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Author(s): Alun Munslow

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Andrew Carnegie and the Discourse of Cultural Hegemony

ALUN MUNSLow

Can cultural change be explained as a function of discourse? A discourse is any language territory, whether a mode of thinking, talking or writing, which presupposes shared assumptions between its producer and consumer. This means that the relationship between language and ideology is dependent upon the nature of a particular discourse. This paper offers comments on this question with reference to the formation of the post-bellum American business culture and its ideology by examining the written works of one of its leading exponents, the industrialist Andrew Carnegie¹. Working from the assumption that this business culture was serving the interests of a new ruling group at the expense of subordinate Populist-Producer ones, does an evaluation of the businessman's discourse reveal how it helped create that ideological domination?² Both Hayden White and Michel Foucault have claimed that culture can

Alun Munslow is Lecturer in the Department of Humanities, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Beaconside, Staffs., England, ST18 0AD.

¹ Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy* (London, 1886); *The Gospel of Wealth And Other Timely Essays* (London, 1901), *The Empire of Business* (London, 1902).

² The scholarly literature on the Populist-Producer culture has expanded markedly over the past decade. Notable landmarks are Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise* (New York, 1976); Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York, 1977); Susan E. Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860* (Philadelphia, 1978); John T. Cumbler, *Working Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930* (Westport, Conn, 1979); David Montgomery, *Worker's Control in America* (Cambridge, Mass, 1979); Milton Cantor, ed., *American Working Class Culture: Explorations in American Labor and Social History* (Westport, Conn., 1979); David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America* (New York, 1980); Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia, 1980); Paul G. Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (New York, 1981); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York, 1983); Francis G. Couvares, *The Remaking of Pittsburgh: Class and Culture in an Industrializing City, 1877-1919* (New York, 1984); David Bensman, *The Practice of Solidarity: American*

be explored by reference to the primary figurative modes of discourse, particularly the tropes of metonymy and synecdoche. Basic to this rhetorical approach to cultural formation is its assumption that ideology is a function of discourse, even though White, the most devoted practitioner of the theory of the poetic foundation of cultural practices, recognises Foucault's insight that discourse resides in the world and is bound up with property ownership, power and the imposition of force.³ Assuming that power is embedded in a dominant social formation, business spokesmen like Carnegie, working to maintain the authority of a particular class, did so through a range of discursive cultural practices that contended with others for dominance.⁴ In the Gramscian model of

Hat Finishers in the Nineteenth Century (Urbana, 1985); David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (New York, 1987). Alan Trachtenberg is most clear that the two centres of opposition in the late nineteenth century were the Populists and the working classes, see *The Incorporation of America* (New York, 1982).

³ Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," Inaugural Lecture at the College de France, 2nd December 1970. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1972); *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1973); *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York, 1973); *The Birth of the Clinic* (New York, 1975); Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by D. F. Bouchard (New York, 1977); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (New York, 1979); *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York, 1980); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973), "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Theory*, 7, 1, (Autumn 1980), 5-27, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory*, 23, 1, (1984), 1-33, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore, 1978), "Structuralism and Popular Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 7, (1974) 759-75;

⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks* (London, 1982). Gramsci insists that in order to explore the processes of cultural formation what must be explained is how it happens "that there co-exist many systems and currents of philosophical thought, how these currents are born, how they are diffused, and why in the process of diffusion they fracture along certain lines and in certain directions" (327). In his section on the "The Intellectual" and "Notes on Italian History," in *The Prison Notebooks* Gramsci describes the complexities of hegemony in detail. Beginning by noting the crucial role of the intellectual in the process of establishing a social hegemony Gramsci offers the central insight that the intellectuals are the dominant groups' deputies "exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government" (12). The functions include "The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses...to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige... which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production." The second major function of the intellectuals is to operate the "apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively." The establishment of a social hegemony is not of course as mechanical as it at first sounds. Consent and repression exist together and hegemony is moral as well as

cultural change Andrew Carnegie was an *organic intellectual* in as much as he functioned according to the interests of the new *fundamental* class of the wealthy industrial bourgeoisie.⁵

Although Foucault emphasises the constraints of power relations exterior to the text, Hayden White chooses to emphasise the early Foucaultian narratological position that the theory of tropes provides the basis for classifying the forms of historical and cultural imagination exercised during any given period of a society's development. In this manner the exercise of power in each historical epoch is mediated through its dominant tropic infrastructure with the tropes representing the figurative deep level of consciousness.⁶ White has tried to marry his theory of tropes with Foucault's study of history by arguing that it is

economic. For every conflict between dominant and subordinate groups there is also compromise. It is only at moments when there is a crisis of authority that the dominant groups resort to coercion. Hegemony, therefore, describes the relationship between the masses and the dominant groups of society through politics and economics but most significantly through social consciousness. Among the most significant link between the masses and the elite is language use.

⁵ *Organic intellectuals* are those among a fundamental class, and created by it, who are aware of its functioning and character and conscious of the ends it is pursuing. Gramsci was very precise on the special position of the entrepreneur as an *organic intellectual*: "He must be an organiser of masses of men. ... If not all entrepreneurs, at least an elite amongst them must have the capacity to be an organiser of society in general, including all its complex organism of services, right up to the state organism, because of the need to create the conditions most favourable to the expansion of their own class" (Gramsci, op. cit., 5-6). The only groups who can achieve hegemony are the fundamental classes - the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. The central question in the achievement of hegemony is precisely how intellectual and ideological leadership is established. It is clearly not a simple class alliance. It is, rather, the function of ideology to act as the hegemonic cement. How can a genuine ideological harmony be achieved? The answer is in part to be found in the nature of language and discourse. Gramsci preceded Foucault in his stress upon the role of discourse in reinforcing cultural domination. For Gramsci, "Great importance is assumed by the general question of language, that is, the question of collectively attaining a single cultural *climate*," (his emphasis), op. cit., 349. As Jackson Lears pointed out recently the nature of the available discourse benchmarks that which is allowable, and de-legitimises certain lines of discursive argument. It may make it impossible for potentially oppositional groups to articulate their problems, T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review*, 90, 3 (June, 1985), 569-70. This is the essence of the process of interpellation. The individual is constituted in discourse, and because the structure of ideology is homologously related to the structure of the discourse, the subject is thereby constructed in ideology.

⁶ Each trope represents a different and equally legitimate mode of consciousness, which has in turn culturally formative consequences. It is, therefore, possible to characterise cultural practices of particular historical epochs according to different linguistic protocols. White maintains that the historicised study of culture requires as its analytical model the theory that language is culturally constitutive.

possible to characterize the cultural practices of any historical epoch according to its dominant tropological protocol. Like Foucault, White argues that the tropes determined cultural attitudes to *difference* with particular reference to the changes in the treatment of the insane in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. White maintains that the treatment of the insane, who are the objects of difference, was the result of society thinking about them in the mode of metonymy – through the conceptual substitution of a part for the whole which reduces an object to one of its parts – that is, viewing them as socially separate though contiguous entities. With the advent of the nineteenth century the treatment of the insane became more “humane” because they were characterised in the linguistic mode, or trope of synecdoche, which emphasises continuity between objects by taking the part of an object to refer to its essence. So the insane became viewed as part of society, a variation within the norm.⁷

For American cultural development one test of White and Foucault is, therefore, the extent to which it is possible to trace a shift in Carnegie’s discourse from a predominantly metonymic to a synecdochic construction of the culture of the new order. To put it plainly, did Carnegie impose a

⁷ White, “Structuralism and Popular Culture,” loc. cit., 772–73. It is White’s position that language is possessed neither by the economic base nor superstructure but is anterior to both, and language is the instrument of mediation between consciousness and being. This is the point of divergence for the cultural materialist who would dispute that ideology is a function of tropic determination. However, for White the poetic function is the basis for all cultural activity. White insists that the trope or linguistic prefigurative act then offers us only a limited range of modes of emplotment, argument and ideology with which to explain events and make sense of our culture *Metahistory*, (1–42). In White’s model of narrative discourse there are three parole strategies of explanation – by emplotment, argument and the ideological implications of the first two. Within each strategy there are four modes of representation. The relationships between the elements in White’s grid are elective at the conscious or unconscious choice of the historical writer. The so-called elective affinities or most likely relationships are:

Trope	Emplotment	Argument	Ideological Implications
Metaphor	Romantic	Formalist	Anarchism
Metonymy	Tragic	Mechanist	Radicalism
Synecdoche	Comic	Organicist	Conservatism
Irony	Satirical	Contextualist	Liberalism

The writer’s strategies of explanation are determined by their tropological prefiguration of the data operating at the level of the langue. The most recent previous treatment of White and his narratological theories of writing history is to be found in Richard J. Ellis and Alun Munslow, “Narrative, Myth and the Turner Thesis,” *Journal of American Culture*, 9, 2, (1986), 9–26.

synecdochic reading on American historical development, particularly in his attitude toward “difference,” whether it be the new entrepreneurial heroes or toward certain oppositional groups and political issues of the producer culture, like populists and agrarianism, unionised labour, even the nature of American individualism and democracy, in order to rationalise the new distribution of economic power? White’s model requires that this task be undertaken by reference to shifts in the structure of Carnegie’s narrative – that is, from a tragic to a comic emplotment; the nature of the laws of social development which Carnegie acknowledged – in effect a shift from mechanistic to an organicist argument to explain social change; and the result of these narrative and cognitive devices in ideological terms, Carnegie’s movement from a dangerously radical to a safe conservative position.

According to White’s model every narrative has a plot which is determined by the power of the hero over his environment. The hero of Carnegie’s business discourse was the entrepreneur.⁸ The pioneer hero was no longer an appropriate figure because the late nineteenth century agrarian utopia promised by the Homestead Act never materialised. As a result the political crisis evidenced by the rise of an oppositional Populist–Producer culture threatened the emergent industrial bourgeoisie. As Carnegie realised, the potential existed for a tragic emplotment in the new order and for its heroic entrepreneurial elite. It lay in America’s dialectical cleavages – militant trades unions, silverite farmers and class conflict. The rise of the corporate state required the acknowledgement of a new hero who could create not only wealth but also social cohesion and consensus. The heritage of Jeffersonian individualism in the corporate age could be fatal to the Republic and its democracy. Carnegie’s desire to promote consensus was achieved by his switch from a metonymic prefiguration revealed as a potentially tragic cultural emplotment, to what in White’s taxonomy would be a comic emplotment within the mode of synecdoche. White maintains that the end of a comic emplotment is a reconciliation of men that produces a more harmonised culture. Carnegie’s businessman hero needed to reconcile the contradictions within the new order and ensure the triumph of democracy. This reconciliation is evident in Carnegie’s views on trades unionism:

My experience has been that trades-unions, upon the whole, are beneficial both to labor and to capital. They certainly educate the working-men and give them a truer conception of the relations of capital and labor than they could otherwise

⁸ Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy*, 442.

form. The ablest and best workmen eventually come to the front in these organisations. ... It is not the intelligent workman who knows that labor without his brother capital is helpless, but the blatant ignorant man, who regards capital as the natural enemy of labor who does so much to embitter relations between employer and employed; and the power of this ignorant demagogue arises chiefly from the lack of proper organisation among the men through which their real voice can be expressed. ... A proper organization of the men of every works to be made, by which the natural leaders, the best men, will eventually come to the front and confer freely with the employers.⁹

Carnegie's case for trades unions was thus couched in the language of patronising complaisance, to produce a pliant, business orientated unionism. Only the "blatant ignorant man" and "ignorant demagogue" would doubt the comity between labor and capital. This language evidences a discursive shift from a potentially tragic to a comic cultural emplotment, and was a rejection of the agrarian, individualistic democracy inspired by Carnegie's reading of Jefferson, in favour of a new corporatism essential to the authority of the new order.

In White's model the argument the writer uses is couched as a syllogism, the major premise of which is a causal law. For Carnegie it was Darwinian laws that ultimately determined the nature of society. Carnegie's view of poverty was a further expression of his attitude to social stability, but it was a view which required a modification of Spencerian philosophy. Although Carnegie insisted that his heroic wealth creators should be the role model, he was realist enough to admit that not everyone could own property, and poverty had to be rationalised. So he set up "all conquering poverty" as the ultimate education.¹⁰ His rationale for the maldistribution of wealth was unequivocal: "wealth is a curse to young men, and poverty a blessing."¹¹ "The millionaires... started as poor boys, and were trained in that sternest but most efficient of all schools—poverty."¹² But in order to procure a harmonised culture Carnegie was again impelled to appeal to the qualities of personal enterprise found in the classless entrepreneurial hero. In this fashion he rejected Herbert Spencer's notion that poverty indicated some kind of unfitness. Indeed, the true hero was the poor boy who, through pursuit of the Gospel of Success, was able to achieve wealth. Ultimately, however, Carnegie was compelled to modify this mechanistic cause-and-effect process. His insistence that poverty was a positive good had to be matched

⁹ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 115–22.

¹⁰ Carnegie, *Empire of Business*, 113.

¹¹ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 55.

¹² Carnegie, *Empire of Business*, 109.

by his belief in universal economic and social progress. This shift in emphasis is revealed, in terms of White's taxonomy, in his substitution of an organicist for a mechanistic argument within his narrative. The organicist argument denies the search for causal relationships in a mechanical sense, appealing instead to the principles or ideas that serve to integrate historical processes teleologically. In this sense Carnegie was able to deny the mechanical determinism of poverty except as a spur to personal advancement, as well as, by implication, Darwinian biological determinism, and instead to appeal to the supposed organic and harmonic nature of bourgeois society.

This shift of signification through the nature of Carnegie's argument was a clear modification of the tenets of Social Darwinism which reached their ultimate fulfilment in the Reform Darwinism of the Progressive Era. The Sumnerian analysis which required an absolute rejection of the Jeffersonian precepts of "natural rights," "liberty" and "equality" was unacceptable to Carnegie. Whilst retaining the signifiers, Carnegie changed their signification. Natural selection for Carnegie resulted not in the survival of the fittest and the accretion of wealth permanently in the hands of the few: "An aristocracy of wealth is impossible [in America]... wealth cannot remain permanently in any class if economic laws are allowed free play."¹³ In effect Carnegie argued that natural selection produced a classless society, a democracy "uninfluenced by birth or rank since neither exist."¹⁴ This replaced Sumner's state of economic warfare induced by the unequal struggle for survival.

Carnegie not only rejected Sumner's mechanistic Darwinism but also denied Spencer's philosophy as well. Despite his surface appeal to the rhetoric of Social Darwinism, in reality Carnegie was pushing on toward meliorism. He went further than virtually any other businessman in advocating Reform Darwinism. Biological analogies within society, a classic illustration of the metonymic deep consciousness of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, explained by mechanistic arguments, were modified by Carnegie to produce an organicist explanation of reality. The essence of Spencerian Darwinism was the process whereby all matter passed from a state of homogeneity to one of heterogeneity. Carnegie actually reversed this fundamental premise, concluding that the rise of the trust was "an evolution from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous, and is clearly another step in the upward path of development."¹⁵ Carnegie's need to view society as a

¹³ Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy*, 366.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 365.

¹⁵ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 89.

harmonised totality necessitated his conclusion that the corporate ideal must benefit the thrifty members of “the organism known as human society.”¹⁶ Economic paternalism, the stewardship notion at the heart of the Gospel of Wealth, was the essence of cultural evolution. The reductive appeal to Darwinian scientism remained, but in a highly modified form. The mechanistic argument for explaining social change had been transmuted into an organicist strategy that accounted for cultural development as tending toward coherence and harmony.

In White’s tropological model the ideological implications of discourse are revealed in the writer’s attitude towards the pace of social change and the ultimate ends of civil society. Carnegie’s ideological position is most clearly shown in his views on the administration of wealth. Given his tropological adjustment from the linguistic mode of metonymy to synecdoche and his congruent shift from a tragic to a comic emplotment of the entrepreneurial hero in American history, and the rejection of mechanistic laws to explain social change in favour of an organicist explanation, Carnegie was pushed away from what in White’s terminology would be a potentially radical to a conservative ideological position. In White’s terms a conservative offers a defence “not of an idealized past but of the present social dispensation.”¹⁷ The conservative defends the status quo by constructing society as an organic unity that radicals claim has yet to be achieved. Consequently, for an *organic intellectual* like Carnegie any residual culture of Jeffersonian radicalism found in any oppositional groups had to be excised from public discourse. Whilst his actions during the 1892 Homestead dispute, when he allowed Henry Clay Frick to use Pinkerton agents to break the strike, may have signified the power of physical repression, Carnegie’s discourse continued the struggle to create a culture structured in the ideological dominance of his entrepreneurial class.

The proper administration of wealth was summarised most famously in Carnegie’s Gospel of Wealth, that “surplus wealth should be considered as a sacred trust to be administered by those into whose hands it falls, during their lives, *for the good of the community*” [My emphasis.]¹⁸ Perhaps the group most vilified by Carnegie for its differentness was the unworthy poor. His rationalisation for the unequal distribution of wealth as the primary end of civic society was that rich and poor could be reconciled through the notion of stewardship. As he said, “Under its sway [the practice of the stewardship of wealth] we shall have an ideal State, in

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁷ White, *Metahistory*, 22.

¹⁸ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 54.

which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense, the property of the many, because administered for the common good.”¹⁹ The corollary to this was a denial of charity, being the most dubious way to administer wealth. Carnegie was absolutely clear that the only members of the poor who could be assisted were those who could help themselves. The capitalist mind of Carnegie was summarised when he said aphoristically “Those worthy of assistance... seldom require assistance.”²⁰

Among the dangerous groups in society were not only the unworthy poor but also errant farmers. In 1891 Carnegie addressed the issue of silver and Populists: “our... Republic is boldly plunging deeper and deeper into the dangers of silver coinage... there is trouble wherever there is silver.” He warned farmers and his wider readership that “The man who tries to bring about this disaster [free silver] in the hope of profit... is twin brother to him who would wreck the express train for the chance of sharing its contents.... He is a wrecker and speculator. His interests are opposed to the interests of the toiling masses.”²¹ The implied alliance of his class with that of the toiling masses rings a little hollow, given his behaviour a few months later during the Homestead Strike. Because the primary obstacle to the creation of a hegemonic class is the need to incorporate the significations and cultural practices through which subordinate classes live and experience their relations to the total social formation, the dominant conservative ideology articulated by Carnegie had to absorb such groups in a manner which would prevent them from opposing the hegemonic class and its views on the distribution and administration of wealth. Carnegie operated such a procedure by the simple measure of isolating specific subordinate groups as uniquely reprehensible or dangerous. Like the undeserving poor, silverite farmers and political radicals were also constituted as potential destroyers of social harmony. Writing in the popular magazine *The Forum* in August 1886, to comment upon the labour riots earlier that summer, he produced his classic statement of ideological incorporation:

Following the labor disturbances, there came the mad work of a handful of foreign anarchists in Chicago and Milwaukee, who thought they saw in the excitement a fitting opportunity to execute their revolutionary plans. Although labor is not justly chargeable with their doings, nevertheless the cause of labor was temporarily discredited in public opinion by these outbreaks. The promptitude with which one labor organization after another not only disclaimed all sympathy with riot and disorder, but volunteered to enroll itself into armed

¹⁹ Ibid., 12.

²⁰ Ibid., 17.

²¹ Carnegie, *Empire of Business*, 55–61.

force for the maintenance of order, should not be overlooked. ... It is another convincing proof, if further proof were necessary, that whenever the peace of this country is seriously threatened the masses of men, not only in the professions and in the educated classes, but down to and through the very lowest ranks of industrious workers, are determined to maintain it. Bomb-throwing means swift death to the thrower. Rioters assembling ... will be remorselessly shot down; not by the order of government above the people, not by overwhelming standing armies, not by troops brought from a distance, but by the masses of peaceful and orderly citizens of all classes ... from the capitalist down to and including the steady working-man, whose combined influence constitutes that irresistible force, under democratic institutions, known as public sentiment.²²

Carnegie's discourse thus closed down alternative interpretations open to the reader. The "mad work of...foreign anarchists" and "their revolutionary plans" invites comparison in the reader's mind with what Carnegie is implying are certain doubtful elements in organised labour. However, legitimate labour organisations and "the masses of men" and "masses of peaceful and orderly citizens of all classes," but most significantly "from the capitalist down to...the steady working-man," will respond in truly democratic and classless fashion in "remorselessly" shooting down rioters and bomb-throwers. Carnegie's linking of democratic institutions with "public opinion" and "public sentiment" constitutes the reader as a unified subject in conflict with that which exists outside the text. Through the power of his discourse Carnegie is attempting to persuade "the masses" to exchange their culture for that of the hegemonic class. The 1890s may be interpreted, therefore, using Gramsci's terminology, as a period of *passive revolution* whereby some sectors of American society were deliberately excluded as illegitimate and had to be sanitised in the best interests of the hegemonic class.²³

The Jeffersonian world view was metonymic. Its reductive certainty and classic eighteenth century laws of politics and economic science viewed human relationships as atomistic contiguities. After industrialization, however, the potential for cultural cataclysm and tragedy was very real if it continued to be conceived in these terms. The rise of the

²² Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 142–43.

²³ The term *passive revolution* is defined by Gramsci as a form of hegemony whereby the masses are absorbed and neutralised by the bourgeoisie, thus preventing them from opposing the hegemonic class. A period of *passive revolution* is essentially a period of class inspired reformism to establish a spurious consensus over the ends of civil government. It is differentiated from an *expansive hegemony* which results from the genuine adoption of the interests of the masses by the hegemonic class, and the creation of a popular will. In the period of *passive revolution* large sections of the people are deliberately excluded from the hegemonic system through the means adopted by intellectuals like Carnegie. See Gramsci, 58–9, 105–20.

corporate state demanded a new conception of the role of the individual and a consensus on how social change and the ends of civil society could be explained. As an *organic intellectual* representing the dominant corporate culture Carnegie expressed the cultural imperative to constitute the new world of industrial capitalism. He was forced to seek out rationalisations that would allow his entrepreneurial class to modify and re-draw the Jeffersonian cultural map. Carnegie's synecdochic popular discourse produced the necessary re-working of his emplotment of American history, a new argument for explaining social change and his modified ideological position. Carnegie's role in this complex process of social change through re-signification was to disassemble oppositional elements of the residual culture and re-articulate them within the cultural praxis of a new bourgeois order manifest as a modified Gospel of Success, an ethic of self-help, a Gospel of Wealth and Reform Darwinism, linking each to a resurgent and triumphant republican democracy.

This application of White's model illustrates how discourse predicates a connection between language use, knowledge, power and ideology. White's language model of cultural change forces historians to acknowledge that discourse and ideology are interrelated, and that the ideological implications of any discourse may be "read" as much through a text's linguistic structure as through traditional historical methods of textual comparison and verification. Whilst White's argument that language is the terrain of ideological struggle is not disputed, the weakness of his position remains in its insistence in the absolute primacy of textuality. It simply ignores human agency: in this case Carnegie's will knowingly to create a dominant culture through his discourse. This is where Gramsci's contribution is most important: the recognition that although cultural dominance may be manifest in discourse, discourse also reveals the ebb and flow of an economically driven cultural struggle.

What Carnegie was about was the identification of his readership with a preferred ideological position based upon his appraisal of what constituted orderly, acceptable social change and the true administration of wealth for his class. For the dominant social formation that Carnegie represented, these ideological principles were all directed towards the creation of a national popular value structure. As a bourgeois *organic intellectual* Carnegie embarked upon a process of cultural transformation whereby he participated in the ideological absorption of oppositional groups. The image of Andrew Carnegie as the classic representative of the Robber Barons' striving to ensure their dominance over a reluctant labour force and a status-stricken middle-class ignores the complexity not only of

his discourse, but also its function in the constitution of a hegemony possessing both cultural as well as economic unity. Although Carnegie's *passive revolution* was only fully realised during the so called Age of Reform, on the way to it Carnegie became the most powerful interpreter of the emergent business culture.