

Acknowledgements

I started to write the study as a research fellow at the University of California in Santa Cruz, a position that was generously sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. It was on the beautiful campus overlooking the Pacific Ocean dotted with black figures of all-time surfers, from where every morning white mist rose up toward us, accompanied by the melodious chants of sea-lions, that I was able to get through the initial stages of my project. My original proposal of course envisaged a far more rapid advance of my work than I was actually able to achieve. Not that I would not be willing to put in extra effort but the University of California offered far too many academic temptations that I was unable to resist: discovering the phenomenon of the Internet, getting acquainted with the explosion of recent theoretical writing, participating in several classes and post-graduate seminars, savoring the pleasures of research in a fully computerized, walk-in library, browsing through the bookstores in Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue, talking to American colleagues as well as to other visiting professors and "comparing notes." Thus I left the hospitable and stimulating Santa Cruz atmosphere with only half of the work done – but with lots of invaluable impressions, a wealth of material both for my own research and for my teaching, and with several promising academic contacts as well as with the hope that I would be able to finish the project within the next year.

Yet the frantic nature of the school-year at the Brno English Department decided otherwise and it was not until the summer of 1995 that I managed to resume my work. In the fall I had the good luck of enjoying another brief stipend, this time sponsored by the Austrian South-East European Institute. The month of October, which I spent in the Central European atmosphere of Vienna, was a period of intense and focused writing, when I managed to reinhabit the intertextual universe of my project and made major progress toward its completion. At this point I think it appropriate to express my most sincere gratitude to the ACLS as well as to the ÖOSI for their support of my research effort.

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