

A NOTE ON THE SENSES

COMMON SENSE FROM ARISTOTLE TO MARX AND BEYOND

Richard Gunn

Introduction

If the doors of perception were cleansed
everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all
things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

– William Blake 'The Marriage of
Heaven and Hell' in G. Keynes,
ed., *Poetry and Prose of William
Blake* (London: Nonesuch Library
1961)

In his 1969 *Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse famously celebrates a 'new sensibility'. This sensibility, he says, is both a precondition and a result of social change.¹ As the passage quoted from Blake illustrates, Marcuse's call for a fresh sensibility on the part of revolutionaries has a lengthy history. Closely entwined with radical thinking is the idea that a new world appears in enriched and experientially resonant ways.

1 H. Marcuse *An Essay on Liberation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1972) p. 37.

Where does such a hope or expectation originate? How should the idea of such an enhancement be understood? Below, I sketch an answer to the first of these questions. And I attempt to shed light on what an enriched sensibility may mean.

* * *

Let us start from Blake. By the 'doors of perception', the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* means senses. His proposal that the senses be 'cleansed' is a response to a specific challenge.

The challenge is made by a 'mighty Devil folded in black clouds'. On a rock, the devil inscribes the following words:

How do you know but every Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?

Transcribed into twentieth or twenty-first-century prose, the devil asks the poet: how do you know *that* every bird *is not* a world of delight? Does blindness of the senses not prevent you from seeing this?

Blake's response is to agree with the devil on both counts. Yes, the bird is a world of delight: it is in effect 'infinite'. And, yes, the human senses are 'closed' – and must therefore be 'cleansed'. *Why*, a reader may ask, are the senses 'closed'? It is because humanity inhabits a 'cavern' and sees things through inadequate 'chinks'. The senses are indeed the problem – but the problem can be solved if emancipation occurs.

What sort of emancipation? Blake wrote the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* at the time of the French Revolution. Scholars date the work to 1790 or 1790-93. The emancipation which Blake invokes is neither mystical nor merely literary: it is social, in a manner which addresses theoretical (or internal) and practical (or external) issues.² Social emancipation and the emancipation of the senses take place together. The 'cavern' which humanity inhabits involves more than external walls. It involves patterns of thinking that derange the mind.

Questions about Blake's context may be broadened. Although *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* was composed against a French Revolutionary background, the English Revolution of the mid-seventeenth century was no less important to Blake's work. In the 1640s, England's system of church courts and censorship collapsed: the result was an upsurge of radical and, sometimes, antinomian ideas.³ This upsurge ended when social élites regained order – but Blake remained an exponent of antinomian themes.⁴

2 G.R. Sabri-Tabrizi *The 'Heaven' and 'Hell' of William Blake* (New York: International Publishers 1973).

3 See, famously, C. Hill *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1975).

4 On Blake and antinomianism, see E.P. Thompson *Witness against the Beast* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994) ch. 2.

(When Blake declares that 'One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression',⁵ he thinks as an antimonian; the same is true when he takes up the challenge that the 'devil' presents.) In the present notes, however, a context broader than the 1640s concerns me – however fascinating, and worth renewing, this context is. For Blake's programme of sensory renewal to be intelligible, a still more general set of issues must be brought into view.

* * *

This set of issues may be summarised in a question: how should the term 'common sense' be understood? The question has a lengthy history. It is addressed in a conversation which ranges through European culture and which has lasted, with permutations, for over two thousand years. An attempt to bring Blake's concerns into focus may start by sketching ways in which common sense has been seen.

At this point, I anticipate an objection: why discuss common sense? Is Blake not the least commonsensical of English poets? Does the notion of sensory renewal not challenge common sense to its foundations?

My response is that currently widespread understandings of 'common sense' (as a term and as an actuality) are misleading. According to such understandings, the realm of common sense and the realm of *what is obvious* (or of *what is immediately self-evident*) are one and the same. The phrase "It's just common sense!" is all too familiar. If such understandings are followed then, to be sure, a turn to common sense embraces conformism and Blakean insight disappears. However, a definition in terms of immediacy or obviousness is woefully inadequate. It underestimates common sense's conceptual richness. And it has little to do with the expression's history.⁶ To this history I now turn.

Understanding 'common sense' and its significance

If 'common sense' is approached through the history of ideas, two broad meanings of the term may be distinguished. I comment on each.

⁵ *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* p. 191.

⁶ I do not wish to overstate my claim. At one point in this history, common sense and obviousness were indeed equated. This point was the first half of the eighteenth century – as described in S. Rosenfeld *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press 2011) ch. 1. Then, common sense became bluff and bourgeois complacency (to employ terms I doubt Rosenfeld would use). If Blake, writing around 1790, nonetheless draws upon 'common sense' thinking, his work attempts to rescue the notion from its nadir. My claim is that common sense in its early eighteenth century meaning is not to be equated with common sense *per se*.

(i) *Common sense in its “schematically Greek” meaning*

An outline of Greek common sense must take *De Anima* (350 BC) as its point of departure. There, Aristotle refers to a 'general sense' (Foster and Humphries) or 'common sensation' (Lawson-Tancred) or 'common sense' (Gregoric) through which *common sensibles* are perceived.⁷ By common sensibles, Aristotle has in mind qualities which (he claims) more than one sense perceives: his examples are movement, rest, number, shape, size and unity.⁸ From Aristotle's remarks, a number of questions arise. Do common sensibles exist? If they do, does common sense perceive common sensible *alone*? If they do not, must the idea of common sense be rejected? My suggestion is that Aristotle's view of common sense can be rephrased, in a manner where the problematic idea of common sensibles is absent. We can say: common sense gathers the more usual five senses together. It relates or interrelates the data which the five senses – sight, touch, etc. – supply.

Here, I do not explore *De Anima* in detail. What interests me in my rephrased version of Aristotle is not its relation to textual issues. It is that it encapsulates common sense in what may be termed its “schematically Greek” meaning.

Let me unpack the “schematically Greek” conception of common sense a little further. At the core of this conception lies an overarching claim. It is that the familiar five senses can be fitted together (or integrated, or “totalised”) to make a single picture or – to change the metaphor – to tell a coherent tale. Owing to common sense (in its “schematically Greek” meaning), a point or edge which *looks* sharp also *feels* sharp. A surface which *feels* rounded *looks* rounded. The same conception of common sense is involved when we describe an object as (say) white *and* cubic – that is, when we ascribe visible and tactile qualities to one and the same thing.

This conception of common sense became widespread in European culture. Writing in the thirteenth century, Aquinas commented on *De Anima* and underlined its conception of common sense. He states that common sense 'lies at the very heart of sensitivity'.⁹ Similar passages occur in Leonardo¹⁰ and Descartes.¹¹ When Berkeley

7 The names in brackets are those of recent translators. See Aristotle *De Anima* (London: Penguin Books 1986) p. 191; St. Thomas Aquinas *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books 1994) p. 175; P. Gregoric *Aristotle on the Common Sense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011) p. 69.

8 *De Anima* pp. 172, 190.

9 *Commentary* p. 191.

10 According to Leonardo, the 'seat of judgement' is located in 'the place called “sensus communis” where the five senses meet': Leonardo da Vinci *Notebooks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008) p. 103. See, for discussion, J. Pevsner 'Leonardo da Vinci's contributions to neuroscience' *TRENDS in Neuroscience* Vol. 25, No. 4 (April 2002).

11 Descartes states that 'external' impressions are 'carried off to some other part of the body, the part called the common sense': E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, eds., *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1967), Vol. 1, p. 37.

(writing in 1709) attacks common sense, he does so by declaring that 'there is no idea common to sight and touch'.¹² That is, he attacks common sense in its Aristotelian meaning. Later in the same century, Reid stressed *De Anima's* significance.¹³ When Blake's antinomian devil refers to the 'senses five', he is renewing a lengthy tradition.

Besides being referred to by a range of writers and theorists, the schematically Greek conception of common sense left a linguistic imprint. From the pattern of thought that I have sketched, the notion of a *sixth sense* emerged.¹⁴

Before leaving my sketch, a further point is to be added. The “schematically Greek” view of common sense is more than a theory of sense-perception. Although the view focuses on the senses, it is not a theory of sense-experience alone. It is a theory about human individuality. An individual whose sense-experience is coherent, in the manner indicated, is one who counts as “totalised” (to employ an earlier expression) or “together” (to borrow an everyday term). He or she is adult (in a psychoanalytic or Kantian sense) and capable of autonomous existence. Blake's devil challenges the poet not merely to see clearly but to be free.

(ii) *Common sense in its “schematically Roman” meaning*

Schematically Greek and schematically Roman conceptions of common sense differ in more than one detail. They respond to different sets of problems. Whereas Aristotle focuses on the senses, and the relation between them, Roman writers may *EITHER* address ethical issues *OR* reflect on common or shared ideas. My first task is to illustrate this either/or.

Writing in the first century AD, Seneca claims that 'ordinary tact [*sensus communis*]' is sufficient to avoid provoking hatred.¹⁵ In this passage, common sense is a code of behaviour and an ethical – as distinct from, say, an empirical or descriptive – notion.

In a passage dating from the previous century, Cicero defends 'the usage approved by the sense of the community [*communis sensus*]'.¹⁶ Here, the 'sense' referred to is not

12 G. Berkeley *A New Theory of Vision and Other Select Philosophical Writings* (London: J.M. Dent n.d.) p. 72.

13 Thus T. Reid 'Curâ Prima on Common Sense', Appendix to L. Marcil-Lacoste *Claude Buffier and Thomas Reid* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press 1982) p. 189: 'Aristotle observed that the faculty by which we distinguish the objects of the different senses...must be a faculty distinct from [for example] sight and touch'. See G. Davie *The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect* (Edinburgh: Polygon 1986) p. 187.

14 Aristotle insists that common sense is not a sense – in the usual meaning of the term. What then (on an Aristotelian or “schematically Greek” understanding) is it? What is it *if not* a “sixth” sense? *De Anima* remains unclear.

15 Seneca *Letters from a Stoic* (London: Penguin Books 1969) p. 195. See (for the Latin) L. Anneus Seneca *Philosophische Schriften* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1998), 4, p. 618.

16 Quoted in S.E.W. Bugter 'Sensus Communis in the Works of M. Tullius Cicero' in F. van Holthoon and D.R. Olson, eds., *Common Sense: The Foundations for Social Science* (Lanham and London: University Press of America 1987) p. 90.

necessarily ethical. It is not necessarily an idea about how individuals should behave. It is, rather, a set of ideas or meanings which (whatever their content) a group of individuals – a community or society – shares.

What may we gather from the just-quoted passages? Two twentieth century comments point us in what I see as the right direction. In one, Hans-Georg Gadamer links Roman common sense to 'traditions of public and social life'.¹⁷ In the other, S.E.W. Bugter equates (whilst summarising Cicero) *sensus communis* with 'the notions or norms men in society hold in common'.¹⁸ Both comments paint the same picture – namely, a picture with two components. The first is that common sense exists only where more than one individual is present. The second is that the individuals concerned must think of themselves as socially related. Drawing these components together, we may say: *common sense in its “schematically Roman” meaning is interpersonal.* (I return to the notion of interpersonal below.) If such a common sense is seen in an asocial or solitary or monological fashion, it is a contradiction in terms.

In the light of these comments, how should the difference between Seneca and Cicero be regarded? Of the two passages quoted, is one reference to common sense more authentic than the other? Must an interpersonal common sense have an ethical character (in which case Seneca is to be preferred)? Or may such a common sense be present in non-ethical statements (as Cicero implies)? Bugter's phrase 'notions or norms' suggests how these questions may be answered: if the term *sensus communis* is applicable to 'notions' and 'norms' alike, then (I take it) common sense *may*, but *need not*, invoke ethical ideas. At its most general level, *sensus communis* relates to meanings which *regardless of their content* individuals share.

The above remarks on Roman common sense are, necessarily, sketchy. To what I have said, I add three observations.

(a) In the history of ideas, Roman common sense tends to be presented in solely ethical terms. For example, Shaftesbury (writing in 1711) relates *sensus communis* to 'publick Spirit' and an awareness of the '*Publick Good*'.¹⁹ Hutcheson follows Shaftesbury when he translates 'common sense' or *sensus communis* as '*Publick Sense*'.²⁰ Reid follows Shaftesbury and Hutcheson when (linking Greek common sense to the 'understanding') he relates Roman common sense to the 'heart'.²¹ In the

17 H.-G. Gadamer *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward 1975) p. 22.

18 Bugter 'Sensus Communis' p. 91.

19 A.A. Cooper (Third Earl of Shaftesbury) *Characteristicks* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund 2001), Vol. 1, p. 67.

20 F. Hutcheson *An Essay on the Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund 2002) p. 17. (It is true that, taken literally, the phrase '*Publick Sense*' may cover *any* meaning – and not merely, or not necessarily, an ethical meaning – that is socially current. My feeling is, however, that Hutcheson is guided by Shaftesbury and intends his phrase in a specifically ethical way.)

21 '*Cûra Prima*' p. 189.

face of this consensus, I claim that *sensus communis* covers normative *and* notional – or ethical *and* epistemological – issues.

(b) In scholarly discussion of common sense, a specific assumption tends to be made. It is assumed that, if it exists, it is present in each individual. That is to say: it is assumed that it is present in individuals *taken separately*. When Reid lists 'contingent truths' which, he thinks, count as 'principles' of common sense,²² such a view seems to be taken for granted: how should we interpret such a list, other than as an enumeration of principles that all individuals endorse? From Reid, the assumption has made its way into Reid-scholarship.²³ If, however, the notion of interpersonality is to be emphasised, it is not sufficient that common sense be seen as present in individuals taken separately – or in isolation from one another. To quote Gadamer once more, it is not sufficient to view common sense as 'a feature given to all men, part of the natural law'.²⁴ Rather, interpersonality's other component – the component which requires that individuals see themselves socially – must be brought into view. In this connection, it is impossible to shrug off a disquieting suggestion. Why does recent scholarship see common sense in terms of separate or isolated individuals? Is it because *liberal and neoliberal* views of individuality prevail?

(c) If *sensus communis* is interpersonal, and turns on the idea of shared meaning, amongst whom may meaning be shared? Must there be a specific group or community who count as “commonsensical” – and beyond whose boundaries arbitrariness obtains? For the Romans, the 'traditions' (Gadamer) which nurture common sense are – broadly speaking – Roman traditions; the public life to which it is linked remains the public life of republican Rome. If this is so, a question arises about how far the notion of *sensus communis* may be generalised. Most crucially: does an interpersonal conception of common sense presuppose group- or community-membership? In order to exist, must it divide the world between “insiders” (who possess common sense) and “outsiders” (who do not)? We have said that individuals who share *sensus communis* must think of themselves in social terms: does it follow that they must think of themselves as a group around which a boundary is drawn? Such questions are crucial for directly political reasons. If common sense presupposes membership in a finite and bounded group, then (despite its interpersonality) it remains intrinsically conservative. If common sense may exist in a society where boundaries and group-membership is absent, it may be pictured as the shared sense of a self-determining world. In reply to my questions: I can see no reason to picture common sense in restricted terms. I can see no reason why (if common sense is to exist) a distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” need be drawn. Let us (for a moment) picture a society as a conversation. In a conversation

22 W. Hamilton, ed., *The Works of Thomas Reid, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart 1863), Vol. 1, pp. 441-52.

23 Rightly or wrongly, I am thinking of N. Wolterstorff 'Reid on Common Sense' in T. Cuneo and R. van Woudenberg, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004).

24 *Truth and Method* p. 24.

that is *open to all comers*, common sense not merely subsists but thrives.²⁵

Combining Greek and Roman views

Can the views of common sense that I have distinguished be combined? Can common sense (i) and (ii) – that is, “schematically Greek” and “schematically Roman” common sense – be drawn together into a single scheme? I think they can.

The conceptual scheme that I have in mind is one where common sense (i) and (ii) are mutually dependent. They exist in and through one another. Interpersonal common sense involves a sharing of meanings, and this sharing is possible only amongst individuals of a self-coherent and – to employ a term introduced earlier – “totalised” kind. That is to say: “schematically Roman” common sense presupposes “schematically Greek” common sense. Conversely, the common sense which is present in “totalised” individuals can exist only if interpersonality is in play. It is only because individuals share meanings that they can appear in autonomous and self-coherent terms. Stated differently: “schematically Greek” common sense presupposes “schematically Roman” common sense. The conceptual scheme which I suggest has two arcs of argument; I comment briefly on each.

(a) *Why should “schematically Roman” common sense presuppose “schematically Greek” common sense?*

I take it to be uncontroversial that only self-coherent individuals can be interpersonal – or, to state the point differently, share a world. Individuals in the grip of monological fantasies²⁶ lose purchase on the idea of a shared or common life. When we distinguish this point from one which it resembles, controversy – so I suggest – reappears.

The notion of a self-coherent or “totalised” individual is to be distinguished from that of a solitary or asocial or “abstract” individual. The notion of individuality which is adult (in the psychoanalytic or Kantian meaning) is to be distinguished from individuality of a “liberal” or (so to say) monadological kind.²⁷ The chief difference

25 What is said in the closing sentences of this paragraph may be expressed more philosophically (and less metaphorically). A society where there are group-identities and boundaries is one which is institutional and where role-definitional alienation obtains. A society which may be compared to a *conversation which is open to all comers* is one where there is mutual recognition (see below). For discussion, see R. Gunn and A. Wilding 'Revolutionary or Less-than-Revolutionary Recognition?' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 24 July 2013; 'Marx and Recognition' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 24 November 2014.

26 For example, “Kleinian” fantasies.

27 On 'man as an isolated monad', see Marx's 'On the Jewish Question' in K. Marx and F. Engels *Collected Works*

is that the “liberal” notion of the individual stands in a tradition – that of natural law thinking – which is monological in character, whereas the notion of self-coherent or adult individuality may be pictured (indeed, must be pictured) in social terms. In the present connection, a further point is to be considered. A liberal or abstract conception of the individual sees itself as self-sufficient – both in a social and a conceptual sense. It pictures itself as a conception to which all else refers. In the context of the present discussion, individuality is by contrast a moment in a larger flow. As will become apparent in a moment, I picture the individual in a social context. Individuality is not (I claim) self-sufficient but exists in a social and interpersonal sense.

(b) *Why should “schematically Greek” common sense presuppose “schematically Roman” common sense?*

The second arc of my argument is, I suggest, by far the most challenging. Rather than drawing attention to a claim that may seem evident, it opens a fresh avenue towards a conception of the self.

The conception is one where the individual becomes self-aware, not through introspection, but by seeing him or herself with 'the eyes of other people'.²⁸ The 'other people' who are seen look at the individual in their turn, and what the individual sees in their eyes is the starting-point from which self-awareness begins.²⁹ My proposal is not, of course, that other people view the individual in an infallibly accurate way. On the contrary, what the individual reads in the 'eyes of other people' may be a set of assumptions to which he or she objects. This does not mean, however, that the *look of other* is irrelevant to an image of the self. What follows from the point about other people's non-infallibility is not that individuals must be pictured in solitary or asocial – so to say, “liberal” or “private” – terms. Rather, social relations must be envisaged which take the form of a conversation. More specifically, the conversation must be one where – to adapt a formulation in Habermas – all individuals may, equally,

(London: Lawrence and Wishart 1975-), Vol. 3, p. 162.

28 The phrase is Adam Smith's, in a passage that deserves to be quoted in full: 'We can never survey our own sentiments and motives, we can never form any judgement concerning them; unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our natural station, and endeavour to view them as at a certain distance from us. But we can do this in no other way than by endeavouring to view them *with the eyes of other people*, or as other people are likely to view them.' A. Smith *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1976) p. 110 (emphasis added). Smith is, of course, widely interpreted as a proto-liberal and an advocate of market-based views – but this interpretation strikes me as tragically mistaken. See R. Gunn 'From Smithian Sympathy to Hegelian Recognition' in H. Kapuku, M. Aydin, I. Şiriner, E. Morady and Ü. Çetin, eds., *Politik ve Adam Smith* (Istanbul: Yön Yayınları 2010) – also available at <http://www.richard-gunn.com>. For views of Smith that I welcome, see D. Gocmen *The Adam Smith Problem* (London: I.B. Tauris 2007) and N. Davidson, P. McCafferty and D. Miller, Eds., *Neoliberal Scotland* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010) pp. 3-6.

29 The *look of the other* is a key theme in phenomenological philosophy: see, famously, J.-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness* (London: Methuen 1957) pp. 252-302. To G.E. Davie (in conversation), I owe the suggestion that Smith's comment on the eyes of other people and the phenomenological notion of the *look* are related.

perform all sorts of speech acts.³⁰ That is to say, social relations (and the *looking* that social relations involve) must be mutually recognitive in kind.³¹

How do these comments on the *self* relate to the senses? What I have referred to as the second arc of my argument has a precise implication. It is that we, as individuals, gather sensory data together only when we take note of how other people see us. Why should other people be relevant, when attempting to understand our sensory experience? A number of answers can be given to this question. One is that, when other individuals look at us, they *see us as a whole* – at least, in a fashion and to a certain degree. And this *totalising* (or, at least, *partially totalising* or *would-be-totalising*) view is one from which we learn. Once we have a picture of ourselves as totalised, we are in a position to relate our senses. Another answer has an ontogenetic character: it is to point out that a child or infant learns to perceive objects by *seeing themselves through another individual's eyes* – the “other person” being, most usually, his or her mother.³²

A third answer is that meaning – the meaning of any expression whatever, however closely related to sensory experience – is “public” rather than “private”. Hegel takes a step towards this view when he says that, when immediate 'sense-certainty' tries to say what it means, it contradicts itself: meaning, in Hegel's view, is linked to language.³³ The view gains full and explicit expression when, a century and a half later, Wittgenstein relates meaning not to ostensive definition – and thus to immediacy or “privacy” – but to a word's 'use in the language'.³⁴ In the mid-twentieth century, the view that a term's meaning was “public” and linguistic (rather than “private or immediate) met with fierce controversy; since then, however, it is widely accepted. In the present connection, I refer to the issue of meaning because a shift from “privacy” to “publicity” makes it easier to see why “schematically Greek” and “schematically Roman” common sense are related in the way that I have suggested. Once this shift has taken place, claims about each or any of the five senses are necessarily understood against a background of shared meanings. The notion the “schematically Greek” common sense exists *in* and *through* “schematically Roman” common sense becomes all-but-mandatory. Would it be too much to say that a drawing together of common sense (i) and (ii) is the fundamental basis on which the linguistic turn of twentieth-century philosophy rests? I leave the question open here.

30 J. Habermas 'Wahrheitstheorien' in H. Fahrenbach, ed., *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion* (Neske: Pfullingen 1973) p. 255; see T. McCarthy *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1984) p. 306.

31 On 'mutual recognition, see note 25, above, and the discussion of Hegel (and Marx) later in the present paper.

32 See the diagram given in M. Tomasello *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press 1999) p. 65.

33 G.W.F. Hegel *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1977) pp. 65-6.

34 L. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1968) p. 20e. A question arises at this point: may Hegel's and Wittgenstein's views on meaning be related? I suggest that they can indeed - the link being a passage in Marx's *German Ideology*: 'Language is as old as consciousness, language *is* practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it exist for me' (Marx and Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 44). Roy Pascal, a friend of Wittgenstein in Cambridge, was the *German Ideology's* first English translator.

*

*

*

Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is the text where, for the first time in history, common sense (i) and (ii) – or “schematically Greek” and “schematically Roman” common sense – meet in the way that I have sketched.

Can Blake plausibly be seen in such a fashion? He cannot. Nowhere in his writings does he refer to the common sense tradition. Nowhere in the writings of common sense scholars does Blake receive a mention – much less an accolade.

And yet my suggestion, once made, calls for attention. When taken on its own, the *Marriage* appears to be an inspired fragment. When related to common sense, and more specifically to “schematically Greek” and “schematically Roman” conceptions, it acquires an argument. Words which seem enigmatic come to life.

May the *Marriage's* argument be summarised? I believe that it can. A sketch may start from a relatively uncontroversial point. The devil's question about the five senses raises issues which “schematically Greek” common sense has addressed. What do the senses show? How may the *multiplicity of the senses* (the 'senses five') and the *immensity of the world* (an 'immense world of delight') interrelate? How do this multiplicity and that immensity impinge on a single perception – for example, that of a 'Bird'? In the light of what I have said, these questions have a familiar ring. They are questions about *totalisation* and about how experiences cohere. Let us agree that the *Marriage* addresses “schematically Greek” themes.

To these remarks, a comment may be added. If we say that Blake addresses themes which “schematically Greek” thought considers, we view – it is true – *the past* as a context of his work. We allow that he explores previously-debated ideas. However, we do not regard his thought as tradition-bound. The questions which Blake raises about totalisation are, I propose, ones with a distinctive ring. If individuals were to be coherent, or self-coherent, might their experience be 'cleansed'? Might the 'doors of perception' be opened to them? What might self-coherent individuals see?

What force might such path-breaking questions have? So far, my comments on Blake have focused on “schematically Greek” ideas. Now, I bring “schematically Roman” common sense into the picture. It is at this point that controversy erupts.

Is there, in fact, *any relation* between Blake and “schematically Roman” thinking? I suggest that there is – and that the relation is vital. The *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* acknowledges a space which, in earlier times, Roman thinking might fill. The space is one where conceptions of social existence and thence of interpersonality are to be found. It is one where individuals relate to one another and where meanings are shared. Above, I noted that the *Marriage* was composed in French Revolutionary times; Blake writes as a new social world unfolds. The “social” dimension of his writings is what, now, calls for our attention. His proposal – in the history of thought, his earth-shattering proposal – is that the emancipation of the senses must be seen in social terms.

This proposal may be stated in a drier but no less trenchant manner: common sense (i) formulates problems which only common sense (ii) can address. Issues concerning the five senses can be resolved only on a social (an interpersonal) terrain. One advantage of this drier phraseology is that it allows the immense antiquity of the issues concerned to be seen. Once this antiquity is appreciated, Blake's originality becomes clear.

To suggest that *Blake points the way towards a unified picture of common sense* is, already, to enter disputed territory. The controversial step in discussion is, however, still to come. Let us agree that Blake's position can be roughly summarised as follows: questions about the senses must be translated out of monological privacy and, instead, be viewed in interpersonal terms. If this summary is accepted, a further question remains. What form of social existence – what pattern of interpersonality – must, in Blake's view, be present, if the senses are to be renewed? How must meanings be shared, if the doors of perception are to open? In what sort of society may the *Marriage's* challenge be met?

Again, my point may be phrased in a dry manner. And, again, the dry reformulation allows historical depth. I have proposed that Blake acknowledges a conceptual space which, previously, “schematically Roman” thinking might fill. My suggestion is that Blake turns “schematically Roman” conceptions on their head. That is, he *transforms the significance* of socially shared meaning. Let me explain.

An explanation may start from an observation made earlier. Above, I have suggested that Roman writers employ an “insiders”/“outsiders” distinction – the “insiders” they had in mind being the Romans themselves. This mind-set was echoed in common sense's history: frequently, the idea of common sense had a politically conservative ring. When, for example, Shaftesbury equated *sensus communis* with 'publick Spirit',³⁵ he gave common sense a “civic” significance; in so doing, he prepared the

35 See note 19, above.

way for it to become the ideology of a mercantile élite.³⁶ When 'common sense' became a fashionable term in eighteenth-century London, the limits of political debate were firmly etched: common sense was invoked as – in Rosenfeld's nuanced expression – a 'minimum standard for social and ideological cohesion'.³⁷ Such a list of instances may be extended. As time passed, common sense and conservatism came to be allied ideas.³⁸

With Blake, everything is different. The space which “schematically Roman” thought had filled is given a *politically radical content*. For Roman writers, I have suggested, meaning was shared – this meaning being specifically Roman. For Blake, the meaning concerned (and thence the act of sharing) is one where *emancipation obtains*. The work which contains the famous words about the 'doors of perception' is the work which proclaims: 'EMPIRE IS NO MORE'.³⁹ How does Blake envisage non-tyrannical social existence? What form does he consider emancipation must take? The text of the *Marriage* contains pointers – pointers which become vivid when Blake's roots in seventeenth-century revolutionary thinking is borne in mind. Amongst radicals of the 1640s, antinomianism flourished⁴⁰ and frequently associated with theologies of free grace. What a theology of free grace might signify may be learned from John Saltmarsh, whose *Smoke in the Temple* (1646) declares: 'Let there be liberty of the press for printing, to those that are not allowed pulpits for printing. Let that light come in at the window, which cannot come in at the door... Let there be free debates and open conferences and communication'.⁴¹ As an example of antinomianism we may quote Abiezer Coppe, writing in 1649: 'Well! To the pure all things are pure... God hath chosen BASE things'.⁴² Blake, I have noted, expounds antinomian ideas: in effect, he renews seventeenth-century perspectives in French Revolutionary times.⁴³ With these points as background, the *Marriage's* picture of non-tyrannical existence emerges. Blake imagines an emancipation that is beyond good and evil – understanding “good” and “evil”, here, in a jurisdictional or legalistic or (in a word) “repressive” sense. The sharing of meanings which Blake's writings seek to anticipate reject conservative values. It condemns eighteenth-century

36 Is this judgement too sweeping? I doubt it. If the period is the eighteenth century and the 'elite' the post-Stuart UK (Scottish and English) establishment, how else should the role of eighteenth-century 'common sense' be described?

37 Rosenfeld *Common Sense* p. 27.

38 To take a further example: Davie refers to Théodore Jouffroy's post-French Revolutionary view that common sense 'could be appealed to as a check on extremism': G.E. Davie *The Democratic Intellect* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1981) p. 255. How should this reference be understood? Does Davie urge that common sense and 'extremism' are opposed? I do not discuss Davie's meaning here.

39 *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* p. 193.

40 Besides Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down*, see his *Liberty Against the Law* (London: Allen Lane 1999) ch. 18.

41 Saltmarsh in A.S.P. Woodehouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty* (London: J.M. Dent 1992) p. 181.

42 Coppe in N. Smith, ed., *A Collection of Ranter Writings from the 17th Century* (London: Junction Books 1983) pp. 92, 106. Coppe's invocation of 'BASE things' is echoed – presumably unconsciously – in Bataille's 'The “Old Mole” and the Prefix *Sur*': see G. Bataille *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1985) pp. 32-44.

43 See text at notes 3-5, above. (Blake's *renewal* is not without its poignancy: popular struggles in the 1640s met with defeat, and more than a century of repression ensued. Might the French Revolutionary succeed, Blake is asking, where the popular revolution of the 1640s failed?)

orthodoxies.⁴⁴ And it points beyond the liberalism of the present day.

I end this section of my notes by raising a question. The question is one of a mainly-verbal kind. My discussion has outlined what is, in effect, a conversation that started in 350 BC and lasted until (at least) French Revolutionary days. This conversation concerned common sense and its variants. Did the conversation continue? The writers who continued the conversation, from the nineteenth century onwards, are not – I concede – ones who saw themselves as common sense theorists. Conversely, scholars who trace common sense's history tend to set aside discussion by Hegel and Marx. How should we proceed? My preference is to see 'common sense' as a still-relevant term. In what follows, I attempt to persuade a reader of this relevance. What matters is, however, that the conversation continues. Whether or not the term 'common sense' is found helpful is a secondary affair.

Emancipatory implications: common sense's history in Hegel and Marx

So far, my notes have focused on classical-to-eighteenth-century thinking. What happened next, after the French Revolution occurred? Where did the conversation that started in 350 BC lead? My suggestion that issues concerning common sense became central in German thinking.

In the sections of my discussion which follow, I comment on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Marx's work. Both writers employ a conceptual geography which, I claim, a distinction between common sense (i) and (ii) allows us to trace. In addition, both writers view the notion of shared meaning – the notion that underlies common sense (ii) – in a radical and emancipatory way.

At this point, I offer a clarification. At no point (to the best of my knowledge) did Hegel or Marx read Blake. The suggestion that Hegel and Marx may have been influenced by Blake is one which I regard as fanciful and set aside. If the story which I tell proceeds *as though* Blake was influential, so be it. What may have happened is that Blake and Hegel and Marx inherited (whether consciously or unconsciously) seventeenth-century revolutionary ideas.

Before turning to Hegel, I offer two comments. One is general in character. When German writers explore commonsensical issues, what they have in mind is chiefly common sense (ii). That is to say, they focus less on the five senses than on shared

44 See note 6, above.

meaning. This observation underlines conceptual connections. It suggests that 'recognition [*Anerkennung*]' in Hegel and social relations in Marx are common-sense-related themes.

My second comment is more specific. It is that lines of transmission – in effect, capillary connections – link common sense to German thought. Manfred Kuehn has discussed Scottish common sense philosophy as a background to Kantian and post-Kantian ideas.⁴⁵ George Davie has related 'the Smithian doctrine of one's knowledge of other minds' to the position 'which we find in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*'.⁴⁶ During the eighteenth century, two German translations of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* appeared.⁴⁷ Relations between Scottish and German accounts of civil society are the subject of a study by Norbert Waszek.⁴⁸

To my comment on capillary connections, a note can be added. Besides Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Law* – published in 1796-7 – is a work that relates to common sense as an idea. We have seen that, amongst Roman writers, common sense is interpersonal: a solitary or asocial common sense is (we have said) a contradiction in terms. For Fichte, the same is true of human beings themselves: a human being 'becomes a human being only among [other] human beings'.⁴⁹ What might this *human plurality* (or *interpersonality*) mean in social and political terms? It is in reply to this question that Fichte speaks of 'recognition'; he speculates on the form that a 'community' of recognitive consciousnesses might take.⁵⁰ From Fichte, the term 'recognition' passes over into Hegel – who gives to the notion a non-Fichtean twist.

i) *Commons sense in Hegel*

To Hegel I now turn.

My comments on Hegel focus on his earlier writings alone. More especially, they

45 M. Kuehn *Scottish Common Sense Philosophy in Germany 1768-1800* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press 1987).

46 G. Davie *Ferrier and the Blackout of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Review 2003) p. 3. The passage requires unpacking. The 'Smithian doctrine' to which Davie refers is the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* argument that self-knowledge comes about by looking into the eyes of other people: see text at note 28, above. My 'From Smithian Sympathy to Hegelian Recognition' – see note 28 – explores the notion of interaction on which, I consider, the Smithian doctrine turns. For the common-sense-related passages in Schelling, see F.W.J. Schelling *System of Transcendental Idealism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1978) pp. 155-74.

47 I.S. Ross *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995) p. 194.

48 N. Waszek *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel's Account of 'Civil Society'* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1988).

49 J.G. Fichte *Foundations of Natural Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000) p. 37. In the continuation of the passage, Fichte is still more direct: 'if there are to be human beings at all,' he says, 'there must be more than one'.

50 *Ibid.* pp. 42, 47.

concern his *Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy* (1801) and *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Amongst scholars, there has been considerable debate about the relation between Hegel's earlier and later writings. Do the *Phenomenology* and, say, the *Philosophy of Right* of 1821 say the same or different things? In my view, they are different. But I set the issue aside here.

In the present connection, Hegel's *Difference* is relevant for two reasons. First, it contains a notable section on common sense.⁵¹ The section contrasts the abstract 'dicta' of common sense with common sense as something 'inward and unexpressed'; whereas the 'dicta' of common sense are dogmatic assertions, common sense as something inward has 'absolute' connections.⁵² The passage is striking because it points towards the idea of shared meaning. Common sense as something inward (and hence as something strong and resilient) draws on common sense (ii).

The second reason for turning to the *Difference* essay concerns Fichte. The form of community which Fichte advocates is one where each individual has a 'sphere' of freedom – individuals' spheres being mutually exclusive.⁵³ So to say: mutual *recognition* turns on mutual *delimitation*. Hegel's *Difference* rejects the Fichtean notion of spheres, in no uncertain terms: 'If the community of rational beings were essentially a limitation of true freedom, the community would be in and for itself the supreme tyranny'.⁵⁴ In Hegel's view, freedom is not something – an area or “sphere” – that human interaction cannot and should not reach. It is, in his view, inescapable that freedom and interaction are linked. If unalienated freedom is possible, it is because interaction is free.

I have stressed Hegel's critique of Fichte because it is germane to our discussion. Above, I have suggested that Blake advocates a radicalism that 'points beyond the liberalism of the present day';⁵⁵ here, my proposal is that the *Difference* has a similar significance. Fichte's notion of spheres belongs in the Modern Natural Law tradition – from which liberalism evolved.⁵⁶ Like Blake, Hegel anticipates an emancipation

51 G.W.F. Hegel *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York 1977) pp. 98-103. There, Hegel's term for 'common sense' is *gesunden Menschenverstand* rather than *allgemeinen Menschenverstande* – the term which he employs in his later work. Compare the German text of *Difference* p. 98 and G.W.F. Hegel *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press 1999), Vol. III, p. 376. I take it that (this verbal difference notwithstanding) the Hegel of 1801 has the common sense tradition in mind.

52 *Difference* p. 99.

53 In Fichte's words: 'I ascribe to *myself* a sphere [*Sphäre*] for my freedom from which I exclude the other, and ascribe a sphere *to the other* from which I exclude myself' (*Foundations* p. 48).

54 *Difference* p. 145; see also Hegel's satirical footnote on p. 147.

55 See text immediately following note 44, above.

56 On the Modern Natural Law tradition, see R. Gunn 'From Marx to Grotius and from Grotius to Marx' (available at <http://www.richard-gunn.com>). For liberalism, note the close similarity between Fichte's individual “spheres” and Isaiah Berlin's notion of an 'area within which a man can act unobstructed by others' (emphasis added): I. Berlin 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in D. Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2006) p. 34 (together with 35 and 38-41). In effect, Fichte *agrees* and Hegel *denies* that liberty is to be pictured in “negative” terms.

that liberalism's delimited individuals cannot reach.

If Hegel's *Difference* essay addresses topics that concern us, his *Phenomenology* presents a conceptual world. Within this world – whose roots are, I note in passing, deeply practical⁵⁷ – everything is transfigured. However, outlines of earlier positions may be traced. My suggestion is that these outlines are, in part, familiar; Hegel's discussion echoes accounts of common sense.

In *Phenomenology* chapter II, Hegel discusses perception. What we perceive are *things* or, more specifically, things '*with many properties*'.⁵⁸ One way of reading the chapter is as follows: Hegel seems to be saying that the *unity* of a thing and the *multiplicity* of its properties are at odds. That is to say: 'perception' does not tell us how *this unity* and *this multiplicity* are linked. Is this reading sufficient? I suggest that more is at stake. When Hegel discusses properties, he offers examples: a 'thing' may, he says, be 'white, and *also* cubical, *also* tart, and so on'.⁵⁹ What is striking about these properties is – we may note – that different senses apprehend them. Whiteness is revealed by sight. The circumstance that something is cubic is discovered through touch. Tartness is tasted. To employ terminology introduced earlier: an individual unable to combine sight and touch and taste is an individual who lacks common sense (i) – or common sense in its “schematically Greek” meaning.⁶⁰ The problem which Hegel raises in his chapter on perception is *not merely* that of how multiplicity and unity may be linked. It is that of how *totalised* individuals – that is, individuals with common sense (i) – may exist.

At this point, the chapter on perception may be viewed in the *Phenomenology's* broad argument. Chapters I-III of the book discuss traditional epistemologies – and demonstrate that such epistemologies generate more problems than they solve. These problems become solvable – or, alternatively, fail to arise – when attention is shifted from the solitary and monological human subject to the subject regarded in interpersonal or dialogical terms. The 'turning-point [*Wendungspunkt*]' of the *Phenomenology's* argument comes when interpersonality – or, in Hegel's term, 'recognition' – is brought on the scene.⁶¹ This turning-point involves a change that our discussion has made familiar: questions about *totalisation* – and, thereby, common sense (i) – are henceforth addressed in terms of social meaning. Common sense (ii) is made the context in which common sense (i) is seen. The shift that we have ascribed to Blake and, in passing, Wittgenstein⁶² is – so I claim – fundamental to the

57 For Hegel, it is in the light of the French Revolutionary 'sunburst' (*Phenomenology* p 7) that his book's discussions may be seen.

58 Ibid. p. 67.

59 Ibid. p. 73.

60 The example of an object that is white *and* cubic was given when discussing “schematically Greek” common sense, above.

61 *Phenomenology* pp. 110-11.

62 See note 34, above.

Phenomenology's claims. How may *totalised* individuals exist? They may exist (and epistemological problems may be avoided) if social relationships are free.

If these admittedly sketchy comments on the *Phenomenology* are endorsed, Hegel's conception of *free social existence* moves to the centre of debate. What picture of such existence does the *Phenomenology* offer? What does Hegel put in the conceptual place that “schematically Roman” common sense once filled? When such questions are raised, discussion of Hegel takes an unexpected twist.

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that what Blake puts in place of “schematically Roman” allusions has an antinomian tinge. It is more startling that the *Phenomenology* advocates a notion of 'forgiveness' that lies *beyond good and evil* – or beyond the polarity of the 'hard heart' and the 'beautiful soul'.⁶³ I do not, here, suggest that Hegel turns to antinomianism directly. However, I draw attention to a parallel that is (once noticed) real.

Hegel's discussion of a forgiveness that is *beyond good and evil* come in the section of the *Phenomenology* which explores thought of the French Revolutionary era. In this section, the theme of mutual recognition is foregrounded.⁶⁴ For Hegel – I assert, but do not pause to argue here – French Revolutionary freedom and mutually recognitive freedom are the same. (By 'mutually recognitive freedom', I mean freedom which other people acknowledge, and which comes into being through this acknowledgement. It is freedom that exists in and through recognition, and comes into its own when recognition is unconstrained.) Blake and Hegel are utterly different figures, but meet on Revolutionary ground. If my comments on them are justified, they transpose the common sense tradition on to radical and world-changing terrain.

In this connection, common sense (ii) concerns us. A society where mutual recognition exists is, for Hegel, a society where meaning is shared. At the core of the *Phenomenology* lies a set of connections which can, I suggest, be expressed in mathematical (or quasi-mathematical) terms: *theory* is to *practice* as *truth* is to *freedom*. And *truth* is to *freedom* as *science* is to *mutual recognition*. In short, what the *Phenomenology* terms 'science' (or 'absolute knowing'⁶⁵) exists in and through mutual recognition; it can appear only when, in practice, mutually recognitive (or revolutionary) social relations subsist. Here, I do not comment on how (for the *Phenomenology*) 'science' proceeds. However, I offer a phrase which points towards Hegel's meaning. For the Hegel of 1807 – or, in other words, for the “earlier” Hegel – 'science' and *dialogical phenomenology* are the same.

63 *Phenomenology* pp. 383-409.

64 For mutual recognition, see *ibid.* pp. 388, 392, 394, 396-7, 405, 408-9.

65 *Das absolute Wissen* is the title of the *Phenomenology's* final chapter. The term 'science [*Wissenschaft*]' appears on the title page of the first edition, and is discussed in the *Phenomenology's* Preface.

Earlier, we asked whether Roman writers had a picture of the *pattern of interpersonal* (or *form of society*) wherein meaning can be shared. And we replied: for the Romans, this *form of society* was Rome itself.⁶⁶ Hegel's answer to the same question is drastically different. It is that meaning can be shared only where mutual recognition prevails. Individuals may be *totalised*, and their thought 'scientific' or truthful, only on the basis of the emancipation that revolution attempts.

A further comment on the *Phenomenology* may be added. It is that, for the Hegel of 1807, recognition may take *contradictory* (or “alienated”) or *uncontradictory* (or “non-alienated”) forms. Mutual recognition is *uncontradictory* recognition – and continues to remain in being only when its own dynamic is sustained. In order to sustain this dynamic it must (like a good conversation) determine its own course. Nothing that is extrinsic to it may condition it. If mutual recognition allows itself to be confined by institutional boundaries, or becomes channelled into courses that institutions and role definitions entail, it abandons its own dynamic. It renews recognition of a contradictory form. In Hegel's view, such a relapse occurred when French Revolutionary action ended: individuals submitted 'to negation and distinctions'⁶⁷ and a social world of 'spiritual masses [*geistige Massen*]'⁶⁸ came into being once again.

I end my comments on Hegel with two reflections. One is that interaction which *respects no external boundaries* is the *Phenomenology's* central and most pervasive theme. The other is that, from 1807 onwards, common sense (on the one hand) and institutional thinking (on the other) part ways.

ii) *Common Sense in Marx*

In Marx's *1844 Manuscripts*, the notion of sensory experience is vital. The above-drawn distinction between common sense (i) and (ii) can be mapped on to Marx's discussion.

For Marx, the themes of *the senses* and *emancipation* are linked. This is because emancipation concerns the 'whole [*totaler*] man':⁶⁹ When the rule of private property is ended, the notion of '*having*' is no longer an obsession – and the senses of '*seeing*,

66 See text leading up to note 25, above.

67 *Phenomenology* p. 361; see also p. 7.

68 On *geistige Massen* (or social institutions), see *ibid.* pp. 300, 356. For discussion, see Gunn and Wilding as referred to in note 25, above.

69 Marx and Engels *Collected Works* Vol. 3 p. 299.

hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling' are transformed.⁷⁰

Do passages of this sort suggest a Marx-and-common-sense connection? My reply is that they do. What Marx says about the senses echoes “schematically Greek” issues. And there is more. Marx's discussion can be read as an account of how common sense (i) and (ii) are related.

When Marx writes about the senses, he draws a distinction. All five of the senses can – he considers – exist in two ways. A 'human' eye or 'human' ear is capable of aesthetic pleasure, whereas a 'crude' (or non-human) eye or ear perceives in instrumental – roughly, survival-oriented – terms.⁷¹ When '*having*' predominates, the senses degenerate. When private property has been transcended, and when emancipation obtains, then (Marx tells us) man 'appropriates his comprehensive [*allseitiges*] essence' – and does so in a 'comprehensive [*allseitige*]' way.⁷² How should we understand these emphatic words? When Marx refers to an *allseitige* emancipation of the senses, his meaning is (I propose) precise. He is telling us that, if *any* sense is to be emancipated, the emancipation must extend to all five senses (or the senses taken together). That is to say: the senses may be emancipated only if integrated and self-coherent and *totalised* individuals exist. Marx envisages a world where common sense (i) thrives.

My suggestion is that still more can be gathered from Marx's claims. In the passages from the *Manuscripts* that bring common sense (i) into focus, Marx tells us how totalised individuals must be viewed.

In a word: such individuals must be seen as social. If sensory experience is to have an integrated and self-coherent character, it must (together with the individuals whose experience it is) be seen as social through and through. For Marx, distinctively human senses are '*social organs*'⁷³ – and '*the senses of the social man differ from those of the non-social man*'.⁷⁴ When Marx pictures an emancipation that concerns the '*whole man*', the emancipation that he has in mind involves radical social change.

At this point, a feature of Marx's discussion may be noted. I have hinted at it when I said that, for Marx, the senses are *through and through* social. My meaning was that, in the (human) senses as seen by Marx, no core of asocial “privacy” is retained.⁷⁵

70 Ibid. pp. 299-300.

71 Ibid. pp. 301-2.

72 Ibid. p. 299.

73 Ibid. p. 300.

74 Ibid. p. 301.

75 Here, I use the term “privacy” in the, in sense which debate on Wittgenstein has employed: see A.J. Ayer 'Can There Be a Private Language?' and R. Rhees 'Can There Be a Private Language?' in G. Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (London: Macmillan 1968). For Wittgenstein, according to whom meaning is “public”

Sensory experience is mediated through other individuals – a point which holds good even when an individual's own experience is concerned. Marx makes this last-mentioned point explicit when he says that 'his' – the human individual's – 'own sense-perception first exists as human sensuousness for himself through the *other man*'.⁷⁶ It is implied in the well-known (and surprisingly “Wittgensteinian”) passage on 'language' and 'consciousness' which the *German Ideology* contains.⁷⁷ Here, two observations on this feature of Marx's position can be offered.

The first is that Marx – together with Feuerbach and Hegel – belongs in and, in part, brings about the general shift from “privacy” to “publicity” that the last century-and-a-half (approximately) has seen.⁷⁸

The second is that, in his discussion of the senses, Marx draws common sense (i) on to the terrain that common sense (ii) has explored. This terrain is *social* in character. For Marx, *questions about the senses are questions about social meaning* – and hence “public” rather than “private”, in a Wittgensteinian sense.⁷⁹ One way of phrasing this point is to say: Marx contends that “schematically Greek” issues are best approached in “schematically Roman” – although not in politically conservative – terms.

To the above comments on Marx, I add thoughts on how, in his view, emancipation is to be seen. What sort of social change does emancipation entail? If this question is answered, a claim that the *senses are social* acquires a political direction and edge.

Marx's view of emancipation is given in a famous passage. '*Communism*' – we there read – is 'the real *appropriation* of the *human* essence by and for man'.⁸⁰ For this declaration to be informative, it must be unpacked in some detail – and, especially, we need to know how the phrase '*human* essence' is to be understood. What Marx has in mind is, I suggest, humanity in its social existence – as the continuation of the well-known passage makes clear. Communism – says Marx, in the next part of his

rather than “private”, see the reference given in note 34, above.

76 *Collected Works* Vol. 3 p. 304.

77 The passage is quoted in note 34, above.

78 On the shift, see text at notes 33-4, above. For Feuerbach in the present connection, see L. Feuerbach *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill 1966) pp. 71 ('The essence of man is contained only in the community and unity of man with man...') and 72 ('The true dialectic is not a monologue of a solitary thinker with himself; it is a dialogue between I and Thou'). Marx – it may be noted – praises Feuerbach's 'great achievement' in 'making the social relationship of “man to man” the basic principle of the theory' (*Collected Works* Vol. 3 p. 328); when, later, he declares that the 'essence of man' is the 'ensemble of the social relations' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 7) he is, in effect, quoting Feuerbach against himself. Regarding Hegel, a number of relevant passages may be cited. In the *Phenomenology's* Preface, we are told that 'human nature only exists in an achieved community of consciousness[es]' (*Phenomenology* p. 43); in the work itself, 'self-consciousness' (or human individuality) is presented in explicitly plural or interpersonal terms (e.g. *ibid.* pp. 110-11). A strikingly “Wittgensteinian” passage observes that 'language is self-consciousness existing *for others*' – and adds that it is through language that the self 'becomes objective to itself' (*ibid.* p. 305).

79 See note 75, above.

80 *Ibid.* p. 296.

sentence – involves 'the complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e. human) being'. To the same effect, the *Manuscripts* praise Feuerbach for making 'the social relationship of “man to man”' the 'basic principle' of theory.⁸¹ But how, in such passages, is the term 'social' being used?

In general terms, the question “What does Marx mean by 'social'?” admits of a ready answer. On the basis of his claim that the 'social relationship of “man to man”' is 'basic', we can say: for Marx, a *social* relation involves interpersonal – or intersubjectivity (to employ an equivalent term). But, when Marx speaks of returning man to his '*social* (i.e. human) being', what form of interpersonal does he have in mind?

An answer to *this* question involves – I suggest – more than quotation. It involves an interpretation of Marx's broad theoretical aims. In these notes, such an interpretative argument is impossible to give – and I rely on previous work. In our 'Marx and Recognition',⁸² Adrian Wilding and I have defended the following position: Marx regards *social relations* as *relations of recognition*. Throughout his life, Marx (following Hegel's *Phenomenology*) looks beyond *contradictory* recognition to recognition that is mutual and uncontradicted and free. Communism which reappropriates man's (or humankind's) social being *is mutual recognition*, in the *Phenomenology's* meaning of the term. Here, I present this interpretation *minus* the argument which supports it. But I stress the interpretation's significance. It allows us to draw conclusions about what, for Marx, emancipation means.

The conclusions run parallel in Marx's and Hegel's cases. Above, when discussing Hegel, I commented on how mutual recognition is to be seen. Such recognition continues in being, I suggested, only when its dynamic is sustained. I proposed that mutual recognition (like a good conversation) determines its own course; were it to be moulded by anything other than itself, alienated or contradictory recognition would emerge. If, for example, recognition were to be confined in formal or institutional channels, emancipatory existence would be at an end. Such reflections apply (so I suggest) where both Hegel and Marx are concerned.

The implications of such reflections are momentous – and deserve underlining. For both Hegel and Marx, emancipation (although social) cannot emerge through institutions. It exists *in* and *against* and *beyond* institutions.⁸³ It is in this sense that Marx's social conception of the senses has political direction. At the end of the line of thought that my notes have sketched, grassroots radicalism and sensory renewal make common cause.

81 See note 78, above.

82 See note 25, above.

83 For the *Phenomenology*, it appears on the streets of Revolutionary Paris – amid crowds where 'each, undivided from the whole, always does everything' (*Phenomenology* p. 357) and mutual recognition obtains.

Common sense: Bloch and the Frankfurt School

Where next?

After Marx, where might a continuation of common-sense-related discussion be sought? In the Marxist tradition, such discussion has been hesitant – and confined to the margins of mainstream debate. Discussion that has taken place has an indirect character. Two examples give an idea of what I mean.

The first comes from Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*. The last sentence of this massive and far-reaching study reads as follows:

Once he [the human individual] has grasped himself and established what is his, without expropriation and alienation, in real democracy, there arises in the world something which shines into the childhood of all and in which no one has yet been: homeland [*Heimat*].⁸⁴

What does this moving sentence tell us? At first, Bloch's meaning seems to be general. He appears to claim that human hopes and dreams and aspirations have a unitary sense or aim – the aim being existence of a non-alienated kind. This is, I think, part of the claim that Bloch wishes to make. But there is more. The “more” lends itself to a common sense interpretation.

The key to Bloch's further line of thought is the idea of dreaming. The material of a dream is drawn (so Freud tells us) from everyday life: its source is the familiar – or, to state the point differently, *Heimat*. However, we can dream about the familiar in two drastically different ways. The familiar can become the stuff of nightmares and Alice-in-Wonderland-style absurdity. Or it can become a place of happiness – a *Eutopia*, to borrow Thomas More's expression⁸⁵ – and fulfilled hope. It is in the former guise – so, I suggest, Bloch considers – that the idea of *Heimat* 'shines into the childhood of all': in an alienated society, the family house is haunted and what is

84 E. Bloch *The Principle of Hope* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1986) p. 1376.

85 T. More *Utopia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1965) p. 133 (at note 7). For discussion of More and, also, Bloch, see R. Gunn 'Utopian and Apocalyptic Thought' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 26 January 2015.

familiar is laced with fear. In a society without 'expropriation and alienation', by contrast, everyday life is non-threatening and dreams may express hope. In a 'real democracy' – compare the 'true [*wahren*] democracy' which, in 1843, Marx imagines⁸⁶ – dreams are “adult” (in what I have earlier called a 'psychoanalytic or Kantian' sense⁸⁷) and self-confident: they integrate the individual with his or her world. It is, of course, the case that, for Marx and Bloch and (presumably) ourselves, conditions of 'true' or 'real' democracy do not exist. 'Childhood' (on non-adult existence) may, indeed, be a realm of hauntings. However, adults may orient themselves towards a non-alienated future – into which, as Bloch says, no-one has yet stepped. The notion of *Heimat* may be redeemed from ghosts and ghouls. If this *further line of thought* is present, Bloch ends the *Principle of Hope* on a note of anti-fascist protest.

Here, my suggestion is that Bloch's *further line of thought* may be expressed in common-sense-related terms. The “adults” who dream of 'real democracy' are the self-coherent individuals by whom common sense (i) is displayed.⁸⁸ The real democracy which they envisage is the form of social existence – mutual recognition (in Hegel's expression) or an 'association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all' (to quote Marx)⁸⁹ – in which *social meanings* may be redeemed. It is common sense (ii) stripped of conservative implications and viewed in the radical and non-institutional manner that Hegel and Marx recommend. The “adult” dreamer whom Bloch's final sentence envisages *carries individuality forward on to a social terrain*. His or her dreaming recapitulates the argument that my notes have traced.

My second example comes from Frankfurt School aesthetic theory. In an intriguing passage, Adorno refers to Stendhal's dictum about art's *promesse du bonheur*' and wonders aloud about its implications.⁹⁰ Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension* is, in effect, an attempt to carry Stendhal's 'dictum' (as reported by Adorno) further. He refers, it is true, to art's 'promise of liberation'⁹¹ rather than of happiness – but I take it

86 Marx and Engels *Collected Works* Vol. 3 p. 30.

87 See, for example, text at note 27, above.

88 Is 'childhood', according to Bloch's further line of thought, confused *about the senses*? His closing sentence makes no mention of the senses: without such a mention, why refer to common sense (i)? A possible answer is that Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is filled with images of sensory dislocation; the famous 'DRINK ME' episode in ch. 2 is just one example. Another reply might be that the *incoherence amongst the senses* on which “schematically Greek” common sense concentrates is emblematic of more wide-ranging confusion.

89 Marx and Engels *Collected Works* Vol. 6 p. 506.

90 T. Adorno *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1986) p. 430. Stendhal's declaration that 'beauty is only the promise of happiness [*n'est que la promesse du bonheur*]' comes from his *On Love* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1975) p. 66 – where the term 'only' is important. Beauty is not, for Stendhal, happiness itself but *only the promise* of happiness (just as philosophy is not, etymologically, wisdom itself but *only the love* of wisdom). For discussion, see the opening paragraphs of J.G. Finlayson 'The Work of Art and the Promise of Happiness in Adorno' *Word Picture* No. 3 (2009).

91 H. Marcuse *The Aesthetic Dimension* (London: Macmillan 1979) p. 46. (The reference to art's 'promise of liberation' comes a few lines later than the *Aesthetic Dimension's* one and only reference to Stendhal. I take it that the passage is the conceptual centre of Marcuse's book.)

that, for Marcuse, happiness and liberation are linked.⁹² His claim is that art 'transcends its social determination'⁹³ as a matter of its intrinsic and aesthetic form. The beautiful images which art presents are, themselves, anticipations of freedom. They invoke a new 'sensitivity'⁹⁴ – indeed, a new 'sensitivity, imagination and reason'⁹⁵ – which replaces the instrumentalism of the *status quo*. Marcuse reminds us, however, of art's limitations. He notes that artistic beauty is 'only' the 'appearance' of freedom, and that a promise and its fulfillment are two different things.⁹⁶ Aesthetic form is, we discover, enmeshed in a complex dynamic of form and content: aesthetic pleasure may open an emancipatory dimension or it may lead to a conformist delight in what an artwork 're-presents'.⁹⁷ In the passage just referred to, Adorno expresses concern that individuals 'go on clinging to the promise of happiness in its immediate, substantive form'.⁹⁸ If they did, art's *promesse du bonheur* would be broken. Marcuse – who remarks that art is 'powerless against...reconciliation with the irreconcilable'⁹⁹ – is worried about the same thing.

How do these remarks on Marcuse relate to common sense? The answer comes in two passages on 'inwardness' – which *The Aesthetic Dimension* defends. In the first, Marcuse notes that an individual who 'withdraws' into inwardness is an individual who 'steps out of the network of exchange relationships and exchange values'; through such an act of withdrawal, he or she may break into 'material and intellectual culture'.¹⁰⁰ In the second, Marcuse comments that inwardness and subjectivity 'may well become the inner and outer space for the subversion of experience'; he adds that free association originates in 'autonomous individual decision'.¹⁰¹ In short, an individual may start by withdrawing (into inwardness, into himself or herself) only to associate with others in a free and mutually recognitive way. Such an individual develops in a manner that runs parallel to a transition from common sense (i) to common sense (ii). Of course, a retreat into inwardness may have different results. Not all individuals who retreat become mutually recognitive. Marcuse's claim is, however, that such an outcome is likely – if two all-important conditions are met. One is that the individuals concerned endorse, or operate in terms of, aesthetic form. If aesthetic form is endorsed, a new sensitivity – and, with it, free association – is anticipated. The other is that, once aesthetic form has been endorsed, art's 'promise of liberation' is kept. The promise of *happiness in the immediate* which Adorno,

92 In an essay on 'Hedonism' published in 1938, Marcuse writes: 'Insofar as the materialistic protest of hedonism preserves an otherwise proscribed element of human liberation, it is linked with the interest of critical theory.' See H. Marcuse *Negations* (London: Allen Lane 1968) p. 162.

93 *Aesthetic Dimension* p. 6; see also (on transcendence) pp. 9, 13, 14-5, 37.

94 *Ibid.* p. 7, 28.

95 *Ibid.* pp. 9, 33, 36.

96 *Ibid.* p. 46. See also p. 48. Marcuse's 'only' echoes Stendhal: see note 90, above.

97 *Ibid.* p. 8. In Marcuse's words: 'the indictment and the promise preserved in art [may] lose their unreal and utopian character' (*ibid.* p. 28).

98 *Aesthetic Theory* p. 430.

99 *Aesthetic Dimension* p. 66; see also p. 48.

100 *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

101 *Ibid.* pp. 38-9.

elsewhere, dubs 'culinary'¹⁰² remains an ever-present threat to a unified and self-consistent conception of common sense.

To the answer just given, which turns on Marcuse's account of 'inwardness', a further point may be added. It is that *what art promises* is not merely liberation in general. It is liberation where a new 'sensibility' is in play. It is liberation where, in a Blakean fashion, the doors of perception are thrown open. If the passage quoted from Bloch makes no direct mention of the senses, the theme of the senses is central to all that Marcuse says. A consistent liberation involves a new sensibility, just as such a sensibility comes into its own when free association appears. Conversely, issues addressed by common sense (i) may be addressed, and handled in a fruitful manner, when a mutually recognitive common sense (ii) obtains.

Standing back, a reader of my notes may be puzzled. Why (he or she may ask) should we have to search Marxism's margins to find passages which continue Marx's interest in common-sense-based themes? This question can be answered in a number of ways. Marxism which has emphasised a base-and-superstructure model has played down the significance of experiential issues. When such Marxism emphasises the idea of production, questions about recognition (to which common sense is linked) fall out of consideration. A politics that focuses on building a party (be the party Leninist or social democratic) is not likely to make 'new sensibility' a central aim.

Such reflections on orthodox Marxism are to the point. And yet they do not bring into focus the issue at stake. The features of Marxism that I have listed are, without exception, ones with a nineteenth-century (or early-twentieth-century) provenance. Can Marx's own writings be interpreted in this predominantly nineteenth-century way? I suggest that they cannot. Behind the workers' movement of the nineteenth century, lies the groundswell of popular revolt which came into being in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – and which the English Civil War (Blake's point of departure) was the final culmination. It is striking that, in radical struggle today, the perspectives of seventeenth-century movements are renewed.¹⁰³ If Marxism is to develop, it must contextualise nineteenth-century issues in early popular – in a word, Left Apocalyptic¹⁰⁴ – concerns. Blakean antinomianism and the notion of new sensibility (linked to common-sense-based issues) are indications of where its future lies.

102 T. W. Adorno 'On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening' in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1978) p. 273.

103 The notion of *prefigurative* politics was taken for granted by radical Civil War groups such as the Diggers and Ranters. Saltmarsh's celebration of 'open conferences and communication' – see note 41, above – is renewed in present-day emphasis on mutual recognition. Graeber has noted that the horizontalism of the Occupy movement echoes aspects of Quaker practice (D. Graeber *The Democracy Project*, London: Allen Lane 2013, pp. 194, 218) – the Quakers being, initially, a free grace movement of English Civil War years.

104 See, for discussion, my 'Utopian and Apocalyptic Thought' referred to in note 85, above

Other extensions: from avant-garde to surrealism and the present-day

Besides Bloch's and Adorno's work, where might an extension of our conversation be found? There are various possibilities - one being writings associated with *avant garde* art. Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* of 1914 is (perhaps surprisingly) full of common sense examples. There, it is said that 'taste' and 'sight' have been known to 'work in harmony'; colours are seen as 'rough' or 'sticky' or 'warm' or 'cold'.¹⁰⁵ A specific form with a specific colour – say, a 'yellow triangle' or a 'blue square' – has a determinate significance¹⁰⁶ and, indeed, different 'arts' can be combined in harmonious and discordant ways.¹⁰⁷ Such comments (a reader of my notes will appreciate) renew themes that we have linked to common sense (i). For Kandinsky, who favours theosophy, the various senses flow together in the soul or inner self; for us, the task of interrelation is performed by common sense. It is performed, that is, by common sense (i) – which is, itself, to be understood in social (and thereby non-supernatural) terms. In the present connection, however, it is not Kandinsky's weaknesses that concern us. What is striking is the circumstance that the links which Kandinsky stipulates between the various senses suggest ways in which, in a new world, sense experience may be enlarged. In such a world, must sense and taste (for example) be fundamentally distinct? Or may one sense point toward the other? May colours be 'warm' or 'cold' in *not merely* a metaphorical sense? Who (in a 'cavern' of social and sensory impoverishment) can say?

Kandinsky is far from being the only twentieth-century artist to think and create in a “common sense” perspective. Surrealism attempts to prise objects (and places and events) from their 'admitted physical properties and accepted roles';¹⁰⁸ by stripping off tired associations, it allows their sensory richness to emerge. It allows objects to appear in their 'revolutionary' significance.¹⁰⁹ If the 'accepted roles' from which Surrealism seeks to emancipate objects are those of instrumentalist thinking and 'the domain of the performance principle',¹¹⁰ a social programme is already announced. Issues pertaining to common sense (i) are already viewed in a social – so to say, a common sense (ii) oriented – perspective. In surrealism, we may note, the notions of the emancipation of the object and social revolution are linked. This is so especially

105 W. Kandinsky *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (New York: Dover Publications 1977) p. 25. In addition, colours can – Kandinsky continues – be 'soft' or 'hard' or 'dry'; they can be seen as scented or linked to 'sound'. It would be hard to find anyone who would try to express bright yellow in the bass notes, or dark lake in the treble' (ibid.).

106 Ibid. p. 29.

107 Ibid. p. 42.

108 A. Balakian *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1986) p. 137. On places and events, see A. Breton *Nadja* (London: Penguin Books 1999) p. 20.

109 W. Benjamin 'Surrealism' in his *One Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso 1979) p. 229.

110 Marcuse *Aesthetic Dimension* p. 37. On instrumentalist thinking, see G. Bataille *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1985).

in Breton's writings.¹¹¹ The main line of thought in Breton's *Communicating Vessels* runs from a dark night of the soul (associated with experiences of loss)¹¹² to interpersonal vision.

In recent radical social theory, R.C. Smith's *Consciousness and Revolt* has renewed perspectives that Blake (on the one hand) and Marx and Hegel (on the other) pioneer. Smith urges an 'experiential revolt'¹¹³ which combines experiential and social themes. He writes: 'In my revolt, in my coherence, the world lights up around me. Here lies the organic basis for all passion.'¹¹⁴ Revolt, for Smith, has a personal dimension: what he terms 'experiential coherence'¹¹⁵ and what the present paper discusses under the heading of "common sense (i)" are, roughly, the same. But for Smith, as for my paper, the personal has a social context: coherent consciousness exists through revolt of an interpersonal sort.¹¹⁶ The manner in which we relate to a phenomenon or another human being is – we read – 'an expression of our intersubjective relation with one another'.¹¹⁷ The intersubjective relation in which experience becomes coherent is one where 'mutual recognition' and a 'community of others' obtains.¹¹⁸ Smith's discussion belongs in a lengthy tradition whose exponents include Blake and Hegel and Marx.

Here, I refer to *Consciousness and Revolt* only briefly and in an illustrative manner. I make no attempt to discuss it in detail or to explore it in a rounded way. However, I note two significant themes.

First, Smith argues persuasively that personal and political issues are interwoven. In the terminology of the present paper, he maintains that common sense (i) and (ii) are linked. He argues that social emancipation requires coherent experience and that, conversely, experience may be coherent only if social relations are changed.¹¹⁹ *Consciousness and Revolt* challenges a widespread assumption that the "personal" and the "political" belong in separated domains.

111 See Breton's 'Second Surrealist Manifesto' in P. Waldberg (ed.) *Surrealism* (London: Thames and Hudson 1965) pp. 78-80; A. Breton *Communicating Vessels* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1997) pp. 127-8. For discussion, see N. Heath '1919-1950: The Politics of Surrealism' (libcom.org) 11 September 2006; M. Löwy *Morning Star* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2009) ch. 3.

112 *Communicating Vessels* pp. 67-79; 108.

113 R.C. Smith *Consciousness and Revolt* (Holt: Heathwood Press 2011) p. 180.

114 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

115 See, for example, *ibid.* pp. 38, 41, 54-5, 163, 169.

116 Smith's title alludes to Camus, and the personal-becoming-interpersonal dynamic that his thought contains: 'Consciousness and revolt,' - writes Camus in 1942 – 'these rejections are the contrary of renunciation' (A. Camus *The Myth of Sisyphus*, London: Penguin Books 2013, p. 41). Far from entailing renunciation, revolt confronts the absurd head-on. How does interpersonality come into Camus's picture? According to *The Rebel (L'Homme révolté)*, 'Rebellion is the common ground on which every man bases his first values. I rebel – therefore we exist' (A. Camus *The Rebel*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1962, p. 28). Note Camus's dialogical 'we'.

117 *Consciousness and Revolt* p. 160. In effect, Smith echoes Marx's 1844 declaration – as quoted in note 76, above – that an individual's sense perception 'exists...through the other man'.

118 *Consciousness and Revolt* p. 89. For 'mutual recognition', see also pp. 86, 88, 104.

119 It is in this sense that I understand Smith's formulations on 'day-to-day revolt' and the 'valorisation of phenomena' at *ibid.* p. 182.

Second, *Consciousness and Revolt* attempts to renew Frankfurt School critical theory – and does so in an intriguing fashion. In part, Smith turns to Adorno's writings; in part, he draws upon phenomenology.¹²⁰ Stated differently, he renews forms of critical thinking that bring experience into focus. Smith's claim is that 'revolt' must involve a change in patterns of recognition. His further claim is that recognitive and experiential changes go hand in hand. In a renewal of a critical or Frankfurt School perspective, discussion of recognition and of the senses must intersect.

Hope of sensory renewal

At the start of my paper, I asked two questions. Where does a hope or expectation of sensory renewal originate? And how should such a renewal be understood? In answer to the first question, I have traced a lengthy discussion – in effect, a strand in the history of ideas. The strand is that associated with the term 'common sense'. The term is, as we have discovered, complex: it has more than a single meaning. The common sense tradition comes to life when these meanings intersect. This intersection of meanings has been central to my discussion. How may common sense (i) and (ii) – or common sense in its “schematically Greek” and “schematically Roman” meanings – be related? Can common sense (i) and (ii) be combined into a single view? If they can, is there a specific form of social relations that allows common sense to flourish? What might this form be? Discussion of these questions has been central to my paper. The first of my two questions – “Where does the expectation of sensory renewal originate?” – has absorbed my attention.

At this point, a reader of my discussion may be restive. He or she may remind me of my second question. How should sensory renewal be understood? What forms might a cleansing of the senses (Blake) or 'new sensibility' (Marcuse) take? In a new world, where common sense is vivid, what may be seen?

I have to confess that my second question makes me uneasy. Throughout the twists and turns of my historical account, I have had a sense of an approaching reckoning. Where might the history that I have been tracing lead? My unease has, I consider, strong foundations. A discussion of *what may be seen* by renewed senses can go off the rails – so easily, and in so many ways. Are we invited to imagine new and improved sense organs? Does a discussion of extrasensory perception loom? Or must discussion become evasive and heartwarming and vague? In the light of such dangers,

120 Are critical theory and existential phenomenology compatible? Here, I do not address this issue. However, I point to an example of kindred themes. Adorno's critique of identity-thinking and ideology – a critique which Smith emphasises – may be set alongside Camus's remarks on 'diversity' (as distinct from 'abstract' thought). See *Myth of Sisyphus* p. 84.

it is tempting to place my second question off-limits. It is tempting to invoke a “ban on images” which – it is said – Hegel and Marx and Adorno impose.¹²¹ This said, my question cannot be set aside readily. If it is suggested that present-day sense-perception is limited, as when – for example – Marx condemns sensuousness that is restricted by 'having',¹²² issues concerning an alternative are raised. What form might such an alternative take? Perhaps the nature of the alternative is best left unspecified. However, if the conceptual space marked “alternative” is left *entirely* empty, critique rests on an “ought” of a formalistic and external kind. In addition to this, my second question has political justification. If mutually recognitive emancipation is to be sensory *and* social – if it is to be “personal” *and* “political”, and if it is to involve common sense (i) *and* (ii) – then attempts to imagine 'cleansed' perception go hand in hand with attempts to envisage new recognitive forms. If political struggle for new recognitive forms is to have a prefigurative character,¹²³ so too must the cleansing of which Blake speaks.

Attempts to envisage new forms of perception can be seen as ranged under distinct (but non-mutually exclusive) ideas. One such idea is that of *interpretation*. If, for example, 'speed' is interpreted not in terms of physics but as a social category, its meaning changes.¹²⁴ *Urbanization* – to take a different example – may be seen in terms of town-planning or as a dimension of everyday life. Which interpretations are consistent with the broadest meaning and the most resonant interpersonal relation? I do not address the question here. Instead, I note that interaction is an axis along which sensibility may change.

To this suggestion, an objection may be raised. Is a change in interpretation a change in sensation? Is interpretation not something – so to say, something “intellectual” - that is done once sensory data has been supplied? My reply is that the two steps – if they *are* two steps – of interpretation and data-reception are inseparable. An uninterpreted piece of data is a brute fact (or set of brute facts) and – I take it – brute facticity is a positivist myth. As the eighteenth-century “common sense” philosopher Thomas Reid has it: 'sense...signifies judgement'. He adds: 'From this it is natural to think that common sense should mean common judgement; and so it really does'.¹²⁵ I am aware (I note in passing) that it is counterintuitive to cite Reid in support of a

121 See discussion between Bloch and Adorno in E. Bloch *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press 1989) pp. 10-11. For discussion, see M. Ott 'Something's Missing: A Study of the Dialectic of Utopia in the Theories of Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Bloch' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 2 December 2013.

122 See note 70, above.

123 The theme of prefiguration is, I propose, vitally important – but cannot be addressed in the present paper. For discussion, see A. Wilding, R. Gunn, R.C. Smith, C. Fuchs and M. Ott 'Occupy and Prefiguration – A Roundtable Discussion' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 10 November 2014; R. Gunn, R.C. Smith and A. Wilding 'Assemblies for Democracy: A Theoretical Framework' Assemblies for Democracy (www.assembliesfordemocracy.org) 14 July 2015.

124 On 'speed', see L. Aragon *Paris Peasant* (Boston: Exact Change 1971).

125 T. Reid 'Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man' in W. Hamilton, ed., *The Works of Thomas Reid* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart 1848), Vol. 1, p. 423.

point that derives from a surrealist text.¹²⁶ Such a citation should seem less counterintuitive if this paper's claims about common sense go through.

Besides examples that turn on interpretation, another route towards a notion of enhanced perception is through metaphor. In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that *literal* claims may be given a *metaphorical* meaning but the reverse: claims that have, in an unemancipated society, a metaphorical significance may, when recognition obtains, acquire a direct sense. To my suggestion, a reader may respond: why should a metaphor become non-metaphorical? Surely a proposal that *metaphor may become non-metaphorical* launches a line of quirky and nonsensical thought? I have to admit that I share my reader's disquiet. In general, metaphors are best left as metaphors. However, there are instances where a seeming metaphor seems to be poised *on the edge* of literal truth. The instances that I have in mind are those mentioned by, for example, Kandinsky when he refers to colours as 'rough' or 'sticky' or 'hard' or 'dry'.¹²⁷ To the same effect, a colour-combination may be “discordant” - or an intervention in a discussion may be “edgy” or “blunt”. In all such cases, a term – the term which appears as an adjective – is used metaphorically. But why is the metaphor found telling? May it not be that (say) the ideas of warmth and coldness – indeed, the sensations of warmth and coldness – are, in some way, directly implied by colours of specific hues? If this is so, may we not hypothesise or imagine a sensibility where the data of different senses combines in a vividly experiential way?

A third example raises questions of an aesthetic character – and, for reasons of space, aesthetics is not considered here. In the National Archeological Museum of Athens stands the massive, bronze figure of Zeus Poseidon: it is one of the museum's most admired exhibits. If a viewer spends even a few moments inspecting the back of the figure, he or she experiences a surprise: the figure is animated by twisting and turning energy which communicates overwhelming dynamism and powerful strength. Zeus *becomes Zeus* when this dynamic is apprehended. And yet *not a single photograph* of this much-represented figure contains an indication of the power and energy on which Zeus's divinity depends. My suggestion is that this deficiency is not merely a matter of viewpoint: it is, of course, true that most photographs depict the figure's front (where Apollonian balance predominates) rather than Zeus's Dionysian and energy-filled back. What I propose is that photography, which depicts solely visual images, is systematically blind to considerations of a dynamic kind. It is blind to considerations of what visual artists term 'movement' or musicians 'accent'.¹²⁸ The reason for this blindness is (I propose) that dynamism and movement resemble the warmth or

126 Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (as referred to in note 124, above) is one of the foundational works of the surrealist movement.

127 See note 105, above.

128 As it stands, this imputation of *blindness* is (of course) too crude. A less crude version of my suggestion is that photography employs secondary means – receding perspective, central position, etc. – to depict a movement or dynamic that the eye apprehends in a more immediate way. On the less-crude version of my suggestion, dynamism in photography is not so much excluded than down-played.

coldness of colour: they are not *solely* visual (as are photographic images) but involve common sense. Inspection of the Zeus Poseidon – as distinct from inspection of *photographs of the Zeus Poseidon* – opens on to a fresh and emancipated world.¹²⁹

As well as the three examples that I have given, there are a range of ways in which the notion of a new sensibility might be fleshed out. New sensory objects might come into being – 'speed' as referred to by Aragon being a relevant instance.¹³⁰ The five senses may be combined in fresh ways – and experiences that combine various senses may be explored. And, of course, the five senses may become more and more accurate, in the same way as (for in part the same reasons) human longevity has extended. On top of such possibilities, aesthetic considerations may be added: an increase in the range of aesthetic judgement and a cleansing of the senses are, surely, linked ideas. Although aesthetic issues are not systematically explored in this paper, an instance of *increasing the range of aesthetic judgement* may be given. In his essay on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, Benjamin reflects that 'film' has 'enriched our field of perception with methods that can be illustrated by...Freudian theory'.¹³¹ Aragon's thought and Benjamin's are (I note in passing) closely allied.

To the present section of my discussion, the term 'note' is especially applicable. My aim is to provide a starting-point for a far-reaching political and epistemological debate.

Closing reflections: here *we* are

Where does my note on the senses leave us? If I am right in thinking that common sense (i) requires, if it is to be present, common sense (ii), and if common sense (ii) involves mutual recognition and emancipation, the end-point of my paper may be summarised very briefly: here *we* are. The '*we*' in this summation is dialogical, and turns on the issue of non-alienated interaction. They signal, that is, a political theme. The terms 'here' and 'are' underline this politics' urgency and the prefiguration that it entails. If we are to be intelligible to ourselves, mutual recognition is essential. If mutual recognition is to be achieved, it must be approached in a prefigurative way. To

129 It is in this sense, perhaps, that Stendhal's notion of art's *promesse du bonheur* and Marcuse's aesthetics may be revisited.

130 In the twentieth century, when Aragon was writing, hitherto-unimaginable speeds were reached. Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed* (circa. 1844) was a foretaste of what was to come. Commentators seldom comment on the way in which a violent linear perspective and (in the image of the railway engine) a departure from linear perspective are combined. Does Turner think of 'speed' as a new sensory object for which new means of representation must be found?

131 W. Benjamin *Illuminations* (London: Collins/Fontana 1973) p. 237. I am grateful to Adrian Wilding for this reference and for alerting me to Benjamin's significance in my discussion.

offer a further brief summary, mutual recognition must start as it means to go on.¹³²

The 'we' of mutual recognition underlies all that is marvellous in cleansed experience. It is the ground of a beauty that is 'convulsive' in surrealism's sense.¹³³ It is the transfiguring light which casts the data of the senses into a fresh relief. For common sense to flourish, mutual recognition is essential. Conversely, mutual recognition must subsist as, and through, common sense.

132 For a discussion of this starting point, see R. Gunn, R.C. Smith and A. Wilding 'Assemblies for Democracy: A Theoretical framework' Assemblies for Democracy (assembliesfordemocracy.org) 14 July 2015.

133 For 'convulsive' beauty, see *Nadja* p. 160. (The category of the 'marvellous', as used in the present sentence, is likewise intended in a surrealist sense.)