The Politics of the Word and the Politics of the Eye

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Contents

ABSTRACT The concept of worldviews gives a visual sense to the notion of a shared ideological frame, but misleadingly suppresses the visual itself. Against the standard image of worldviews, it is argued that the notion makes sense in connection with particular technologies of representation, notably newspapers, and is no longer informative about political beliefs. The example of Kristin Luker's work on abortion politics is used to show how weak the evidential base is for claims about worldviews. It is then argued that the kind of solidarity produced by ideological or 'word', politics is different from the solidarities produced by the visual. Acts of political violence with strong visual representation produce sympathetic responses and are particularly effective in creating a sense of common victimhood. However, images also produce complex and conflicting responses that are less controllable. The visual impact of the World Trade Center attacks is a startling example of the differences between a politics of the eye and a politics of worldviews.

KEYWORDS abortion • ideology • Northern Ireland • political violence • solidarity • visual • working class

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The German term for 'worldviews' carries different weights in different contexts. Sometimes it is quite innocuous, comparing most closely to the English word 'outlook', where this word is used to mean not simply a forecast but to characterize a person's vision of the world. But there's a deeper sense. The *'Schau'* of *Weltanschauungen* is not about seeing at all. The concept borrows a visual metaphor to characterize something else. Like other German philosophical terms, the terms *Schau* and *Weltanschauung* carry some of the same problematic implications back and forth between their innocuous everyday uses and their more elevated philosophical uses. The problematic implications are not simply quirks of the language or of the German philosophical tradition, however, but point us in the direction of something deeper. John Dewey wrote a wartime polemic in which the term — a favorite, as it happens, of Hitler — is contrasted to its English counterpart, especially as it figures in the history of British empiricism. Dewey himself suggested that 'world-intuition' is a better translation. 'Intuition' points to something deeper, and one might attempt to provide a philosophical explication of this deeper thing.

My argument here, however, is quite different, and employs a different contrast. *Weltanschauung* is a term that best fits commonalities of opinion and belief that are the product of *words,* and particularly printed words, and even more particularly, printed words used in connection with a particular set of social technologies. *Weltanschauungen* are a product of the information technology of the 19th century, particularly of newspapers, a technology marked by its lack of reliance on images, and therefore on seeing. Contemporary politics, however, is a politics of the eye.

The politics of the eye is different from the politics of the word: images work in different ways than words; they make claims on our primordial sense of solidarity that

words do not make. Our own political world is increasingly a world of images, or more broadly of virtual experiences, often partly constituted by images. I give some examples of this, suggest some ways in which the politics of the word and the eye interact, and, rather than to propose a theory of the eye, plead for the irreducibility of the eye to the word, and reject attempts to 'theorize the eye' as a new ideological formation or worldview.

What Are *Weltanschauungen*?

Marianne Weber in her biography of Max Weber (1975) speaks of a friend who had recently changed his worldview, a usage which is itself revealing. We can treat this sentence as a cultural and linguistic artifact. It recalls Oscar Wilde's contemporary comment that one should change one's opinions as often as one changes one's underwear. The remarks raise the question of what difference there is between opinions and worldviews. Marianne's comment suggests a profound change, Wilde's a superficial one, and this is no accident. From the point of view of later writers such as Mannheim, worldviews are so deeply ingrained in and constitutive of the mental life of an individual as to be inseparable from that mental life, that is to say part of its essence. The term itself derives, as Dewey says, from the idea 'that a look "without" must be based on a prior look "within"' ([1915] 1942: 21). And what is within is something stable, classically, in the philosophical tradition, first (or constitutive) principles, or, in its sociological form, a tacit theory shared by members of a historical group that frames their experience of the world. There is something odd about using the phrase worldview, as Marianne does, in a sentence about changing worldviews, if indeed it is a part of the essence of an individual, since essences, unlike underwear and opinions, cannot easily be changed. Yet her formulation itself is halfway to a constitutive notion of worldviews. Her point in using the term is to distinguish the change from a *mere* change of opinion, beliefs, or attitude, and to point to something in the person that *determines* opinions, beliefs, and attitudes.

The distinction between the two senses is important, for it raises a third possibility. Suppose that we choose to resolve the ambiguities between the various meanings of the term in this way: decline to adhere to what we might call 'the worldview theory', the idea that *all* social groups possess a shared tacit theory that frames their experience. If we may then decline to use the term for *every* historical complex of opinions and feeling, however chaotic, we can instead restrict the term to apply to the subset of cases in which there is a distinctive complex of opinions that is closely shared by a particular group in opposition to a complex of opinions shared by another contemporary group. If we do this, we can ask whether a particular group has a worldview. But more importantly, we may pose historical questions about the phenomenon of worldviews, such as the question of whether the phenomenon of worldviews is inseparably associated with a particular information technology.

Evidence About Worldviews

When one looks at actual claims about worldviews in the conventional sociological literature, what one finds is evidence either of relative stability and continuity in opinions or of differences in opinions. A claim that some sort of worldview exists in some setting typically amounts to splicing together quotations into some more or less coherent whole. Indeed, the analyst's task is to make articulate and coherent something which is not coherently articulated by the adherents of the worldview, to make explicit the thing that is within the individual which they cannot make explicit because it is the frame of their experience, a frame that is invisible to them.

The difficulty with this strategy is that the quotations are characteristically so diverse and full of both life and contradiction that they point to something else, namely idiosyncratic but considered opinions. These amount to the creation of personal 'systems' of belief or to a set of considered preferences which respect inherent conflicts between one's various beliefs. Kristin Luker's well-received book, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (1984), which is one of the few attempts to make an explicit case for existence of worldviews in the sociological literature, illustrates the problem. The book is a sociological work about the abortion controversy, based primarily on the study of California pro-life and pro-choice activists. Luker's aim in the book, she says, is 'to discover how people come to differ in their feelings about the rightness or wrongness of abortion' (1984: 3). The differences in feeling she reports are great. She notes, in the introduction, that 'the abortion activists I interviewed in the course of researching this book frequently burst into tears of rage and grief when speaking of their feelings on the subject', and asks 'Why is the debate so bitter, so emotional?' (1984: 2).

This is a question that cries out for explanation, and the book is an attempt to answer it. 'Part of the answer is simple: the two sides share almost no common premises and very little common language... one side begins with a given that the other side finds highly debatable, that the embryo is the moral equivalent of the child it will become' (Luker, 1984: 2). This is the 'frame' part of the answer to the question. The rest of the answer corresponds to the stage of explaining adherence to the different frames, the frames within which and by virtue of which people have these strong feelings.

Why think that 'frames' are relevant to explaining the differences in feelings? Luker gives specific grounds for doing so. She begins by making some historical claims: that 'the moral status of the embryo has always been ambiguous' (1984: 3). The evidence for this is disagreement about the subject between ancient philosophers, and the fact that, though 'verbally chastised', abortion was 'often legally ignored' (1984: 3), and the fact that in the common law embryos have some legal rights but not others. Historically, then, the moral status of the embryo has always been ambiguous. Luker acknowledges that this historical conclusion would not be acceptable to many activists on either side. 'Partisans on each side of the issue can point to articles, monographs, and "facts" that prove that the embryo has always (or almost always) been accorded the social or legal

attributes they favor' (1984: 5) But this suggests that 'the abortion debate is not about "facts" but about how to weigh, measure, and assess facts' and indeed 'the two sides ... examine exactly the same set of facts: but come to diametrically opposed conclusions about them' (1984: 5).

They do so because, she suggests, the debate about abortion is really a debate about something more fundamental, namely personhood (Luker, 1984: 5). 'With respect to the issue of personhood, for example, the different location of pro-life and pro-choice people in the social environment predisposes them to use different traditions of moral discourse in thinking about the issue and to perceive different definitions of personhood as more moral or less moral' (1984: 7). These views of personhood, in turn, have a particular social basis. 'The view that personhood is basically social in nature, which implies that some individuals have a less compelling claim than others on scarce resources, is perceived quite differently by persons who expect to have access to those resources and those who have reason to fear that they may be denied such access' (1984: 7). The 'social basis' is part of the admittedly vague grounds for asserting that the participants in the debate 'are defending a *worldview* — a notion of what they see as sacred and important — as well as a view of the embryo' (1984: 7).

This specification of the meaning of *Weltanschauung* in terms of the sacred is itself intriguing, but disturbing — is this the mark of a genuine *Weltanschauung*? But Luker goes on to add the crucial element that makes it into a traditional *Weltanschauung*, the thought that there is a tacit theory that the possessors of the *Weltanschauung* share. A decision about the status of the embryo is an implicit statement about other things, such as 'the role of children and women in modern American society' (Luker, 1984: 7–8). And these implicit statements are associated with interests that differ between women with careers and homemakers in relation to the outcome of the decision. 'If the embryo is held to be a fetus, then it becomes socially permissible for women to subordinate their reproductive roles to other roles, particularly in the paid labor force'; holding an embryo to be a person 'is to make a social statement that pregnancy is valuable and that women should subordinate other parts of their lives to that central aspect of their social and biological selves' (1984: 8). A decision about the status of the embryo 'enhances the resources held by one group and devalues the resources held by the other' (1984: 8).

This is a classic sociology of knowledge explanation. A worldview is erected on a base of interest. The interests, however, are not material interests, but are 'deeper, broader, and more subtle. People see in the abortion issue a simultaneously pragmatic, symbolic, and emotional representation of states of social reality — states that they find reassuring or threatening' (Luker, 1984: 7). Different people find different things reassuring or threatening, and the interests in this dispute are essentially in seeing their lives valued. Thus people with different kinds of lives are differentially threatened or reassured by different beliefs about the status of embryos. Their interest is in a belief that validates them, reassures them about the kinds of lives they have chosen, and so forth.

Yet the evidence of Luker's text, and other texts on the subject, once it is looked at in detail, is that the people involved on each side hold very complex and diverse opinions, that their opinions hang together in different ways, that their opinions are shaped by different and profoundly significant life experiences, such as motherhood itself, and that the real reason that the issue is so emotional in character is that it is an issue on which 'compromise' is not possible simply because it takes the form of a yes or no question about the legal status of the fetus. Luker's own statements about the moral issue of abortion, which are pro-abortion, are characteristic. She says that 'embryos are located on a continuum that stretches from a single sex cell (an egg or a sperm) to a newborn human infant' (1984: 4). This is certainly more complex an idea than the idea that the embryo has no human status. Moreover, it is an idea that can be employed both in support of pro- and anti-abortion arguments. And this, it turns out, is characteristic of reasoning about abortion.

For many of her informants who were themselves mothers the experience of being a mother itself profoundly influenced their understanding of the moral issues of abortion. And 'experience' is an explanation of their opinions that is in conflict with 'interest' and worldview explanations. Perhaps these explanations are systematically false, and the interest cum worldview explanation is right. But what is most striking when the actual voices of women are heard is the tangled and highly idiosyncratic structures of individual reasoning about the abortion issue that appear, and also the strong contrast in this respect between the official ideology of the abortion rights movement. What individuals actually profess to believe and the considerations that they take to be decisive has little to do with these standardized frames.

The contrast points to something important: a difference between the articulated ideology of professional ideologists who make it their business to rationalize and iron out the contradictions in a position, and the personal process by which people arrive at conclusions about such questions. The notion of worldview flattens the difference. Sometimes the adherents of a worldview may be like people looking out through a window frame that others also look out from.

On reflection it is obvious that the kinds of coherent worldviews that the theory of *Weltanschauungen* was originally developed to characterize were different from the worldviews Luker describes. The term, which is theoretically thin in Luker, arose as an attempt to characterize concepts of inexplicit ideologies or partially explicit ideologies, and to equate the two. The doctrinaire position of late 19th-century socialism was the kind of explicit ideology that contemporary 'worldviews' are a pale version of. Fascist ideology in this respect is more like the explicit ideologies of 19th-century socialism than the much less explicit 'ideologies' of conservatism, and this is of course part of the background to Mannheim's effort to depict conservatism as a kind of ideology. The difficulty is that the coherence of socialism and its ideological imitators is explicit and constructed. These were ideologies with vehicles of the printed word and speeches by professional agitators, who understood the necessity for, and followed, a 'party line', purged or denounced those who failed to follow it, and provided what the Swedish

sociologist Bjorn Eriksson calls social insulation, a means by which the facts of the outside world and experiences are filtered through, and controlled by, the creation of barriers to social contact that limit experience and supply interpretations that limit the effects of the standard disenchanting experiences a member of the group is likely to have. I wish to reflect more systematically on the implications of this difference, and to show why it fits with some of the puzzling features of present politics.

The Technology of Worldviews

Consider a very simple model of a teaching and its vehicle. The medieval Almohad Islamic regime in the Maghrib used force to impose a new teaching. Troops came first, teachers second, and served to consolidate the claims of a new regime by creating through compulsory religious education a new legal-ideological order. In this simple model, one needs mosques and teachers, just as the labor movement of the 19$^{\text{th}}$ century required party newspapers and agitators. And one needs means of exerting control on them, disciplining them to the rationalizations that are arrived at by the central ideologists and propagandists, and so forth.

One is tempted to say that any kind of coherent ideology requires a technological basis that produces analogous results, and that the technological basis, whatever it is, in some sense greatly constrains the form of the worldview that it may carry. Teaching that must be conveyed over a wide territory in religious schools lit by oil lamp requires a complex organizational machinery. Teachers must be trained, uniformity produced in a face-to-face setting, and some means must be found of continuing discipline and maintaining consistency, such as having teachers paired with one another and reeducated from time to time. As in the case of the party line, there must be disciplinary powers, ideological examination, expulsion of revisionists, and the like. The social insulation needed here is simple: one needs to control what ideas, images, facts, and experiences come across social borders.

Communism and fascism were highly developed machineries of this kind, with many novel additions. Their efforts to explain away different opinions as false, incorrect, and as enemy propaganda produced quite remarkable results. The technology in question was impressive. In Germany, for example, there were dozens of party newspapers that relied on party sources for material, such as book reviews, and propagated on a local level ideological constructions that had been set at a central level. This machinery became more elaborate under Soviet domination, with a concept of the party line, party discipline, purges, and the like. But it is worth considering the success of this system, and its ultimate weaknesses, in terms of the disappearance of this technological base as an exclusive source of world interpretation.

The totalitarians, as Carl Schmitt so nicely pointed out, caused trouble for parliamentary democracy while they were still 'parties' competing in a nominally liberal political system because they created a world in which a totalizing social experience

was supplied by a party. Everything from automobile clubs to childcare was available in party-specific forms. These efforts were designed to protect party members from intellectual contamination. The striking similarity to the present is in the reemergence of what might be called viewpoint-specific social institutions of this kind in common with niche politics: gay traffic violation schools in California and feminist daycare facilities. But these are hardly comparable. The social insulation of niche identities is incomplete; the attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the world and its events is feeble. Instead, a comfort zone is enforced, and a slant on salient issues is precariously constructed.

Party papers were unable to make a transition to the postwar period in Europe without making very substantial concessions to the machinery of the production of world events, events which were the product of state actions which were themselves increasingly didactic, actions designed to serve as ideological object lessons. States thus usurped the ideological functions of parties and newspapers, but by replacing acts needing interpretation with acts that carried their own interpretations. But state action was typically accompanied by images that gave the lie to the intended meanings. The sheer availability of images of burning Buddhist monks in Vietnam, for example, made it impossible for defenders of the war to give a convincing interpretation of the events of Vietnam.

The power of images has a technological base, closely related first to the rise of photojournalism and second to the rise of television. The availability of these media proved to be a powerful equalizer in a sense that the opponents of a dominant mode of representation need only to produce an arresting image to undermine interpretation. The production of ideology or worldviews is curiously weak in the face of these images. Anything that requires talk, concentration, belief, and so forth as both fascist and communist ideology did, and which their paler imitations in the Cold War period also did, cannot compete cognitively with the sheer visual impact of a tank running down a Chinese student in Tian an Men Square or a monk immolating himself. These images, however, do very little to create ideologies, much less worldviews. Indeed, the power of the visual conveyed by these new technological means mock the metaphorical visual analogizing of the term 'views'. There is a sense in which this destructive power of the visual can be turned in favor of ideological regimes as well as against them, but the relationship is much more complex than in the case of the spoken word.

Consider a few examples. The movement in the United States for the protection of legalized abortion has concerned itself with the suppression of images of fetuses, knowing that the images are a potentially powerful means of undermining its own accounts of such questions as when does life start. Yet images are not merely corrosive of ideology. They are in a complex way a surrogate for ideology. It would be too reductive to say that the ideology of a Clinton or Thatcher was constructed on visual images and visual expressions woven together to provide justification for policies, a set of definitions of enemies and victims, and so forth. Visual images obviously are only part of the story. But it is less implausible to suggest that the constructions

that politicians and ideologists provide in an age of visualization (and perhaps more importantly of emotional immediacy) are driven by the images (and the demand for emotional immediacy that the images provide).

The discussion of the visual recreation of warfare as a series of images in the writings of Baudrillard has been much ridiculed, but there is perhaps some deeper point about modern and especially post-Vietnam warfare that can be grasped from it. The powerful thing about wars is not merely the fact of suffering but the conveying of suffering and the potentially explosive and also unpredictable consequences of visual presentation of suffering. Statecraft is essentially constrained by these images; worldviews are rendered fragile by them. The show trials of Stalin, one suspects, could not have taken place on television. The ordinary humanity of the individuals involved could be made to vanish in print; seeing the faces of the victims would have sufficed to delegitimate the process. Even Milosevic can appear as a sympathetic person, and indeed has come to seem more complex and perhaps even to seem justified as a result of his televised trial.

Of course, images are the subject of manipulation. Politicians have visual consultants, advisors, coaches, and the like, and work hard to produce the relevant images. Nietzsche has a wonderful passage in which he invites people into the factory that produces human ideals. But we no longer have a need to be invited into these factories. It is characteristic of the consumers of these images and virtual experiences that we see the images being made, and that their making is part of the experience that is being shared. But more important, the experiences that we shared virtually are more powerful because they are real. Anita Hill, the Buddhist monks, the Chinese students, Yeltsin standing before the tanks, were not fabrication, but something more. Yet the striking thing about these cases, and indeed about a Reagan or a Thatcher, and for that matter even Hitler, is that there is a core to the visual and personal presentation of these individuals that spin and reinterpretation cannot keep up with.

The standard strategy of humanistic thinking about the visual is to import verbal and literary modes of expression to understand it. 'Visual language' is translatable into language. These attempts at translation are usually feeble. Just as historians of art can continue to find new things to talk about in old images, the visual routinely outpaces the linguistic — beyond the proverbial ratio of one picture having the worth of a thousand words. And this wrongly suggests other similitudes — that because images can be fabricated there is a falsity of the eye that corresponds to falsity of the word. Images can be fabricated; but matters are not so simple. There is an impressive array of evidence from cognitive science to suggest that there is a massive amount of cognitive processing capacity in the mind devoted to the human face. One need not be a biological reductionist to concede that the students of these cognitive processes, such as Paul Ekman, might be right in thinking that there are some emotions that are universal and universally expressed. One part of this work suggests that lying has more or less recognizable visual cues, which is to say that lying in a visual sense is more complex than merely lying in print. This work, in any case, gives some sense to the idea that the visual is not reducible to ideology, and that 'theorizing the visual'

is necessarily an exercise in futility. There is something going on with respect to the powers of images that differs from the powers of the word.

Consider the much discussed mystery of support for Clinton by people who recognized that he was a liar (and especially support by women who were ideologically committed to the view that the offenses he committed represented acts of masculine degradation of women and abuses of male privilege). The complexity of responses to Clinton, and the inability of his otherwise articulate supporters to articulate the basis of their attitudes, is indicative of the political significance of some level of human connection that goes beyond ideology or calculation. Many commentators have, I think quite correctly, pointed to sympathy as the defining basis of this continued support. One of Clinton's visual traits is that, in a Wildean way, he is always sincere, whether he means it or not, and the fact of his dishonesty is recognized and forgiven at the same time out of a sense of the benign or generous character of his basic motives. Clinton's dramatic lies, the entirely artificial performances that Clinton produced in response to accusations, in a sense validated the underlying emotional connection that voters felt for him when they viewed his Grand Jury testimony. More than half the American population judged this as perjury. But the visible fact of the Grand Jury performance was that these were lies that Clinton had trouble telling. His failure to lie convincingly was itself sympathetic, because it was without malice. People saw Clinton as just another torn person, a victim of his own mistakes, and in this sense a genuine candidate for victimhood who is deserving of sympathy, in spite of having done wrong, but because of having done wrong and being caught at it.

The anguish of dealing with confession, and the images of Clinton's dissembling in front of the Grand Jury are humanizing and victimizing at the same time, and thus far more powerful than his carefully coached images of denial and anger. Not everyone was equally touched by this situation, sympathy was not universal. Beneath the politics of the word, the politics of the eye produces conflicting reactions in the same individuals. What is especially striking about the arguments over the Clinton matter is the inability of the politics of the word to attain closure over these disordered or contradictory sympathetic urges. Neither Clinton's defenders nor his enemies have managed to articulate the principles under which these images can be ordered: his legal team defended his literal truthfulness, against the manifest evidence of the eye; his enemies, who asserted his literal culpability, could not overcome the overpowering evidence of the face of Clinton himself, a face unlike the face he has presented in his other political acts.

This is paradigmatic of the state of modern politics and modern political sympathies. Contemporary politics is subordinated to the demands of the politics of the eye. The European news channel, *Euronews,* every evening packages a segment called 'No Comment' which consists of images without words. They are sometimes ironic, sometimes didactic, but are a kind of daily catalog of the products of the imagery of the world, just as the *Los Angeles Times* has a daily picture which is the most powerful image it has found in the day's world news. There would be no point to such produc-

tions if images were not only more powerful than a thousand words, but in some very deep sense different than a thousand words in their powers. But this stream of images, tugging first one way and then another, is in an equally deep sense uncontrollable by a closure of the politics of the word.

The problem for would-be hegemonic worldviews is this uncontrollability of images and the potential that images have for disrupting and undermining the sympathies and dissympathies on which worldviews in some sense rest. Images do not always work in predictable ways when they engage our sympathies, and they do not always engage our sympathies in a single direction. The repeated picturing of the horrors of the Oklahoma City bombing represent an image that could have gone either way. It broke against the militia movement and the mentality it represented, allowing them to be stigmatized, just as the very compelling, images of the government destroying the Koresh complex failed to produce sympathy for the authorities. All these failures result from the uncontrollability of images, the uncontrollability that needs to be understood at the level of the emotional roots of solidarity. The politics of the eye produces its own characteristic forms of solidarity and its own novel political possibilities, because it produces new possibilities of solidarity.

The Eye, Solidarity, and Ideology

To employ the terminology of Mary Douglas, the politics of the eye is all group and no grid. The kinds of thin ideologies that it is possible to construct today are dependent on these vividly emotional contents, particularly of suffering and victimhood and the capacities of empathetic identification that are invoked by these images. The world as global village comes to have some immediate significance on this level. Our identification with one another is village-like rather than civic or urbanite — primordial, in the language of Shils. And in the village there is no ideology and no particular point to the notion of diversity of worldviews. There are instead solidarities, such as those of kinship and friendship in the village, and of group membership.

All politics, all worldviews, have an emotional, solidaristic core. The emotional core is often, in a sense of injury, a sense of justice denied, a sense of right, an agonistic sense. Rudolph von Ihering taught this lesson many years ago in his greatly influential 19th century work *The Struggle for Law* (1915). The motive force for the evolution of law was in the recognition of injury and the consequent demand for rights to protect against the injury. This is a model with limitations, but fundamentally useful, in that the process of formulating demands of recognition begins at an inchoate and emotionally chaotic level in which contradictions, such as contradictions between explicit ruling doctrine and felt realities, are most strongly felt. Obviously the pinch of these contradictions happens at a particular point, most strongly in the experiences of a particular marginalized group whose response to the order may well be largely visceral and unintellectualized.

Gradually these hurts acquire ideologists. The technology of the word is spread by them to others whose sympathies could be engaged. Solidarity, beyond the solidarity of the face-to-face world, was closely bound up with ideology, or with shared identities that depended on print. It is no accident that modern nationalism followed print and is characteristically associated with national literatures. There is no sharp line between the literary and visual production of sympathy and solidarity. The production of sympathy itself is often a matter of the creation of intermediate images, images or ideas that do something to transcend the gap between those with whom we have face-to-face and intimate relations and those we do not.

Its very effectiveness works against it as a political weapon, simply because the demands that it places on our sympathies are so varied, unrelenting, and contradictory. Yet this I think is the key to the present state of the emotional core of politics. What is difficult to grasp is the existential situation of functioning in a world in which constant and contradictory demands are placed on one's sympathy. But one can identify some features of this situation. The first is that the person subjected to these varied solidaristic appeals becomes a consumer rather than a simple 'sharer' of worldviews.

In the United States, it was traditional for candidates to eat ethnic food, wear bits of ethnic costume, and the like. Clinton, in contrast, told the people he spoke to that he felt their pain — not a mere generalized pain, but the specific pain of a form of shared experience of victimization. This is telling. The virtual recreation of experience, of sympathetic identification, is extraordinarily effective with experiences of injustice and victimhood. The Anita Hill testimony, for example, brought forth a complex response — a thin sense of solidaristic identity over sexist workplace slights which the male Senatorial questioners of Hill 'did not get', in the language of the time, but also a thicker, more nuanced sense of identity among black males, many of whom saw Hill along with those who testified in support of her as representative of the traditional enemies of black males, something that the women's movement did not get. 'Getting' here is a matter of feeling another's pain and feeling another's pain is the paradigm case of sympathy.

There is a pattern to these acts, in which something like moral authority attaches to the prototypes of an experience in which the rest of us share virtually, and this pattern has implications for the kind of politics that we have today. How does this moral authority work? Conor Cruise O'Brien's (1994) discussion of the IRA focuses on what he calls the 'differential', the moral power that the extreme voices have over the moderate ones. He quotes a famous speech of the revolutionary Patrick Pearse, who speaks of the ghosts of the ancestral dead, who struggled for a united Ireland.

@@@Ghosts are troublesome things ... There is only one way to appease a ghost. You must do the thing it asks you. And the ghosts of a nation sometimes ask very big things and they must be appeased, whatever the cost. (O'Brien, 1994: 8) ~

As O'Brien says, 'within the Republican culture the person who is doing the thing the ghost asks has a clear moral ascendancy over the person who is, as it were, dodging the ghost's eye' (1994: 116). This is a model of moral power that the Taliban, radical

feminists, and others also exert. But it is also the power of those who are genuine victims rather than ideologists of victimization.

This power operates in the face of lack of doctrine, and in spite of disagreement over doctrine — it is a solidaristic power that is there to be invoked, and is likely to be invoked over symbols, over the visual, rather than over 'principles' or words. O'Brien remarks that in Ireland the efforts at resolving problems in the 1960s were undermined by commemorations, and in the 1980s by funerals, especially the funerals of hunger strikers. But the power of these images could be bought cheaply. This is the power of pain and death — magnified to be sure. These images, these visuals, nevertheless exert a pull, invoke solidarities, that words do not and cannot. And in this case they do so against the words of moderates, of reason, of compromise, and of the whole machinery of traditional interest politics. Luker's struggle to identify the interests underlying the conflict of worldviews she believes herself to be reporting on are revealing in this regard. The conflicts are in fact conflicts within the hearts of the people whom she quotes. The interests are interests that can be satisfied by solidaristic means — by the validation that is brought through sharing emotions.

In a sense these solidarities are like the solidarity of the created worldviews of socialism and fascism, which also 'validated' and involved the sharing of emotions and experiences. It is also true that images often only work well with those who understand the symbols. The primordial solidarities to which the Catholic paraphernalia of IRA funerals appeal are not universal. But the idea of worldviews nevertheless fits poorly with these facts. In these cases, images work together with groups — they are means, partly novel, of appealing to primordial solidarities that doctrinal groups can use. But these solidarities of the eye are captive to the means. They cannot develop beyond them. They can add to the visual idiom, but not abandon it, nor can they allow the visual idiom to be turned against them — this is the same as giving up its power to invoke solidarity. And this often means that an organization can never go beyond its status as a marginal movement with special moral authority — simply because its solidaristic images are affronts to others, or because it cannot shed those of its images that do affront others.

The New Politics

Earlier I gave a simple model of the production and reproduction of a worldview: teaching backed by the sword. The 'ideology' in this model is straightforwardly a monopoly. It is a monopoly de facto because there are no other means by which teachings can be transmitted. In 19^{th} and 20^{th} century politics of the word were not monopolies of this kind, but a situation in which an interest group was provided over a long period of time with a stable set of constantly updated but nevertheless routinized and centralized ideological products.

Today we have consumers whose interests are often less clear, even to themselves, but, more importantly, whose sympathies are fluid and disordered, contradictory, and in collision. For most people this makes politics more painful, and political choice more ambiguous. The politics of the word provides very little comfort against the flood of images demanding our sympathies. Ideological politics seems phoney, inadequate, and emotionally dishonest. The production of ideology or of 'word' politics can adapt to the demands of this market, but typically survives by marketing to niches, that is to say to groups of people whose sympathies are governed by or controlled by certain sympathies above all others: hence the Greens, feminism in its extreme forms, anti-abortion politics, racial politics, and identity politics of all kinds. But this is not all. Among the niche markets in which the politics of the word still has its hold are various elite markets. And policy is still and perhaps necessarily translated into the politics of the word, of accountability and bureaucracy. So ideology has not vanished. But politicians like Blair and Clinton are not the captives of ideology that their predecessors were. They are, however, captives of image, and are compelled to manage the relation between their images and policy, policy that becomes less ideological and more technical.

The new politics of the eye thus has an emotional basis. But is it a different and more deeply disordered emotional basis than past politics *because* of the politics of the eye and the technologies that make the images available? Or is the fluidity and disorder of the present political experience 'disorder' only to those weaned on the politics of the word? If the latter is true, what sort of politics is the new politics? Is this a new version of the end of ideology thesis? In one sense it is. The old role of ideology has irrevocably changed. The struggles of thinkers like Tony Giddens to create an intellectual rationale for a 'third way' which is preeminently a politics in which sympathies come first and ideology comes second shows how difficult the relationship is.

Earlier I made a great deal out of the etymology of the term *Schau* and its problematic relationship to *Weltanschauungen* as a concept. In this respect the idea of *Weltanschauung* is out of date. The worldview of the word and the worldview constituted by the politics of the word and metaphorically represented by the notion of *Weltanschauungen* has been taken over by the politics of the unmetaphorical *Schau* itself, the image rather than the imaginaries, in the terms of Castoriadis, created through the medium of the word. We are powerless, or rather the politics of the word is powerless or at least very weak, against these images. And it is this weakness that dictates our tolerance of Clinton's sins, our respect for the claims of Kosovans, the ordinary Serb's respect for the claims of Serbian victims, and so on. The collapse of images into the word represented by the idea of *Weltanschauungen* has been replaced by the undermining of the word by images themselves, with the consequences I have described here. The politics of the eye is a solvent of worldviews. It is also an engine of tolerance, tolerance dictated by the sympathetic pull of the various images that arise in the flood of images constitutes the politics of the eye. It is a politics that gives a kind of special moral legitimacy to the fullest participants in a shared experience, and to shared experiences

that transmit well on the media of virtual experience — experiences of victimization and pain. It is theatrical, but it is theatre in which the blood is real.

Postscript — 11 September

This article originated as a presentation at a conference at New York University on worldviews, and was submitted to *Thesis Eleven* on 11 September 2001, by email three hours before the airliners had crashed into the World Trade Center. The event was the most extraordinary example of the politics of the eye than could easily have been imagined by a mere academic commentator, and it was certainly beyond my imagination. Nevertheless, it provides some grounds for further reflection, as do the images of suicide bombers and the images of Israel's punitive response in Palestine.

The images of 11 September 2001 were replayed over and over in the United States, and then stopped. They were oddly familiar images, quotations of a popular Hollywood visual type, the exploding building that appears at the end of so many action movies; a type so common that when buildings with interesting visual qualities are demolished through the use of explosives it is typical for an attempt to be made to defray the costs by planning it so that the images of the demolition can be sold for future movies. The World Trade Towers presented a massive scaling up of this in every respect, combining the familiarity of the building, its visual interest, and symbolic associations with the visual cliché of the airline disaster movie.

The solidarity-producing effects of the act were commensurate with this visual force and scale. In the United States, an enormous outpouring of identification occurred which extended to every corner of the nation, which seldom identifies with New York City. Collections were taken up for victims and families of firefighters, rallies were held, spontaneous similar commemorations were constructed, and a familiar Durkheimian sense of community was revived, which, as many commentators noted, contrasted the excesses and triviality of multiculturalism and the more profound significance of American community. Ironically, Islamic religious figures were routinely recruited in commemoration of the events of 11 September, a representation which in its frequency and visibility was unprecedented, but which defined the relations of community that the commemorators sought to recognize and sustain, and at the same time to reject the definition of solidarity which it was assumed Bin Laden and the perpetrators wished to sustain and bring forth — a solidarity of Islam against America.

The visual representations of the act itself were also widely distributed in the Islamic world, and produced, or illuminated, a kind of thin, nonideological solidarity. Spontaneous demonstrations with the demonstrators holding up reproductions of Bin Laden's image took place, and T-shirts were sold with his picture. The ideological unreadability of this solidarity was its most striking feature. Although there is a large and confusing Islamist literature, and Bin Laden was an ideologist of the return to the Caliphate, this had little or no connection to the sense of solidarity in the Islamic world.

The solidaristic sense was based on a much more visual sense of revenge, outrage, and pride at having bloodied the nose of those who had failed to give Islam the deference it was due.

Although the idea of a 'clash of civilizations' between Islam and the West, promoted by Huntington in the previous decade, produced a brief flurry, now long past, of book sales, the strategy of analysis that the book represented, of an intellectual reduction of politics to worldviews, explained very little about the act itself. Like the Unabomber, who sent bombs to various professors in the United States on the basis of a complex antitechnology ideology, the acts themselves outran in significance and 'meaning' the ideology that motivated them. The Unabomber sought a forum for his words. The attacks of 11 September were not followed by an ideological pronouncement. They were an attention grabber for a renewed politics of the word, but appear rather to have been an attempt to use a visually powerful action to change the facts of solidarity 'on the ground' in a way that would produce political change.

There is no shortage of historical analogues to the use of violence to produce this kind of change, and the relation between the elements of violence, solidarity, and ideology have never been as tight as my discussion of the politics of the word implies. The labor movement of the 19th century had one great and quite genuine 'interest' core, the desire for the reduction of the working hours of laborers and for the improvement of their standards of living. This was a stable interest, around which elaborate ideological constructions could flourish over time. The revolutionary left, which sought comprehensive revolution, had, by the time of Sorel, come to recognize that these stable interests were not, as Marx had supposed, enough to bring revolution inexorably closer. One reason for this was that the interests of the working class could be manipulated in ways that undermined solidarity, indeed once the shorter work week was established in Europe and the United States the workers' movement lost cohesion and direction. Solidarity became a political good in itself, largely through the efforts of theorists of the general strike, who moved through a complex process of theoretical and practical political development, toward a purification of the notion of revolution that stripped it of its familiar ideological and programmatic elements in favor of a strategy of political violence. The basic idea was that the momentary concentration of solidarity in the form of a general strike would irrevocably change the facts on the ground. It is the famous thesis of Zeev Sternhell that Mussolini turned to nationalistic forms of the production of solidarity out of frustration with the practical limitations of socialist solidarity and its failure to produce the desired effects (Sternhell et al., 1994). Mussolini honed his skills in a series of local general strikes in Italy, but local general strikes were not enough to change the facts on the ground.

Mussolini's fascism had no coherent ideology; it was made up after the movement had succeeded. Although Mussolini himself was, unlike Hitler, a real intellectual with a concern for his reputation as a thinker, the formulations were themselves intellectually slight, invoking against liberalism the idea of taking the model of solidarity of military devotion and applying it to society at large. This was less an ideology than a

characterization of a desirable form of solidarity itself. But this dismissal is too abrupt. Mussolini, and after him Hitler, established a powerful set of visual expressions of solidarity.

The Left, of course, had its own visual methods, and it is reasonable to wonder, in retrospect, how much 'worldview' and ideology mattered, and whether our perception of the centrality of ideology in the period from 1848 to 1956 is to a greater extent than usually acknowledged an illusion of perspective, and that as intellectuals we tend to ascribe a greater significance to the words of the intellectuals of the past than they had at the time, and to slight the elements that were meaningful for the workers themselves. Writers like de Man, in his *The Psychology of Socialism* (1928), made this point, and emphasized the contrast between real working class solidarity and the constructions of socialism made by intellectuals. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a meaningful difference between the 19$^{\text{th}}$ century and the present with respect to the balance between words and images.

Bomb throwing is a traditional form of political violence which has now become, with the advent of television news, an important adjunct to the spread of visual politics. The communists during the Spanish Civil War used political violence for a particular tactical purpose: to provoke the authorities into acts of collective repression and punishment which would in turn create solidarity among its victims (Orlov, 1963). This was political violence in which the authorship and ideological background of the initial act was not only unimportant but in which the denial of authorship or at least the secrecy of the identity of the author of the act was essential. The point was to force the authorities to react, to behave in ways that would create victims and solidarity with the victims, and to assure that the reaction could not simply be a matter of rounding up the perpetrators. The authorities took the bait, and assured that pain, outrage, and solidarity in response to authority would be the outcome. A more sophisticated structure of reciprocal acts of political violence is to be seen in the opposed solidarities of Israelis and Palestinians: suicide bombers produce images that strengthen solidarity on each side, and so do the acts of repression. Violence, and the sacrifices of others, serve on each side as goads to the conscience of the moderates, and underline the truth in the claims of the most extreme factions and leaders.

It is often said that there is no mystery about the phenomenon of terror, that terror is employed because terror is effective. The events of 11 September were uniquely dramatic. Whether they will be consequential, or more consequential, remains to be seen. But the politics of the eye and its logic of seeking solidarity and validating an extremist politics of conscience is effective, at least as a means of changing conditions. The end of ideology, far from being an end of conflict, may represent a new beginning of the intrusion of what Weber called *Gessinungsethik* into politics, through the medium of the eye.

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