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Cultch

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nouns [origin uncertain] 1. rubbish 2. the various materials, such as shells, gravel, etc., out of which a spawning bed for oysters is made. 3. the spawn of oysters.

from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

The scandal lingers, rough baptismal ballast, sounding a life, naming a death. A way to begin: the gauze an elegy lays

or rips, rusty impertinent threader. The hedge protects but hides

a killer, rusing traveller rocking back to center a sin,

the easy ignited flow cresting each hill, the downhill denial, speedy freedom, a quick blind friend.

The baobab cutters make paper, rope, eat the pulp of the gourdlike fruit.

What change, barb erupted, skulks here? What cultch rides the barge downriver? Whose channel might flow me ballast for spawn, cracked rocks to gird my tracks, a bed that holds, sweet trash to steady, each wasted load a gait that sees, forgetting the story that clears the gazed path.

Wings, by Paula Aguilera
Unscanned, each stroke's an autonomous piece, a nuanced beat of melting pursuit, conscious of dirt. The scarred sequestered ones scale back, spring-balanced to constrict on sight. Unnerved, the spiral vessels lean, their craft unstuck, swept up to slicker peaks, glanced by tongues pressed between lips, unseemly text, parenthesis, love's husk.

Acerbic beauty, split at the cusp, splinters the skin to acephalous song, the severed a pivot slowing the turns, pacing the loss, sieved meaning unriddled, sheathed, gone. Forked root squeezed in, springs apart, ascetic luxury spent seedily, but well-decided, this doubled deciphering. Ignoble, imprecise, this split pintle's my clean piece of cultch.

Theory and rationality:
Extending the Foucault/Habermas debate
Review essay by Arnold L. Farr
Department of Philosophy, University of Kentucky

Critical Theory
David Hoy and Thomas McCarthy
Blackwell Publishers, 1994

Recovering Ethical Life: Jurgen Habermas and the Future of Critical Theory
J.M. Bernstein
Routledge, 1995

In the twentieth century reason has become an object of interrogation and suspicion. Reason is no longer simply accepted as an infallible authority or as the highest court of appeal, but rather, it has become suspect as a force of domination and oppression, and as a system of distorted communication. If reason is taken to be oppressive rather than emancipatory, what then is the status of theory, and how do we judge or justify any moral or ethical position? Can we justify any appeal to reason at all? These questions constitute the central themes of this issue of *disclosure* and the texts by Bernstein, and Hoy and McCarthy. By reading these authors against each other, we should be able to see what is at stake in the reassessment of theory and reason.

The interrogation of reason in the twentieth century has probably received its greatest momentum from critical theory. The status of reason, theory, and critical theory is debated by Hoy and McCarthy in *Critical Theory*. In Part One McCarthy examines the task of critical theory and both the use and critique of reason. In Part Two Hoy assesses the status of critical theory and attempts to fuse critical theory with a Foucaultian critical history. Hoy and McCarthy provide rejoinders to each other in Part Three.

In Part One McCarthy examines the relation between critical theory and philosophy. Critical theory has its origin in the Kantian critique of reason but unlike...