Friend as Enemy: Notes on Cavell and Socialism (Via Makavejev)

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Richard Rorty famously claimed that the difference between analytic and continental philosophers, boils down to a political one—analytical philosophers are predominantly liberals who share a belief in the rule of law and the institutions of modern constitutional democracy, while the continental ones tend to be more pessimistic about this political arrangement, and much more prone to experiment with the alternatives[1]. But where does this leave the members of that rare breed—philosophers who see themselves as working in both traditions? In order to answer that question for himself, Rorty has written several books proclaiming his faith in liberalism and America as its most prominent example. But what about Stanley Cavell—a philosopher inspired equally by Ludwig Wittgenstein, J.L. Austen, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger? It is difficult to answer this question straightforwardly, since, although many of his writings are in some sense deeply political, Cavell rarely wrote explicitly on politics, especially in respect of modern ideological struggles. One way someone interested in this question could go about trying to answer it is by turning to Cavell's encounters with more explicit representatives of certain ideological positions. That is exactly what I intend to do in this paper—by turning to Cavell's engagement with Yugoslav director Dušan Makavejev.

The cinema of Makavejev has recently been the subject of a resurgent interest among film theorists.[2] In a recent scholarly outpour on the filmmaker, Cavell article

1. Richard Rorty, "Philosophy in America Today", in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982),229.
2. Pavle Levi, *A Disintegration in Flames*: *Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Lorraine Mortimer, *Terror and Joy: The Films of Dušan Makavejev* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2008); Boris Buden, "Behind the Velvet Curtain. Remembering Dušan Makavejev's *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 18 (2008): 118-126; *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 5.1 (2014).

on the director, "On Mavkavejev on Bergman" is a frequent, almost canonical reference, and still most film theorists rarely engage in a close reading or substantial reinterpretation of his views on Makavejev's filmmaking. A notable exception to such treatment of Cavell one finds in Sezgin Boynik's, "On Makavejev, On Ideology - The Concrete and the Abstract in the Readings of Dušan Makavejev's Films". In his text, Boynik argues against what he calls humanist interpretations of Makavejev's films, which are in his opinion crucially indebted to Cavell.

> "He was a true Red Fascist!" These are the last words of Milena, describing Vladimir in *WR*. Red Fascism as the merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American image of totalitarianism is a political terminology par excellence. It has played a crucial role in post-WWII America, constructing the policy of anti-communism which was paved through the troubled equivalency of Hitler with Stalin. Apart from generating the discourse on the acuteness of the task to fight communism, Red Fascism also served the fantasies of what might happen. For example, we have to look at Hitler in the 1930s in order to avoid a possible coming of Stalin's Fascism. This fantasy is somehow at the core of totalitarian ideology, as a bizarre psychopathological paranoiac state that confuses the abstract and the real. This is how Stanley Cavell in his article on Makavejev describes the archive materials of the ultimate evil of Stalinism, or the Katyn Forest massacre shown in *Sweet Movie* [1974], as a "dreamlike sequence" and poses the great moralist question that a freedom lover would: "Isn't that forest a name for the region inhabited by regimes that no longer know that there is a difference between dream and reality, acting out the one, wiping out the other?" Stalin mistook the concrete for the abstract, and according to his critics it is this confusion that makes him so uncanny.[3]

This passage explicates most succinctly Boynik's reading of Cavell's position on ideology—and this it does by labeling Cavell as one more representative of the *tota-*

3. Sezgin Boynik, "On Makavejev, On Ideology - The Concrete and the Abstract in the Readings of Dušan Makavejev's Films," in *Surfing the Black: Yugoslav Black Wave and its Transgressive Moments*, ed. Gal Kirn et al. (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Academie, 2012), 144.

litarian paradigm. According to him, Cavell does not only subscribes to the anti-communist consensus which equates Fascism and Stalinism as the two totalitarianisms, but argues that what makes a murderous—or totalitarian—regime is confusing "the abstract and the real," or conversely "the abstract and the concrete". Apparently, in opposition to these regimes which get blinded by ideology, thus ending in killing concrete and real individuals, Cavell advocates American liberalism which puts individuals and their freedom first and foremost—Boynik is not explicit on that point, but as much can be deduced from the ~~sarcastic~~ remark about Cavell as "freedom lover".

I believe this view of Cavell as a sort of Isaiah Berlin type of Cold War apologist of negative liberty and American-style liberalism to be deeply mistaken. Not because Cavell does not see himself as an American or as a liberal—as I will show, he clearly does—but because his view of America and liberalism on one side, and of the socialist alternative, on the other is much more complex than that of the Cold War ideologues such as George Kennan (with whom Boynik also compares him), and even of the serious liberal philosophers such as Berlin.

Let us start from the Katyn Forest, and the role it plays in Makavejev's film, and the reading of it Cavell offers in his text. The documentary footage depicting the excavations of the victims form the Katyn Forest is shown without any comment and at the very end of it a quote is shown, from a letter of Sir Owen O'Malley, the British ambassador in Poland, to Anthony Eden: "Let us think of these things always and speak of them never." Cavell writes:

> The conscience of *Sweet Movie* is most hideously captured in a sequence of literal excavation-the Nazi documentary footage of German troops exhuming bodies from mass graves in the Katyn Forest. A lifelong participant in a society of declared socialist aspirations, Makavejev is asking: Was my revolution capable even of this? Has it cannibalized everything that has touched it? Is it true that the Red Army committed a mass murder of the Polish officer corps? The film shows a card which contains Anthony Eden's response to this news: "Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never." For Makavejev, that conspiracy of silence, call it mass hypocrisy, is a prescription for self-ad-

> ministered mass death. Mere film alone cannot prove who caused and buried the corpses in the Katyn Forest, but this film directly refuses the conspiracy of silence about it.[4]

Cavell obviously gives a prominent place in his interpretation to the already mentioned quote (although he mistakenly ascribes it to Eden, instead to O'Malley—no doubt a sign of the time when film interpretations were still based on strength of personal memory, instead on the technologies such as VHS and DVD which make every scene in the movie always readily available to the interpreter). This quote is a sign of the conspiracy of silence that Makavejev stands up against. But—tellingly—the source of this quote is not Soviet—it is British. Thus, this conspiracy of silence does not stop at the borders of the Eastern Bloc, but inevitably implicates liberal democracy—the very regime that, according to Boynik, the "freedom lover" Cavell is uncritically embracing. (Small wonder that Boynik does not even mention this quote, nor its importance either for Cavell, or for Makavejev).

Having that in mind—a different reading of Cavell's claim that Katyn is "a name for the region inhabited by regimes that no longer know that there is a difference between dream and reality, acting out the one, wiping out the other"[5] forces itself upon us. These regimes seem to be not only Fascism and Stalinism, but all regimes prepared to wipe out reality in the name of a fantasy, including it seems, the one which, although not directly involved in the massacre—is prepared to repress any discussion of it in the name of *Realpolitik*. And was not the Katyn massacre, more than an ideological crime, actually a crime of *Realpolitik*—a politics which believes itself to be *the most real* of all, completely non-deluded by utopian or moralist concerns[6] (exactly this, then, being its fantasy)? And if so, could not its

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4. Cavell, "On Makavejev on Bergman," *Critical Inquiry* 6 (1979), 313.
5. Ibid., 322.
6. "It has been suggested that the motive for this terrible step was to reassure the Germans as to the reality of Soviet anti-Polish policy. This explanation is completely unconvincing in view of the care with which the Soviet regime kept the massacre secret from the very German government it was supposed to impress. [...] A more likely explanation is that [...] this step should be seen as looking forward to a future in which there might again be a Poland on the Soviet Union's western border. Since he intended to keep the eastern portion of the country in any case, Stalin could be certain that any revived Poland would be unfriendly. Under those circumstances, depriving it of a large proportion of its military and technical elite would make it weaker." Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 107.

name, just as easily, be Hiroshima, or Vietnam?[7]

The whole passage from O'Malley's letter, from which the mentioned quote is taken, is especially telling:

> Let us think of these things always and speak of them never. To speak of them never is the advice which I have been giving to the Polish Government, but it has been unnecessary. They have received the Soviet report in silence. Affliction and residence in this country seem to be teaching them how much better it is in political life to leave unsaid those things about which one feels most passionately.[8]

The view of politics, in which it is better (in politics) not to speak about things about which one feels most passionately has of course, been a recurring target of Cavell's criticism in many of his political writings, but most prominently in his essay on Rawls, "The Conversation of Justice: Rawls and the Drama of Consent."[9] There, Cavell criticizes Rawlsian liberalism exactly on the account of closing off politics and political conversation for what one feels most passionately about[10].

Of course, Rawls is no proponent of *Realpolitik*, far from it. But, what is missing from his account is precisely the account of how the departures from ideal justice (that is, real politics) influence our consent. As Cavell writes:

> The idea of directing consent to the principles on which society is based rather than, as it were, to society as such, seems to be or to lead to an effort to imagine confining ot proportioning the consent I give my society—to imagine that the social contract not only states in effect that I may withdraw my consent

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7. On America's engagement in Vietnam Cavell writes that America "is killing itself and killing another country in order not acknowledge its helplessness in the face of suffering, in order not to acknowledge its separateness", Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear,*" in *Must We Mean What We Say?: A Book of Essays*, updated edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 345.
8. Owen O'Malley, "Dispatches of the British Ambassador to Poland," *Electronic Museum*, accessed July 31, 2014, http://www.electronicmuseum.ca/Poland-WW2/katyn_memorial_wall/o%27malley_despatches/o%27malley_despatches_3.html.
9. Cavell, "The Conversation of Justice: Rawls and the Drama of Consent," in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), 101-26.
10. See Stephen Mulhall, "Promising, Consent, and Citizenship: Rawls and Cavell on Morality and Politics," *Political Theory* 25 (1997), 171-192.

> from society when the public institutions of justice lapse in favor of which I have foregone certain natural rights (of judgment and redress) but that the contract might, in principle, specify how far I may reduce my consent (in scope or degree) as justice is reduced (legislatively or judicially). But my intuition is that my consent is not thus modifiable or proportionable (psychological exile is not exile): I cannot keep consent focused on the success or graces of society; it reaches into every corner of society's failure or ugliness. Between a society approaching strict compliance with the principles of justice and one approaching causes of civil disobedience, there is ground on which existent constitutional democracies circumscribe everyday lives. We know that the original position has prepared us for, what the lifted veil of ignorance has disclosed: the scene of our lives. The public circumstances in which I live, in which I participate, and from which I profit, are ones I consent to. They are ones with an uncertain measure of liberty and of goods that are not minimal, of delays in reform that are not inevitable. Consent to society is neither unrestricted *nor* restricted; its content is part of the conversation of justice.[11]

How do these ruminations on Rawls, a prominent *liberal* philosopher, tie in with Cavell's discussion of Makavejev? The guiding thought of this passage is already present in the essay on Makavejev. As Cavell sees it—one of Makavejev's main themes is exactly how to react to what he calls (in the Rawls essay) "society's ugliness" if we have already consented to that society, *the whole of society*, and not just its principles and ideals, be they Rawlsian, or Marxist. According to Cavell, Makavejev's discovery lies in our capability to be disgusted by the world, or by what has been done, or is being done in our name, in the name of society we have consented to:

> The discovery of adulthood through disgust was something acted out in the student movement in the time of our war in Vietnam. To perform ugly and indecent acts was an expression of the rejection of a world that asked for consent to its disgusting deeds. This was not my way of expression, partly because I had already given my consent to this world and partly because I do not unders-

11. Cavell, "The Conversation of Justice," 108.

> tand myself as performing ugly and indecent acts. But I understand that way, I felt the exactness of its spiritual accuracy. To say so was my way, and it has its own price. This is or was so obvious that serious films made during that period did not so much need to assert disgust with the world as to ask for its assessment, to acknowledge this fact of the world without letting it sap the motivation to work at this art, even if the art itself was the best context for the assessment. [...] Alceste's interpretation of the uninhabitability of the world, that is, of his distaste, is to see the world as a scene of universal hypocrisy. *Sweet Movie* interprets this hypocrisy, as it were, by picturing the earth as full of corpses-buried evidence of mass murder, rotting ideals, corpses with souls still in them. The film attempts to extract hope—to claim to divine life after birth—from the very fact that we are capable of genuine disgust at the world; that our revoltedness is the chance for a cleansing revulsion; that we may purge ourselves by living rather than by killing, willing to visit hell if that is the direction to something beyond purgatory; that the fight for freedom continues to originate in the demands of our instincts, the chaotic cry of our nature, our cry to have a nature. It is a work powerful enough to encourage us to see again that the tyrant's power continues to require our complicitous tyranny over ourselves. [...] In my earlier essay I more or less accuse both Alceste and Othello of inviting Montaigne's terrible rebuke to mankind in "On some verses of Virgil": "What a monstrous animal to be a horror to himself, to be burdened by his pleasures, to regard him-self as a misfortune!" But I go on to say—something I take *Sweet Movie* to be saying—that the world during my lifetime rather shows that it is yet more horrible to lose this capacity for horror.[12]

This parallel is interesting and important for our discussion in more ways than one—first, it shows that the problematic of consent arises both in liberal societies (which are explicitly built on the myth of consent, or a version of *consent theory*) and in societies of communist aspirations such as Makavejev's Yugoslavia. What inhabitants of both of these types of societies have to face is a sort of hypocrisy, or discrepancy between the ideal justice towards which their societies, each in its own way, strive for

12. Cavell, "On Makavejev on Bergman," 319.

(or by which they legitimize themselves) and the less than ideal (and sometimes positively murderous) practice. Here, the two types of society causing a similar type of response—disgust—are explicitly compared, with the example of Vietnam war, and the reactions of students who "used disgusting acts" to show their disgust towards the society which was asking for their consent. Cavell claims that, although he understood their reaction, he could not take part in it (since he already consented to his society)—but that he wrote about it and that way showed his own disgust toward what was happening. In this way he is akin to Makavejev—who shows us the Muehl commune (the commune of those who do not want to give their consent), but does not join it himself. As we will see, that is because, like Cavell, Makavejev has already consented to his society and his films represent his own mode of response to *that* society's "ugliness". What both share, however, is a refusal to limit their consent to the high ideals of their society, and a preparedness to take responsibility for its uglier aspects.

Here it is already quite obvious why the comparison that Boynik insists on—between socialism (or communism) and fascism will not do as an interpretation of Cavell's views. For it is fundamentally impossible for an inhabitant of a fascist regime to consent to its principles, but not to its murderousness. It is impossible for a hypocrisy Makavejev and Cavell focus on, even to exist in a fascist society, in which there is no striving for ideal justice at all. (Numerous examples of citizens of fascist states who later claimed they did not know what was being done in their name, do not go against this—for our disbelief in their claims stems exactly from the fact is that even if they did not know about the particular cases of crimes—they could not have not known that the very principles they consented to were murderous themselves). *Realpolitik* is not the flipside of the fascist societies, but their self-proclaimed guiding principle.

But—what are we to make of Makavejev's "true Red Fascist"? Boynik makes a strange move by ascribing the equation of Stalinism with Fascism, not to Makavejev himself, but to Cavell, whose interpretation of this provocative line he does not even mention (although, as we will see—not because Cavell does not offer such an interpretation—he does.)

First, let us see how Makavejev treats this line, and what work it does in his film. After Milena has been killed by Vladimir Illich, her severed head, lying on the pathologist's desks, starts speaking into the camera, that is to us—the audience—thus:

> Cosmic rays [...] streamed through our carnal bodies. We pulsated to the vibrations of the universe. But he couldn't bear it. He had to go one step further. Vladimir is a man of noble impetuousness [...] a man of high ambition [...] of immense energy. He's romantic [...] ascetic [...] a genuine Red Fascist! Comrades [...] even now I'm not ashamed of my Communist past![13]

Cavell comments on this scene in the following way:

> In the absence of gods, what WR tells us is that this woman lost her head to love because of a mortal who had already been turned to stone; that she was made a monster, a talking head without a body, or confirmed in monstrousness, by a man who interpreted his purity as demanding that he exempt himself from ordinary human desires, save himself for something higher. The woman's words for this—that is, the talking head's words, I mean of course Makavejev's words-are "He's romantic, ascetic, a genuine Red Fascist," a patriot. Makavejev's further identification with this murderousness, his refusal to exempt himself from recognizing it in himself (in accordance, no doubt, with his own romanticism and asceticism and his patriotism toward a still invisible fatherland) is his further interpretation of the man's self-exemption as the capacity for art. [...] This is shown in the man's beautiful song of prayer as he walks lost along the river, comprising the closing sequence of this film. Makavejev thus discovers further adjacencies in the concept of art as we have it, art as decapitation or renunciation or alienation; and he bears out the knowledge that this art is at the same time the victim or martyr of the very circumstances that produce it.[14]

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13. In *W.R.:Mysteries of the Organism* (1971).
14. Cavell, "On Makvejev on Bergman," 329-30.

There are several interesting points in Cavell's reading of the scene. For starters, according to him—Makavejev does not exempt himself from the "recognizing the murderousness in himself". This seems to be clearly on the mark, for, as we have seen, Milena's head (who is speaking for the author of the film, but also for Wilchelm Reich)—defiantly refuses to renounce her "communist past." Furthermore, all the attributes (romantic, ascetic) Milena ascribes to Vladimir Ilich, Cavell ascribes to Makavejev ; all except one—fascist Instead of that, Cavell tellingly adds one attribute which is not (literally) present in Milena's soliloquy—patriotism "towards a still invisible fatherland".

Those familiar with Cavell's opus might recognize this "still invisible fatherland" as an echo of Emerson's phrase which Cavell used as a title of his 1988 book - *This New Yet Unapproachable America*.[15] The sentence originates from Emerson's essay *Experience*, and Cavell discusses at length why the America Emerson speaks of might be "yet unapproachable", and comes to the conclusion that it is unapproachable because it has yet to be found, but that its finding requires what Emerson calls *aversion*, or what is more commonly known as *conversion*, a turning away from our current state, which Emerson's writing itself is supposed to exemplify. Writes Cavell:

> Then Emerson's writing is (an or promise of, the constitution for) this new yet unapproachable America: his aversion is a rebirth of himself into it (there will be other rebirths), its presence to us is unapproachable, both because there is nowhere *else* to go to find it, we have to turn toward it, reverse ourselves; and because we do not know if our presence to it is peopling it. [...] The identification this writer proposes between his individual constitution and the constitution of his nation is a subject on its own. The endlessly repeated idea that Emerson was only interested in finding the individual should give way of founding a nation, writing its constitution, constituting its citizens. But then would the writer say "I found" (a new America) as if in answer to the opening question, "Where do we find?" (ourselves). If we consider that what we now know, know now, of this writer, that say we and that say I, then wherever he is

15. Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989).

> we are—otherwise how can we hear him? Do we? Does his character make an impression on us? Has he achieved a new degree of culture?[16]

As Roger Griffin notes in his famous essay on fascism, there is something disturbing for the liberal ear, about the idea of the birth and rebirth of a nation, and Griffin ascribes that idea to the "core" of fascist ideology.[17] While it is clear that there are many deep differences between Emerson's individualism and any form of ethnic or cultural organicism, Cavell seems to be very aware of the charge that Emersonian perfectionism is "smoothing the way for fascism,"[18] and has repeatedly returned to debunking it. In one of his most important pieces on Emerson, "Aversive Thinking,"[19] Cavell gives an elaborate argument against what he sees as Rawls' mistaken rejection of Nietzsche's, and *pace* Nietzsche , Emerson's, perfectionism as inherently anti-democratic. While he admits that it is tempting to read both Emerson and Nietzsche as exalting great men, and dismissing the importance of the slavish majority (which is seen as "bugs", "spawn", "mob", "herd"), he insists that there is a better and more consistent way of reading them as speaking not of particular great men, but rather of the possibility of each person for attaining her "unattained but attainable self", for being consecrated to culture. This possibility lies in being disgusted with oneself and one's current state and finding a way for turning away from it, from where we find ourselves at the given moment. Not only is such a possibility in principle open to everyone and hence not necessarily anti-democratic, but, Cavell claims, according to Emerson it is necessary for democracy's survival:

> There are undeniably aristocratic or aesthetic perfectionisms. But in Emerson it should, I would like to say, be taken as part of the training for democracy. [...] I understand the training and character and friendship Emerson requires for democracy as preparation to withstand not its rigors, but its failures, character to keep the democratic hope alive in the face of disappointment with it. [...] That we will be disappointed in democracy, in its failure by the lights of its

16. Ibid., 92.
17. Roger Griffin, "Fascism: General Introduction," in *Fascist Studies: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 118.
18. Cavell, "The Conversation of Justice," 102.
19. Cavell, "Aversive Thinking," in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome*.

> own principles of justice, is implied in Rawls' concept of the original position in which those principles are accepted, a perspective from which we know that justice, in actual societies, will be departed from, and that the distance of any actual society from justice is a matter for each of us to assess for ourselves. I will speak of this as our being compromised by the democratic demand for consent, so that the human individual meant to be created and preserved in democracy is apt to be undone by it.[20]

And here, we reach the point we have already mentioned—of facing disappointment with the ideals of justice we have consented to. Going back to Boynik's claims, we may now safely say that Cavell does not evoke the "Red Fascist" in order to equate the *two totalitarianisms*. On the contrary—Cavell replaces the word fascist with what he sees to be a better fit, "patriotism for a still invisible fatherland"—a perfectionism that he subscribes to himself, and which, though mistaken for fascism by an indiscriminate eye (which, as it turns out, might even be an eye of a great philosopher such as Rawls), is actually not only compatible with democracy, but fundamentally important for it.

Boynik also misinterprets the link that Cavell establishes between Marx and Jung, claiming that in Makavejev's film "the world of Marx is healed by the parapsychology of Jung". But, as we will see, this is a very superficial reading of what Cavell actually says.

Let us start from the way Cavell uses the two quotations:

> The center of the action of the commune sequence is a communal meal, a feast whose ritualization strikes me as possessing, for all its confusion of tongues, a working solemnity. I think of Marx's characterization of religion as the heart of a heartless world, and I ask myself what the things of acceptance and redemption might look like to those who would actually bring such concepts to earth—as if inventing them and giving them a heart. I had not liked Makavejev's complaint that Bergman's "conception of God, especially, the God who does not love people and who makes them unexplainably miserable, seems to me incomprehensible and gratuitous for a serious artist." If this is bad for a serious artist, I felt, it is bad for any human being; but is it a matter over which human

20. Ibid., 52.

> beings have a choice? But I also felt that Makavejev is meeting Bergman at once on Bergman's ground and on Marx's: "The critique of religion is the prerequisite of every critique." What Makavejev sees in religion and how he effects his critique of it will come up again. (Since in the working of this film and in the mode of thinking it exemplifies, apt conjunction is everything, allowing the mutual excavation of concepts, I shall quote from the early pages of C. G. Jung's autobiography, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, without comment [as if one might use a quotation within the body of a text, that is, after the text has begun, as what you may call an internal epigraph] some fragments from his interpretation of "the earliest dream I can remember, a dream which was to preoccupy me all my life": "At all events, the phallus of this dream seems to be a subterranean God 'not to be named,' and such it remained throughout my youth, reappearing whenever anyone spoke too emphatically about Lord Jesus. [...] The fear of the 'black man,' which is felt by every child, was not the essential thing in that experience; it was, rather, the recognition that stabbed through my childish brain: 'That is a Jesuit.' So the important thing in the dream was its remarkable symbolic setting and the astounding interpretation: 'That is the man-eater.' [...] In the dream I went down into the hole in the earth and found something very different on a golden throne, something non-human and underworldly, which gazed fixedly upward and fed on human flesh. It was only fifty years later that a passage in a study of religious ritual burned into my eyes, concerning the motif of cannibalism that underlies the symbolism of the Mass [...]. Through this childhood dream I was initiated into the secrets of the earth. What happened then was a kind of burial in the earth, and many years were to pass before I came out again. Today I know that it happened in order to bring the greatest possible amount of light into the darkness. It was an initiation into the realm of darkness. My intellectual life had its unconscious beginnings at that time.")[21]

Right at the beginning it should be noted that there are two Marx's thoughts Cavell references, while Boynik only mentions one. The other, that Boynik misses is the fa-

21. Cavell, "On Makavejev on Bergman", 315-16.

mous quote about criticism of religion being the prerequisite of every criticism. This thought appears again in Cavell's essay on Rawls. There, he notes

> Ibsen's participation in a perception shared by Marx and Emerson and Nietzsche, that "the criticism of religion is the presupposition of all criticism." When Marx used those words he prefaced them by claiming that in Germany the criticism of religion is essentially complete, while Nietzsche a generation later will show it to be still beginning, as Emerson had in effect, shown him.[22]

In this light, the significance of Jung's quote becomes much clearer—Jung is not invoked to "heal Marx's world", but, just the opposite, to show that the task Marx thought was complete was still before us—the criticism of religion. In this sense, Jung's dream proves Nietzsche and Emerson to be right, the "struggle with one's own inner priest, one's priestly nature"[23] is still far from over. And it is hardly a miracle that it is not—for unredeemed suffering still exists, both in liberal and in Marxist societies. The Muehl commune brings up this thought for Cavell, because it presents a secular way of coming to terms with this fact, just as *Sweet Movie* itself is such an attempt to be reborn, not into another world but into this one, to show that there is "life after birth."[24] As Cavell writes: "Perfectionism, as represented in Emerson and in Nietzsche, we are invited to a position that is structurally one of martyrdom: not, however, in view of the divine but in inspiration to an idea of the human."[25]

In another telling passage, Boynik denounces Charles Warren, whom he previously chacterized as continuing Cavell's "humanist" reading of Makavejev, for the claim: "Yugoslavia is not the USSR and it resists Stalinism. Milena tells to Vladimir that Yugoslavs care about 'personal happiness' and do not blur that with State concerns,"[26] but does not recognize the clear Marxian reference of the line form Makavejev's movie—"The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the

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22. Cavell, "The Conversation of Justice," 111.
23. Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, ed. Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 138.
24. Cavell, "On Makavejev on Bergman," 319.
25. Cavell, "Aversive Thinking," 56.
26. Charles Warren, "Earth and Beyond: Dušan Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of Organism*", in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, ed. Charles Warren (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 206. Cited in Boynik, "On Makavejev on Ideology," 143.

demand for their *real* happiness."[27] The pursuit of happiness has of course been a longstanding topic for Cavell, as well as the importance of persisting in it in the face of human suffering[28]. What Cavell and Makavejev note, and Boynik misses—is that the challenge of illusory happiness is still with us, and in that sense, so is religion—even if we live in nominally secular (whether liberal or socialist) societies.

Stephen Mulhall deftly summarizes Cavell's position on moral argument by noting that for Cavell such an argument may be rational even though not necessarily leading to consensus. We may agree on standards of pertinence of different considerations, but still disagree about the weight we attach to them, while at the same time recognizing each others' position as rational and worthy of respect:

> In Cavell's eyes, contemporary moral argument is a domain which admits of many morally adequate positions being taken on any given topic; and as a result, the particular position a given individual takes up reveals as much about her as the action or judgment under consideration. In this sense, moral argument is both objective [...] and subjective [...]: it allows people to define and defend the position for which they are prepared to take responsibility, and it allows those others to determine whether that position is one they can respect.[29]

Mulhall concludes that this account of rationality in morals is primarily fit for private morality, "its paradigm is an encounter between two people who wish to understand one another better and perhaps work toward an agreement, but whose relationship is clearly an intimate one," and adds that such a model is clearly "ill-suited to the domain of public political morality."[30]

But what if Cavell's engagement with Makavejev is an example of just such a relationship? Read this way—it can be seen as a perfectionist encounter between two

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27. Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 131.
28. See Cavell's discussion of remarriage comedies and his arguments against them being just "fairy tales for the Depression." Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 3.
29. Stephen Mulhall, "Liberalism, Morality and Rationality: Macintyre, Rawls and Cavell," in *After Macintyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 214.
30. Ibid., 214.

individuals whose friendship "includes the inflection of friend as [...] enemy", contesting each other's (each other's societies') present attainments[31]. At one point, Cavell asks himself why it is not the real issue for both a socialist and a liberal, to "understand what happened to the fact and the idea of liberty under Americanization and to understand what happened to the idea and fact of community under Sovietization"[32]. Each society, he seems to imply, is failing "by the lights of its own principles of justice". Each idea is being compromised by political practice, thus compromising both the socialist and the liberal who have consented to their respective societies, that is—both Makavejev and Cavell. Still, they both continue to give consent to their societies, "on pain of self-corruption worse than compromise," relying only on their intuitions that "our collective distance form perfect justice is, though in moments painful to the limits of intolerable, still habitable, even necessary as a stage for continued change."[33] Whose intuition is more accurate? Although obviously not neutral (or maybe exactly because he is not neutral), Cavell does not even try to adjudicate between the two positions. In the future, they may come closer together, striking a shared balance between liberty and community, or they may just continue to strive for change each in its own way. What Cavell makes abundantly clear, however, is that Makavejev's position is one that he can respect.

31. "To see Emerson's philosophical authorships taking up the ancient position of the friend, we have to include the inflection (more brazen In Nietzsche but no less explicit in Emerson) of my friend as my enemy (contesting my present attainments." Cavell, "Aversive Thinking," 59.
32. Cavell, "On Makavejev on Bergman," 315.
33. Cavell, "Conversation of Justice," 112.