CuItch

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.13023/DISCLOSURE.05.14

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.13023/DISCLOSURE.05.14
Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure/vol5/iss1/14

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Bryan Crable


Cultch

by Carol Denson

Chicago, Illinois

noun [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 orrips, 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.
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 sus­
picion. 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 phi­
losophy. Critical theory has its origin in the Kantian critique of reason but unlike

disClosure 5 (1996): REASON INCorporated