

**a usable pastoralism:
leo marx's method in
the machine in the garden**

Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden*¹ has been called "the most stimulating book in American studies, and the one most likely to exert an influence on the direction of scholarship."² Since Harry Finestone's prediction in 1967, many scholars have ranked Marx beside Matthiessen, Chase, Smith and Lewis,³ and "pastoralism" has become an accepted rubric in American literary criticism.⁴ But what is the value of Marx's approach?

For Marx, American literature is pastoral literature, and the American experience has been and still is a pastoral experience. As a social critic, Marx investigates this premise in order to lead Americans to a better understanding of themselves. His book is a search for a usable past, but it has several drawbacks which in fact impede understanding. Like any critical study, *The Machine in the Garden* can offer only a particular kind of knowledge expressed in a particular vocabulary. By exploring the methods which shape Marx's ideas, we may discover the nature of his knowledge and critical vocabulary. Without discarding Marx's approach, we may find, beyond its limitations, a more usable pastoralism.

i

Marx opens with a straightforward statement of goals and procedures. His book is not so much about literature as it is

about the region of culture where literature, general ideas, and certain products of the collective imagination—we may call them "cultural symbols"—meet. To appreciate the significance and power of our American fables it is necessary to understand the interplay between the literary imagination and what happens outside literature, in the general culture. (4)

Tacitly assuming the essentially Arnoldian premise that a literature reflects its society, Marx looks to "the American experience" as a basis for his criticism of American literature. As a cultural *and* literary historian, he focuses on our past and present social conditions as well as our artistic achievements. He shows how the socially determined American consciousness insinuates itself into our literature. In order to examine this

relationship, he requires an interdisciplinary method involving an “interplay” between what Henry Nash Smith calls “social facts and aesthetic values.”⁵ Marx treats both literature and society, then, in terms of a single form—the American pastoral.

As many have argued, pastoral literature, from Virgil’s *Eclogues* to our own American “fables,” has generally been considered a response to certain social problems.⁶ Going a step further, Marx defines the pastoral as not just an art form but a mode of consciousness and itself a social problem—not just a matter of expression but of thought and behavior. He distinguishes between social or “sentimental pastoralism” and literary or “complex pastoralism.” (5) “The psychic root” of the former is “a wish image of happiness” (24) or simply escapism. The latter involves a “contrast of two conditions of consciousness”: the tentative adoption of sentimental pastoralism as a life style and the eventual recognition of its impossibility. Marx contends that the American experience has been based on the “pastoral ideal”—the sentimental belief that man can live in a “middle landscape” situated between nature’s primitivism and civilization’s authority. But technology’s power, progress and cities have thwarted the growth of this social theory (most fully articulated in Jefferson’s agrarianism), and industrialization has reduced the ideal to myth—an impracticable “mode of belief” yet a central part of the American mind.

As a literary form the pastoral is patterned on the traditional “pastoral design,” a “redemptive journey” (69) away from society’s problems into the wilderness and eventually back to civilization. But the American pastoral has an important addition—the “interrupted idyll,” the paradigm for which is Hawthorne’s “Sleepy Hollow” sketch. Here, the author’s contemplation of a pastoral scene is shattered by a locomotive’s shriek and transformed into an awareness of urban and industrial power. The recurring image of the machine in the garden, then, is more than an aesthetic representation of disharmony; it is, in fact, a symptom of the social conflict between myth and history, between the pastoral ideal and the growth of technology.

ii

Marx’s book has been criticized both as cultural history and as literary criticism. George Steiner objects that, as a cultural history, it does nothing new, a contention which presumably stems from the unjustified notion that the book is a rehash of *Virgin Land*.⁷ But Marx’s work goes further than Smith’s study of the deleterious effects of the myth of the Garden to reveal what Marx claims is a “comprehensive” conception of American experience based on a dialectic between myth and history. Another detractor, Nicolaus C. Mills, refutes the idea that the interrupted idyll is uniquely American by citing similar examples in British fiction.⁸ Mills, however, disregards Marx’s assertion that such British imagery generally represents “a threat to some cherished ideal of high civilization or art or craftsmanship.” (347) Furthermore, Mills’s counterexamples do not demonstrate the abruptness of the machine’s intrusion nor the sense of violation of a pastoral consciousness.

Other critics have registered more convincing arguments against Marx’s cultural study and its lack of comprehensiveness. Paul Levine, who calls the book “overlong and underfed,”⁹ concurs with Marcus Cunliffe that Marx’s approach is “attractive, but all too neat.”¹⁰ Indeed,

Marx's claim that the image of the machine in the garden constitutes "the most final of all generalizations about America" (353) is somewhat overstated considering Levine's complaint that Marx's cultural history overlooks puritanism, Southwestern humor, utopianism and such luminaries as Edwards, Brown, Freneau, Howells, James and Norris. The lack of comprehensiveness that Levine and Cunliffe find stems from the limited methods which Marx, ironically, considers necessarily comprehensive. We may pursue this idea by examining Marx's dialectical method and his concentration upon myth.

As a dialectician,¹¹ Marx advocates Lionel Trilling's "comprehensive . . . idea of culture" (341) as conflict. Like Richard Chase, whose *The American Novel and Its Tradition* investigates the literary manifestations of America's cultural "contradictions," Marx also goes on to determine the social causes of these contradictions.¹² Marx's insistence, however, upon a single dialectic between pastoral myth and technology is reductive. Calling this conflict "the great issue of our culture" (353), Marx necessarily discounts other "root conflicts" such as the Westward movement, the Civil War and the growth of imperialism, none of which can be explained entirely in terms of pastoralism but which still affect our twentieth-century consciousness. Since Marx concentrates on the 1840's, when industrialization began to impinge upon the American consciousness,¹³ his approach really only accounts for the last century of American culture. His so-called comprehensive history necessarily ignores the colonial years, the Revolution, federalism and Jacksonianism.

Marx's dialectical method also limits him to certain kinds of literature. Such depictions of urban realism as Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, which one might expect to find in Marx's analysis, may have been excluded because they exhibit no pastoral consciousness nor any sense of Marx's cultural conflict. Although Poe wrote in the 1840's, Marx must also neglect this non-pastoral artist whose work demonstrates a great deal more than a consciousness torn between "two kingdoms of force": the pastoral and the industrial. Although Marx states that the image of the machine in the garden "has served again and again to order literary experience" and that it "dominates much of our literature" (229), it is not so pervasive.

Curiously, Marx's study neglects popular literature and American humor, which many claim were instrumental in shaping the American consciousness. If Marx's "root conflict" is a great issue, it surely must pervade all levels of our culture, affecting popular as well as the "imaginative" arts. Marx's position, however, is that the interrupted idyll is a device through which only "our best writers" (11) offer statements about American life. In his chapter "The Machine," which is fittingly organized in the form of a debate to correspond to the conflict that industrialization has brought,¹⁴ Marx does record the people's response to the machine's power and potential in the non-fiction of certain popular magazines (193-209), but he does not deal with that conflict's manifestation in popular fiction. Although far from an elitist, Marx seems to suggest that popular artists were not sufficiently aware of the great conflict in their own environment to use the image of the machine in the garden. But by the same token, the absence of this image in popular literature suggests that the conflict which creates it is simply not as profound as Marx contends. Marx's neglect of American humor is also curious, for the conflict between ideal and reality can be a source for comic, as well as serious, literary effects. Comically interrupted idylls are

found, for instance, throughout Melville's pastoral imagery, especially in "The Encantadas" and *Israel Potter*. When we turn to Marx's practical criticism, we are forced to wonder whether "our best writers" consciously perceived any conflict at all.

Of course, Marx cannot be faulted for concentrating on the areas in which his evidence occurs. The problem, however, is that a comprehensive view of culture should be able to find its thesis running throughout the culture it treats. Ultimately, the issue is whether a nation's culture resides with its great artists, its general public or both. *The Machine in the Garden* leaves us confused as to where Marx's notions of social conflict and consciousness are located in our culture. Marx defends his view of culture as conflict by saying that it corresponds to the "habit of defining reality as a contradiction between radically opposed forces." (344) But to define all aspects of a culture with respect to a single dialectic is perhaps a *bad* habit preventing the historian from recording the complexities and ambiguities of events, thoughts and expressions.

Marx's concentration upon myth limits his cultural history, too. As Alan Trachtenberg observes in his review of Marx's book, a social myth is meaningless to the historian if the people are not sufficiently captivated by it to act upon it.¹⁵ In *Virgin Land*, according to Trachtenberg, Smith shows the myth of the Garden as powerful enough to push Americans Westward and to encourage them to pass the Homestead Act which eventually defeated their own goals. Lewis' Adamic myth, however, is not such a compelling social force. As a theme in American letters, it has shaped thoughts, but not behavior. Marx contends that the pastoral myth accounts for such aspects of American behavior as suburbanization, farm subsidies and "our piety toward the out-of-doors" (5), but the American love for the middle landscape is hardly the only explanation of these phenomena. Marx's proof of the pastoral myth is found principally in imaginative literature, not at the heart of any significant legislation or national movement.

Given the limitations of Marx's dialectical method and use of myth, we may agree with Cunliffe that Marx's cultural analysis is "too neat." Similarly as literary criticism *The Machine in the Garden* may be called "all too clever." Willard Thorp's primary reservation about Marx's treatment of Melville is that it "strains too hard";¹⁶ while Walter Blair asks if Marx does not "misread or overread" Hawthorne.¹⁷ Marx's criticism focuses on the author's use of the interrupted idyll and machine imagery, but he is often hard pressed to find any machines, much less derive a convincing interpretation of their function.

Assuming that our best writers consciously or unconsciously perceived the conflict between Machine and Garden in their society, Marx contends that they have used these "cultural symbols" to express conflicts in their literary creations. Although these artists do not write about industrialization, their use of machine imagery "clarifies our situation" (4) with respect to that "great transformation." (28) The image of the machine in the garden is, by itself, a story of social conflict whose meaning goes beyond the apparent story and meaning of the work that contains it. We are left with the paradox that an author may make a statement about the demise of the pastoral ideal, but not be conscious of offering such a criticism of life. Furthermore, Marx's emphasis on states of consciousness and the expansive, psychic potential of his cultural symbols allows him to use a metaphoric logic in his practical criticism which jerks images out of their literary contexts and imputes to them dubious evocations and

associations. In short, Marx's social considerations create distorted aesthetic interpretations, as can be seen in his treatments of Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" and Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

Because of its lack of explicit machine imagery, "Ethan Brand" is only a partial complex pastoral (265); nevertheless Marx applies his critical vocabulary to Hawthorne's Faust-like story. The tale's villagers, all mutilated "victims of change" (270) reside in a pastoral environment which Brand's cold machine-like empiricism threatens to destroy. At the end, nature rejoices over Brand's purification from this middle landscape. But Marx finds that this "credulous tone of sentimental pastoralism" (275) is ironic and promotes in the reader a false sense of security in the "self contained village culture" (277) and therefore the pastoral ideal. To justify his interpretation, Marx looks to the "genesis of the story" to find the source of its crucial "sense of loss, anxiety, and dislocation." (269) But Marx's excursion beyond Hawthorne's text is unconvincing.

Before writing "Ethan Brand" Hawthorne consulted his North Adams notebook which includes the author's thoughts on a textile mill newly built in that rural area. As Marx sees it, Hawthorne was so struck "with the sudden, violent character of change" (268) inherent in the contrast that he based his story on that single, twelve-year old impression. "Ethan Brand," then, is a fictional representation of Hawthorne's disillusionment with the pastoral experience, and Brand is a machine-like symbol of change. In proving this latter assertion, Marx bogs himself down in a series of elaborate associations which attempt to link Brand to technology and therefore change. Since fire is artificial as opposed to the sun's natural light, and since fire is the traditional, Promethean symbol of technology, the story's fiery kiln is therefore a machine image. Since Brand is a part of the fire which consumes him, he is by implication an image of technology.¹⁸ Marx also points out that since Brand is an empiricist, and since empiricism (for Carlyle) is an evil attribute of the "Age of Machinery," Brand then becomes an agent of technology. Both of these extraliterary arguments are tortuous, associational and confusing.

No clamoring locomotive crashes through Hawthorne's pastoral scene. The landscape in "Ethan Brand" (except for the ending) is dark and dismal; and if any machines exist, they are highly abstract. Marx's convoluted reasoning does not convince us that Brand symbolizes the ineluctable forces of change, history and industrialization. His array of associations between the story's images and characters and what he takes to be the conditions surrounding the story's inspiration are far-fetched and inconclusive. In fact, the so-called "violent character of change" in Hawthorne's North Adams sketch barely exists, for the textile mill which the author calls "picturesque" is powered by water, not steam, and would not necessarily evoke for Hawthorne a fiery image of industrialization. Furthermore, Hawthorne may have equated fire and sun with artifice and nature, and he may have lumped empiricism with the machine age, but to suggest that they all relate to technology and that the kiln and Brand are covert machine images is questionable. Another weakness in the argument is that if we fail to see the irony at the end, the story's only sense of a pastoral consciousness dissolves. The trap of Marx's associational logic is that it creates more doubts for the reader than proofs.

Marx's treatment of *Moby-Dick* is more convincing because the novel's pastoral design and machine imagery are clearly discernible; however, this treatment also suffers from extravagant argumentation. In fact, Marx seems to distort certain passages in order to find evidence of

machine in the garden imagery. Turning to the novel's try works chapter, Marx argues that Melville's depiction of the *Pequod* as a factory-like vessel enabled him "to fashion a metaphor of heedless, unbridled, nineteenth century American capitalism."¹⁹ (306) To prove that the *Pequod* is a machine image, Marx points to its masonry and iron works, the "fritters" or "tried out" blubber used for fuel in melting down more blubber, and "the unspeakable, stinking, horrible smoke." (306) But Melville's own description of the try works emphasizes other details as well. The "solid mass of brick and mortar" is actually "cased in wood,"²⁰ and since the works "lack external chimneys," they look less like a factory than Marx would have us believe. Marx's "elaborate" ironwork is nothing more than "ponderous knees of iron bracing." According to Marx, the huge iron pots suggest a factory, but according to Melville they shine on the inside "like silver punch bowls" (MD-352) and when not in use serve as womb-like resting places for the whalers.

The melting down of whale blubber has bad connotations for Marx, and he imputes a kind of morbidity to the practice of burning the whale's own remains to melt down more blubber. But Melville's tone projects a feeling of satisfaction over this organic, "self-consuming" (MD-353) process. Finally, the try works' unpleasant smoke evokes a "hindoo funeral pyre" (MD-353) for Melville and not a New England factory. Although Marx finds some evidence to prove his point, he ignores several important details so that his reading appears inaccurate if not distorted. Marx's search for machines that do not exist fails to persuade us that Melville had either factories, industrialization or capitalism in mind when he wrote his masterpiece.

iii

Marx's work in American studies can and has served as a methodological model for others.²¹ But its weaknesses should also warn us of the pitfalls of the dialectical method. Proposed as more dynamic than Partridge's "static" history of ideas, the definition of culture as conflict does have an impressive potential for complexity.²² Coupled with the notion of myth as a mode of belief, Marx's approach seems highly comprehensive. *The Machine in the Garden* emphasizes not just men acting out the events of history or artists reflecting upon those events, but also man's perception of himself in history and his expectations in confrontation with historical necessity. It investigates man's acceptance, rejection or ambivalence toward his modes of belief and history. Thus, Marx's method is complex, and can encompass psychology and the imagination as well as discursive thought.

But the reduction of American culture to a single dialectic can be a static conception of life and art. Like literary works, histories are verbal and mental constructions whose subjects are past and present ideas, events and feelings. We judge a history for its "accurate" representation of reality, but we cannot forget that a history is only a single representation. Marx's dialectic between "two kingdoms of force," then, is *our* myth of the American past just as the pastoral ideal was our ancestor's myth for their present. We can accept Marx's history as one mode of belief, but it is a system that describes only a small part of American behavior and expression. Marx's narrow perspective derives from his interest as a social critic in the quality of life in a powerful, industrial America. He sees culture not as *what it was* several centuries ago but as *what it has*

become today and therefore searches the past to find what is relevant to today's society.

With reservations, Marx's cultural analysis is acceptable, but his literary criticism remains problematic. Marx's critical method relies too heavily on "consciousness." For Marx, literature is a mingling of various "states of consciousness": not just the states of mind represented by the characters and images in a work itself, but also the author's own consciousness and the consciousness of an age and its people. "Consciousness" is a tricky term on which to base one's arguments; it is difficult to define, discover and measure. As a consequence, Marx's single image of fire becomes emblematic of a machine, industrialization, change, history and fate. Instead of precise differentiations, Marx's critical method leads to free associations and questionable readings.

The advantage of Marx's interdisciplinary approach is that by seeing the literary imagination as a part of a social consciousness we may better understand deeper powers behind certain literary works and images. But its hazard is that a concentration on the "interplay" between literature and society may lead to distorted interpretations of both literature and society as sovereign entities. Thus, while Marx's book shows how the American consciousness and literature were moulded chiefly by two forces manifested in the symbols of the machine and the garden, its broad generalizations also over-simplify American history and literature. Despite its limitations, Marx's provocative definition of the pastoral as a pattern of behavior and as a distinctive plot form, as social vision and literary device, provides us with a useful critical vocabulary. But here, Marx's emphasis upon the awareness of social conflict reduces his interpretations to the search for machine imagery so that he recasts all of American literature to fit one image, even when that image is not readily discernible in the works he treats. This narrow focus prevents him from investigating the many interrupted idylls in American literature which do not involve machines. A case in point is Huck's pastoral retreat down the Mississippi which is continually interrupted by slave hunters and con men, as well as the famous Steamboat which Marx emphasizes.

The staying power of Marx's critical approach resides in the simple fact that the more one looks into American literature, the more one discovers the pastoral design and some form of the interrupted idyll. Cooper's *The Prairie*, for instance, centers upon a family of poachers who retreat from a Kentucky settlement (the middle landscape) into the wilderness—an escape from law, order and rustic harmony that brings them up against hostile Indians, the ravages of nature and man's criminality. Instead of the machines of civilization violating pastoral lands, this pre-machine age novel depicts pastoral folk venturing into and finally rejecting the wilderness. The poachers' return home is, in short, an affirmation of the pastoral ideal.

James's *The Ambassadors* is admittedly the least likely to be called a complex pastoral, yet its climax, in which "our friend" Lambert Strether discovers the truth about Chad and Madame de Vionnet, is undoubtedly an interrupted idyll. Strether leaves Paris society and its "inward experience" for the countryside. His new vision becomes an artistic construction; all things harmonize in his mind as if they formed a gilt-framed landscape painting. Strether's elevated but still naïve consciousness (his sentimental pastoralism as Marx would call it) collapses when he finds his friends enjoying their twenty-four hour retreat.

Without referring to machine imagery, Marx's pastoralism may illu-

minate works of American fiction. Two recent articles show that since *The Machine in the Garden* Marx has steered away from the strict analysis of machine imagery to concentrate more upon the pastoral design. In "Pastoral Ideals and City Trouble" Marx shows how literature can "articulate" America's urban problems and even offer solutions.²³ He discusses the pastoral design and interrupted idyll in works by Nathanael West, Frost and Hemingway, but does not dwell upon machine imagery. "The aesthetic success" of these works, he claims, shows the American need for pastoral retreat. To meet this need, Marx concludes that urban planners should provide opportunities for citizens to visit areas outside the city. "Rural development," therefore, is just as important as urban renewal.

Always with an eye on today's society, Marx uses his pastoral ideas in another article to analyze Susan Sontag's *Trip to Hanoi* and to reach a tentative understanding of present trends in the radical movement.²⁴ Marx reports that Sontag's original intention during her visit to North Vietnam was to detach herself from the people, but that eventually she fell in love with their simplicity and morality. Her sentimental pastoralism, however, is interrupted not by the machine but by her own awareness of her sentimentality. She eventually decides to trust her naive response and returns to society, she claims, a "chastened" individual. Sontag's new political awareness, garnered during her retreat from Western society to the idyllic revolutionary state, prompts her to modify her previous aestheticism. Marx argues that although Sontag's pastoral experience should not be confused with the revolution itself,²⁵ it nevertheless describes the need for revolution and therefore "prefigures the transformation of the dominant culture."²⁶ Marx's arguments in both articles demonstrate a sophisticated use of his critical method without the slavish insistence upon machine imagery nor the vague and ornate associative language.

The most any work of criticism can do is provide a new set of words with which we can root out and articulate new ideas previously dormant in literature. Marx has given us such terms as "pastoral design," "sentimental pastoralism" and "the interrupted idyll" which allow us to look deeper into the structure, emotions and conflicts in our American fiction. Ultimately, Marx is a social critic.²⁷ His purpose as a scholar is to investigate America's behavior and expression in order to illuminate our way of life, to "articulate its problems" and even to suggest remedies. Regardless of the limitations of his cultural and literary history, Marx's view of scholarship as a means toward understanding ourselves and bettering our social institutions is one that, given our nation's present crisis, may serve as a model for those of us who hope to describe the American experience. Accordingly this examination of Marx's search for "a usable past" has revealed methodological limitations only to suggest ways in which his practical criticism itself may be more usable.

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footnotes

1. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York, 1964). Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

2. Harry Finestone, "Themes, Topics, and Criticism" in *American Literary Scholarship, 1963*, ed. James Woodress (Durham, N.C., 1967), 265.

3. See Gerald E. Gerber, "James Kirke Paulding and the Image of the Machine," *American*

Quarterly XXII (Fall 1970), 736-741; Anthony C. Hilfer, *The Revolt from the Village: 1915-1920* (Chapel Hill, 1969); Harold Kaplan, *Democratic Humanism in American Literature* (Chicago, 1969); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, 1967); Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York, 1969); John Seelye, "Some Green Thoughts on a Green Theme," *TriQuarterly* 23/24:576-639; Henry Nash Smith, *Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890* (Garden City, N.Y., 1967); Tony Tanner, *City of Words* (London, 1971); Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (New York, 1965).

4. G. R. Thompson, "Themes, Topics, and Criticism" in *American Literary Scholarship, 1969*, ed. J. Albert Robbins (Durham, N.C., 1971), 348.

5. Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly* IX (Summer 1957), 197-208.

6. See C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (New York, 1966); William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London, 1935); Frank Kermode, *English Pastoral Poetry: From the Beginning to Marvell* (London, 1952).

7. George Steiner, *Reporter*, December 31, 1964, 35.

8. Nicolaus C. Mills, "The Machine in the Anglo-American Garden," *Centennial Review*, XIV (Spring 1970), 201-212.

9. Paul Levine, "The Region of Culture," *American Scholar*, XXXIV (Spring 1965), 298.

10. Marcus Cunliffe, "Collision Course," *Spectator*, January 22, 1965, 106.

11. Marx's most artful use of the dialectical method is in "The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Convention and the Style of *Huckleberry Finn*" [*American Literature*, XXVIII (May 1956), 129-46] in which he shows that using the vernacular speech of a young but experienced boy allowed Twain to synthesize two antithetical prose styles, the romantic and the realistic, so that he could present "the lovely possibilities of life without neglecting its terrors." This argument also appears in Chapter five of *The Machine in the Garden*.

12. See pp. 341-3 for Marx's discussion of Trilling and Chase.

13. Mostly for rhetorical purposes, Marx designates 1844 as the beginning of America's industrial awareness. According to W. W. Rostow this year marks the "take-off" of the expansion of American industrial might. It is also the year of Hawthorne's "Sleepy Hollow" sketch and the period in which "our first significant literary generation was coming to maturity." (27)

14. The "debate" form is fitting given Trilling's assertion (quoted by Marx) that culture is not a flow . . . [but] struggle or at least debate." (341) Marx's "debate" over industrialization involves such proponents as Daniel Webster, who, still clinging to his pastoral ideal, saw the machine as a "slave" to the farmer which would help transform America into a middle landscape—an agrarian instead of industrial state. Thomas Carlyle, unencumbered by any social notion of pastoralism, declared strongly against this "age of machinery" and its mechanistic, empirical philosophy which robs man of his free will.

15. Alan Trachtenberg, "The American View of Life," *Nation*, July 19, 1965, 42-45.

16. Willard Thorp, "Melville," in *American Literary Scholarship, 1964*, ed. James Woodress (Durham, N.C., 1966), 37.

17. Walter Blair, "Hawthorne," in *Eight American Authors*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York, 1971 rev.), 100.

18. To substantiate this, Marx adds, "it can be shown that Hawthorne uses the same images, words and phrases to describe the fire in 'Ethan Brand' that he uses elsewhere for direct reference to industrialization." (271) However, he does not provide this information although it can be found in a footnote in his article "The Machine in the Garden" (1956). There, Marx points out that in "Fire Worship," Hawthorne describes a stove as an "iron prison" and that in "Ethan Brand" the kiln is called a "hollow prison house of fire." The logic is that the kiln is related metaphorically to the stove and since the stove evokes a sense of technology, the kiln is therefore a machine image. This evidence is pretty flimsy. In fact, Henry G. Fairbanks in "Hawthorne and the Machine Age" [*American Literature*, XXVIII (May 1956), 155-165] contends that Hawthorne's notebooks reveal a respect, not a hostility, for science and industry. He speaks of Hawthorne's fascination for the "molten iron, boiling and bubbling in the furnace" at the Mersey Iron Foundry, and concludes that "it was not that [Hawthorne] admired the scientist or his machines less, but that he loved man more." From this, Hawthorne appears to be more of a harmonizer of machine and garden than Marx would care to admit.

19. Most likely, Marx's former teacher F. O. Matthiessen may have suggested this idea. In *American Renaissance* he calls the try works "a rare symbol for individualistic recklessness—indeed for a whole era of American development." Perhaps, too, Marx was aided by Richard Chase's assessment of *Moby-Dick* in *Herman Melville: A Critical Study* (1949). He writes that the novel "remains intransigently a story of the whaling industry; a hymn to the technical skill of the heroes and the marvelous perfection of their machine and to the majesty of what they appropriate from the sea. . . . There is no doubt that the voyage is an industrial enterprise bossed by Ahab, the nineteenth century type of the manager of an absentee-owned plant." (101)

20. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York, 1967), 352. Hereafter cited as MD in the text.
21. See in particular Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (New York, 1965) and Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York, 1969).
22. Harold Kaplan briefly but interestingly defends the appropriateness of the dialectical framework in the study of American institutions and thought in his *Democratic Humanism and American Literature* (Chicago, 1969), 27-33.
23. Leo Marx, "Pastoral Ideals and City Trouble," *Journal of General Education*, XX (January 1969), 251.
24. Leo Marx, "Susan Sontag's 'New Left' Pastoral: Notes on Revolutionary Pastoralism in America," *TriQuarterly* 23/24:552-575.
25. In this article as in *The Machine in the Garden* Marx refers to William Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* in which Empson argues that "proletarian literature" does not advance the workers' cause but only serves to ameliorate the guilt feelings of the middle class and the intelligentsia by romanticizing the worker into an epic hero. Thus, this form of pastoral literature subverts the class struggle while purporting to aid it. Marx suggests that Sontag's book is like "proletarian literature" in the sense that it is written by and for the intelligentsia with the purpose of furthering the "revolution."
26. Sontag, 575.
27. Since Marx concentrates mostly on the relationship between literature and consciousness, his concern for the social problems related to that consciousness is secondary. At most, the artist and critic can only identify problems, not solve them; consequently he concludes in his last paragraph that "the machine's sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics." (365). Even so, the artist and critic can be useful in social matters and instrumental in the processes leading to change. In his first article, "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and Huckleberry Finn" [*American Scholar*, XXII (Autumn 1953), 423-40], Marx argues that a purely formalist approach to *Huck Finn* avoids the crucial problem of Twain's "lapse of moral vision" in his failure to come to grips with the slavery question. Marx concludes that we need critics and a critical approach which can deal with "complex questions of political morality." From the beginning, then, Marx has been a literary critic with a clear sense of social responsibility.