though the number of things they liked were almost the same as the best educated and richest Belizeans. This suggests that rising in class is more a matter of learning to stop hating things, learning tolerance, rather than the conventional account of class mobility, which stresses the acquisition of new tastes.

These results are based on only a few survey items, added as almost an afterthought to a more conventional study of likes and preferences. I had originally intended to use them to develop contrasts with work on consumers in developed countries. This has not proven possible, because there has been almost no systematic empirical work on distastes and dislikes in developed countries, with the exception of a relatively narrow body of work on consumer dissatisfaction with items that have already been purchased.

BROADER ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

I have suggested here that dislikes form a complex and varied social field that cannot simply be reduced to the opposite of desires or positive emotions. That distaste and taste are far from simple opposites would account for their frequent juxtaposition. Sherry et al. (1992), for example, describe the complex ways that both negative and positive emotions, from love to hatred, are attached to gifts received in western society. Battaglia (1994) makes the same point for Melanesians, whose gift-giving practices cannot be understood without including practices of dis-owning, separation, abandonment, and "willed forgetting."

Images of distaste and desire are also juxtaposed in much of the imagery and rhetoric of mass consumerism. In popular magazines devoted to promoting all kinds of consumption, we are told both "what's hot" and "what's not." Fashion mistakes, the worst dressed celebrities, and "bad hair" provoke a very different kind of reaction from the images of perfection and trendiness that grace most pages. In the advice columns of *Teen* and *Seventeen* magazines; we can hear people accepting that their dislikes are somehow their own fault: "I keep hearing that pink is the *hot* makeup color for summer, but when I wear it I look washed out."

The July 1995 issue of "Lose Weight and Stay Fit" magazine, for example, is dominated by a full-color photo of a large slice of chocolate layer cake. Many writers on diet culture have noted how dieters feel both desire *and* disgust towards food, that food can be simultaneously "naughty" and "nice" (Williamson 1986). As long as we insist that these are opposite emotions on a single scale, we are forced to view this as a form of pathological dissemia, war between different part of the mind, or alternating mental states (as if multiple personalities occupied the same body). It seems to make more sense to accept that desire and distaste towards the same food may each, to use medical metaphors, have different etiologies, pathologies, and even cures.

It is important to make a distinction between disgust or distaste and anti-consumption and asceticism. While promoting distaste is one tactic of anti-consumption movements (as in the animal-rights movement's anti-fur campaign), anti-consumption is often aimed largely at changing tastes and desires instead. *Diet for a Small Planet* and other similar tracts generally promote substitution of one desire for another, of soyabeans and grain for meat, for example.[6] Neither distaste nor taste are inherently pro-consumption; they are instead dispositions that can combine to restrain or promote, or do both at the same time. But how and where do we learn these complex sets of restraints and impulses, and how do they function in daily social life? I would argue that answers to these questions will require a life-history approach that considers the full range of emotional relationships formed with goods through learning taste and distaste, preferences and aversions, passion and disgust.

Just a quick sort through transcriptions of interviews I have conducted with consumers in Belize and the US, as well as informal discussions with friends, turns up a surprising number of different ways that people have come by their distastes, hinting at a rich and fertile field for further research. Sometimes people seem to be explicitly defining themselves by contrast with the tastes of others, as when some of my informants stressed the things they disliked intensely in order to reassure me that they were not the kind of person who wears those kinds of clothes, drinks that kind of liquor, or eats those sorts of dishes.

I have been told many stories about bad personal associations. Dislikes often seem to form from unpleasant or traumatic encounters, events, or conditions. For example, several Belizeans told me they did not like a particular kind of liquor because it had once made them very sick. Sometimes these bad experiences lead to classic psychological symptoms of avoidance and phobia, the kind anthropologists usually associate with filth and pollution caused by transgression of symbolic boundaries. Bodily excretions may be an archetype for visceral disgust, but the emotion is often extended to foods, odors, places and even groups of people.

Sometimes people make conscious overt statements through public nonconsumption or avoidance; perhaps the most extreme example is the hunger strike, or the 'Breatharian' religion that seeks a life without food as the ultimate freedom. Many Belizean men refuse to wear dark suits and ties because of their association with the British colonial regime. Non-consumption, as all dieters know, is an effort to impose conscious will on the complex natural and social world.

I end with some prospects rather than conclusions. I explicitly want to avoid the temptation to suggest grand evolutionary schemes that try to refigure the traditional/ modern dichotomy in terms of changes in the balance of likes and dislikes. It is both facile and wrong to simply use my observations to conclude that in primitive societies dislikes (as taboos) are public and social while likes are private and individual, in contrast to modernity where likes become public and social, and dislikes private and interiorized. Since there is no comparative data with which to test these ideas, such schemes can only project our own sense of time and modernity onto others (see Latour 1993). We run the same risk in generalizing about the play of likes and dislikes in stages of development. That is why at this point more empirical research on the relationships between tastes and distastes, passions and aversions, learning and forgetting, is urgently needed.

NOTES

1. The first version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, in November of 1994, in a session titled "Inequality, Emotion, and Identity Through the Prism of Consumption," organized

by Elizabeth J. Chin and Josiah McC. Heyman. Many thanks to Anne Pyburn for inspiration and suggestions that became part of that paper, to Danny Miller for conversations that led me in this direction, and also to James Carrier for his usual superior job of putting things in context and asking the right questions. A version was presented in a workshop, "Learning to Consume" at Lund University in 1995, where I heard many excellent comments and suggestions from seminar participants including Colin Campbell, Orvar Lofgren, Jonas Frykman, Russ Belk, and several others. My research on consumption in Belize was funded by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and a Fulbright Fellowship. I especially appreciate the conceptual and material assistance of my daughter Elvia Pyburn-Wilk.

2. In a similar way, Bersani s discussion of homosexuality is based on negating the usual polarity of need and desire (1995). He argues that desire does not have to be based on need or lack of something, as is generally assumed. Instead, the lack of something may not be the reason why we desire, need, and want. Ultimately, Freud may be the source of modern ideas about the similarity of disgust and desire, for he often wrote about the close relationship between the erotic and the excretory (Kahane 1992).
3. There are a few exceptions. There is some literature on religious and political renunciation, that is non-consumption for explicit and conscious reasons, as with Bayly s (1986) study of Ghandi s resistance to European cloth in India. The psychological theories of consumption discussed by Berger (1992: chapter 4) include ideas of phobia, fetish, and ambivalence which at least have the virtue of including desire and dislike in the same theoretical system.
4. Certainly some things *are* disliked because they are associated with a despised class or group, but it does not follow that *all* dislikes are formed in this way, as Bourdieu argues in his famous study of France (1984). Bourdieu never effectively links the class-based conscious judgment of others as having "bad taste" with the very personal bodily experience of disgust or dislike for a particular food, style or fashion. It is not clear if he thinks people project an inverted image of their own taste onto other classes, or actually form their tastes through conscious inversion of others' actual practices. Bourdieu's notion of class distaste is reminiscent of the conscious renunciation of particular kinds of food by medieval monks, for whom rejecting meat and other luxuries was "a repudiation of the values of a society that placed eating first among worldly values" (Montanari 1994). Renunciation in modern consumer society can take some bizarre twists. On the pages of *Catfancy* magazine (Nickolin 1995),1 found people projecting dislikes onto their animals, who were *praised* for their incredibly finicky tastes: "Many people might find this behavior irksome, but I find it sweet." Over 45% of cat owners reported that they had to prepare special diets in order to get the animal to eat!
5. Rozin and Fallon (1987) argue that disgust is a biologically-based cultural universal found in every society, and suggest that animals and feces are consistent sources of disgust on a cross-cultural basis. The notion that disgust is always based on a visceral and almost uncontrollable fear of contamination is widespread in the literature, but it did not seem to be very relevant to the interview material I collected in Belize. There, disgust often reflected a good deal of thought and judgment, and most people reported that their experience of disgust or revulsion had changed a great deal during their lifetimes.

6. Williamson diagnoses this perfectly when she remarks that "In many ways the anti-social is patterned in the same form as the social" (1986). Protest against consumerism becomes another form of consumption.

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